



ICAO

FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL AVIATION SAFETY TEAM (APRAST/15)

APRAST/15-WP/7

Agenda Item 4

Bangkok, Thailand, 24 to 25 June 2020 via Video Conference

**Agenda Item 4: Presentations – State / Industry / ICAO (Issues arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic could be a focus for the WP/IP)**

**DEVELOPING TECHNICAL GUIDELINE FOR AIR TRAVEL THROUGH THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS IN CHINA**

*(Presented by People’s Republic of China)*

**SUMMARY**

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, and following the principle of “targeted and detailed prevention and control measures”, Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has formulated the Technical Guideline for Airlines and Airports in a fast manner, and upgraded the Guideline continuously based on the changing situation of disease outbreak. CAAC is willing to share the experience and practices with member states in a bid to prevent and control COVID-19 in air travel.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The COVID-19 has been spreading quickly around the world, causing severe impacts upon world economy. Faced with the sudden pandemic, and following the principle of “targeted and detailed prevention and control measures”, CAAC has responded swiftly and conducted multi-level, categorized and differentiated management based on risk levels of the outbreak and risk assessment.

1.2 Based on the changing situation of disease outbreak, CAAC has upgraded the Guideline continuously and adopted a series of safety measures which ensured the safe and orderly operation of air transport by focusing on key areas, critical links, and target groups

1.3 At present, the battle against COVID-19 in China has achieved overall success, and disease prevention and control has entered the last stage of consolidation. However, the disease is still ongoing in the world, and the risk of disease transmission in air travel cannot be overlooked.

1.4 In order to implement the policy of regular domestic epidemic prevention and control, and at the same time, gradually resume international flights when the risks are under control, the fifth edition of the Preventing Spread of Coronavirus Disease Guideline will be formulated to ensure operation efficiency when carrying out prevention and control measure, and to safeguard public health safety in air travel.

**2. DISCUSSION**

2.1 CAAC has categorized transport flights into three levels, namely high-risk flights, medium-risk flights and low-risk flights based on factors such as the outbreak at the place of origins of the flights, whether the aircraft is equipped with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, load factors, flight time and passenger health declaration.

## 2.2 Prevention and Control Measures Before Departure

- a) Efforts are made to implement thermal screening of all arriving and departing passengers, and quarantine areas for feverish passengers are set up. Dedicated transport procedures and channels are arranged for feverish passengers during entry to avoid contact with other people.
- b) For passengers (with normal body temperature) transferring from countries that are severely impacted by the pandemic or whose flight has carried passengers with suspicious symptoms, airports have adopted measures such as simplifying boarding formalities, carrying out non-contact boarding, setting up special passages, and assigning designated person to monitor the passengers, in a bid to prevent cross-infection at airports.
- c) Proactive explorations are made to conduct regular prevention and control measures on international passenger flights, such as checking nucleic acid test results on some of the international routes. Based upon the situation in the past several weeks, the number of passengers confirmed with COVID-19 has dropped significantly (about 80%) compared with the peak of the outbreak, achieving good results. Remote nucleic acid test helps to increase public confidence in travel, and also enhance government confidence in restoring international passenger flights, which could be beneficial for the restart of passenger transport throughout the world.
- d) Load factor of international flight is controlled, and cabin layout is arranged in a reasonable manner based on risk level of the flight. Measures are taken to reduce the risk of onboard disease transmission, such as arranging passengers to sit separately, and key groups to sit in every other row.
- e) Ventilation and disinfection in airports are intensified. Relative flow control and diversion measures as well as early warning mechanisms are adopted to issue dynamic information to customers in a timely manner. The frequency of disinfection is increased as appropriate in key areas where passengers crowded together. Prevention and control requirements for special areas are put forward, such as shuttle buses and security screening areas.

## 2.3 In-flight Prevention and Control Measures

- a) In-flight service procedures are optimized. In order to avoid cross-infection, the cabin is divided into clean area, buffer zone, passenger sitting area, and quarantine area. Crew members provide service only to specific sections of the cabin, and a designate member provides basic service to the flight crew. Only pre-packaged food and bottled water are provided on medium and high risk flights. For high-risk flights with more than four flight hours, one additional body temperature test should be carried out on board, and disposables such as blanket and back cushion are not provided.
- b) During flight, crew members are encouraged to reduce their entry/exit of the cockpit and use intercom system for communication whenever they can to avoid close contact. They are also required to avoid two of them dining at the same time, and to use an exclusive lavatory.

- c ) The treatment of medical emergencies on board is refined. Relative quarantine areas and lavatories exclusively used by isolated passengers are set up. Passengers with fever or suspicious symptoms are quarantined in a timely manner, and a crew member is designated to provide service for them to reduce the risk of cross-infection

#### 2.4 Prevention and Control Measures After Arrival

- a ) After landing, in a bid to avoid exposure, separate lanes are set up for passengers and crew members. Also, cabin crew are required to avoid mixed flow with flight crew. Posts and ground markings are set up in the waiting area of baggage claim at airports to keep passengers standing with over one meter between each other and avoid crowding when waiting for baggage.
- b ) Ventilation and disinfection of aircraft are strengthened. The frequency of HEPA inspection and replacement is increased. Flights are encouraged to use maximized ventilation to the greatest extent possible during operation, and aircraft auxiliary power unit (APU) is used during ground operation. The procedures of preventive cleaning and disinfection, concurrent disinfection, and terminal disinfection of aircraft are standardized to ensure their effectiveness.
- c ) The management of crew members when they are working abroad is intensified. When staying abroad, crew members are encouraged to protect themselves and avoid going to crowded places, maintain physical distance of over one meter, dine alone, and strictly monitor health conditions.

#### 2.5 Personal Protection Measures for Aviation Staff

- a ) Personal protection measures for aviation staff. Based on the operation and risk of exposure at various posts, different personal protection equipment (PPE) are put forward for front line staff, including crew members, maintenance personnel, staff at check-in counters, security inspection personnel, airport medical personnel, and cleaning personnel.
- b ) Quarantine measures for crew members. When there is a suspected or confirmed case among the crew members, or those crew members have served suspected or confirmed cases, they should be put under medical observation and have their health monitored as per the requirements.

### **3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 CAAC is willing to discuss and share the concepts and methods of disease prevention and control with other countries, and establish aviation public health procedures together with ICAO.

3.2 The prevention and control guideline has played an important role in combating COVID-19 in the civil aviation industry, but the guideline still needs to be improved. It is recommended that ICAO could further strengthen the discussion and cooperation in this regard, and promote member states to learn from the successful practices and improve the effectiveness of prevention and control.