



CAPSCA AMERICAS

Airline Preparedness Planning

Public Health Emergencies

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Responsibilities of IATA

- Prepare a business continuity plan
- Prepare an external plan to support its members
- Prepare guidelines for its members
- Coordinate the member airlines' response to public health emergencies

Responsibilities of IATA

- Prepare a business continuity plan
- Prepare an external plan to support its members

External Plan to Support its Members

- IATA proposes a generic plan to be adapted
- The plan includes emergency response checklists

http://www.iata.org/NR/rdonlyres/1D412DF9-289B-4508-BE9D-A57C4A84F103/0/AirlinesERPChecklists_V1_Nov30.pdf

External Plan to Support its Members

IATA recommends to its members:

- To consult with National Public Health Authorities before finalizing their emergency response plan
- To create an Emergency Response Team
- To designate an Emergency Response Center
- To adopt the IATA Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases



Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Process:

- Initial draft by Medical Advisor
- Reviewed by Medical Advisory Group
- Reviewed and accepted by WHO



Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Process (cont.):

- Circulated to member airlines and posted on IATA web site
- Reviewed by ICAO Pandemic Planning Working Group
- Reviewed by WHO Transportation Working Group



Medical Advisory Group

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Emergency Response Public Health Emergency

International Partners

- WHO e.g. IHR
- ICAO e.g. Pandemic Preparedness Working Group
- ACI e.g. Pandemic Influenza Update
- UNWTO e.g. Tourism Emergency Response Network



Emergency Response Public Health Emergency

National/Regional Partners

- CDC
- ATA
- Several US government departments
- EU
- ECAC

Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Rationale:

- General vs specific: More practical
- No previous general guidelines existed
- Created for individuals with limited medical knowledge and training



Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Rationale (cont.):

- These individuals still have to respond to passenger illnesses
- They may or may not have access to expert opinions
- More in line with the ICAO Aircraft General Declaration, Health Part



Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Who is at risk?

- Cabin Crew
- Cleaning Crew
- Passenger and gate agents
- Maintenance crew
- Cargo and baggage agents

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

The following are general guidelines for Cabin crew when facing a suspected case of communicable disease on board.

During an outbreak of a specific communicable disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) or member states may modify or add further procedures to these general guidelines.

However, these general guidelines provide a basic framework of response to reassure the cabin crew and help them manage such an event.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

A communicable disease is suspected when a traveller (passenger or a crewmember) has a fever (temperature of 38° C/100° F or greater) associated with one or more of the following signs or symptoms:

- *Appearing obviously unwell*
- *Persistent vomiting*
- *Persistent coughing*
- *Skin rash*
- *Impaired breathing*
- *Bruising or bleeding without previous injury*
- *Persistent diarrhea*
- *Confusion of recent onset*

Note 1: this list of signs and symptoms is identical to that listed in the Health part of the ICAO Aircraft General Declaration

Note 2: if food poisoning is suspected as a result of in-flight catering, proceed as per company-established protocol.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- 1) If medical support from the ground is available, contact that ground support immediately *and/or* page for medical assistance on board (*as per company policy*).
- 2) If medical ground support and/or on board health professional is available, crew should follow their medical advice accordingly.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

3) If no medical support is available:

- a) **Relocate the sick traveller** in a more isolated area if appropriate and if space is available. If the traveller is relocated, make sure that the cleaning crew at destination will be advised to clean both locations.
- b) **Designate one cabin crew** to look after the sick traveller, preferably the cabin crew that has already been dealing with this traveller. More than one cabin crew may be necessary if more care is required.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- c) **When possible, designate a specific lavatory** for the exclusive use of the sick traveller. If not possible, clean the commonly touched surfaces of the lavatory(ies) (faucet, door handles, waste bin cover, counter top) after each use by the ill traveller.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- d) If the ill traveller is coughing, ask him/her to follow respiratory etiquette:
 - i. i. Provide tissues and the advice to use the tissues to cover the mouth and nose when speaking, sneezing or coughing.
 - ii. ii. Advise the ill traveller to practice proper hand hygiene*. If the hands become visibly soiled, they must be washed with soap and water.
 - iii. Provide an airsickness bag to be used for the safe disposal of the tissues.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- e) If a medical mask (surgical or procedure) is available, the ill traveller should be asked to wear it. As soon as the mask becomes damp/humid, it should be replaced by a new one. These masks should not be reused and must be disposed safely after use. After touching the used mask (e.g., for disposal), proper hand hygiene* must be practiced immediately.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- f) If the ill traveller cannot tolerate a mask, the designated cabin crew member(s) or any person in close contact (less than 1 metre) with the ill person should wear a medical mask. The airline should ensure that their cabin crew member has adequate training in its use to ensure they do not increase the risk (for example by more frequent hand-face contact or adjusting and removing the mask).

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- g) If there is a risk of direct contact with body fluids, the designated cabin crew member should wear disposable gloves. Gloves are not intended to replace proper hand hygiene.* Gloves should be carefully removed as per training syllabus and discarded as per paragraph h and hands should be washed with soap and water. An alcohol-based hand rub can be used if the hands are not visibly soiled. .

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- h) Store soiled items (used tissues, disposable masks, oxygen mask and tubing, linen, pillows, blankets, seat pocket items, etc.) in a biohazard bag if one is available. If not, use a sealed plastic bag and label it “biohazard”.
- i) Ask accompanying traveller(s) (spouse, children, friends, etc.) if they have any similar symptoms.
- j) Ensure hand carried cabin baggage follows the passenger and comply with public health authority’s request if any.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

- 5) **As soon as possible, advise the captain** of the situation as he/she is required by the International Civil Aviation Organization (*ICAO Annex 9, Chapter 8, paragraph 8.15*) and the World Health Organization *International Health Regulations* (WHO IHR 2005, Article 28(4)) to report the suspected case (s) to air traffic control. Also remind the captain to advise the destination station that cleaning and disinfection will be required.
- 6) Unless stated otherwise by ground medical support or public health officials, ask the travellers seated in the same row, 2 rows in front and 2 rows behind the sick traveller to fill a passenger locator card if such cards are available on the aircraft or at the arrival station.

Guidelines for Cabin Crew

Proper hand hygiene:

- * A general term referring to any action of hand cleansing, performed by means of applying an antiseptic hand rub (i.e., alcohol-based hand rub) if hands are not visibly soiled, or washing one's hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Avoid touching the face with hands.

Guidelines for passenger agents

The following are general guidelines for Passenger Agents who may be faced with a suspected case of communicable disease at the airport.

During an outbreak of a specific communicable disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) or member states may modify or add further procedures to these general guidelines.

However, these general guidelines provide a basic framework of response to reassure the passenger agents and help them manage such an event.

Guidelines for passenger agents

A communicable disease is suspected when a traveller is observed to have:

- A skin rash **or** a severe cough **or** is obviously unwell, **or** complains of any of the following:
 - Severe cough
 - Fever
 - Bruising or bleeding without previous injury
 - Persistent diarrhea
 - Persistent vomiting
 - Rash (non visible)

Guidelines for passenger agents

Most of these signs and/or symptoms may not be obvious at the desk. However, when in doubt regarding the health of a traveller, especially during an outbreak, refer to the airline procedure

- 1) Call your supervisor

Guidelines for passenger agents

- 2) If the supervisor agrees with your concerns and if medical support is available (own medical department or outside designated physician or group) contact that support immediately.

- 3) If the supervisor agrees with your concerns but medical support is not immediately available, deny boarding ask the traveller to obtain medical clearance in accordance with your airline's policy. For some countries you may also have to involve the company's Customer Complaint Resolution Official (CCRO).

Guidelines for passenger agents

- 4) If assistance is required to escort a sick traveller, and if the sick traveller is coughing, ask him/her to wear a surgical mask. If no mask is available or the sick traveller cannot tolerate the mask, e.g. because of breathing difficulties, provide tissues and ask him/her to cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.

If masks are available but the sick traveller cannot tolerate a mask and the airline recommends that designated passenger agents should do so under those circumstances, the airline should ensure that their passenger agents have adequate training in its use to ensure they do not increase the risk (for example by more frequent hand-face contact or adjusting and removing the mask).

Guidelines for cleaning crew

The following are general guidelines for Cleaning Crew who has to clean an arriving aircraft with a suspected case of communicable disease.

During an outbreak of a specific communicable disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) or member states may modify or add further procedures to these general guidelines.

However, these general guidelines provide a basic framework of response to reassure the cleaning crew and help them manage such an event.

Guidelines for cleaning crew

- 1) Wear impermeable disposable gloves.
- 2) Remove and discard gloves if they become soiled or damaged, and after cleaning.
- 3) Wash hands with soap and water immediately after gloves are removed. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if the hands are not visibly soiled.

Guidelines for cleaning crew

4) Surfaces to be cleaned (affected seat, adjacent seats same row, back of the seats in the row in front):

- Armrests
- Seatbacks (the plastic and/or metal part)
- Tray tables
- Light and air controls
- Adjacent walls and windows
- Individual video monitor
- Lavatory(ies) used by the sick traveller: door handle, locking device, toilet seat, faucet, wash basin, adjacent walls and counter

Guidelines for cleaning crew

- 5) Begin the cleaning at the top (light and air controls) and proceed downward progressively.
- 6) Disinfection of upholstery, carpets, or storage compartments is only indicated when they have been soiled by body fluids. In such cases, disinfect before vacuuming to eliminate the risk of re-aerosolization
- 7) Use *only* cleaning agents/disinfectants that have been approved by aircraft manufacturers.

Guidelines for cleaning crew

- 8) Dispose of soiled material and gloves in a biohazard bag if one is available. If not, use a sealed plastic bag and label it as biohazard.

- 9) Do not use compressed air. It might re-aerosolize infectious material.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

The following are general guidelines for Maintenance Crew who have to carry out maintenance of arriving aircraft with a suspected case of communicable disease.

During an outbreak of a specific communicable disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) or member states may modify or add further procedures to these general guidelines.

However, these general guidelines provide a basic framework of response to reassure the maintenance crew and help them manage such an event.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters

About 50% of the air in most modern aircraft is recirculated. However, air is only reused after having gone through HEPA filters.

Microorganisms suspended in air, including bacteria and viruses, are captured by HEPA filters applied to aircraft air circulation systems. Just like HEPA filters used in containment laboratories, the best HEPA cabin air filters have a microbial removal efficiency of >99.97% with bacteria and viruses. As used filters may contain microorganisms trapped in their meshes after hours of filtering activity, it is good routine practice to apply reasonable precautions when handling them , e.g. during their exchange.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

Important

There is no need to change the HEPA filter(s) on an arriving aircraft with a suspected case of communicable disease. HEPA filters should rather be changed at intervals as recommended by the manufacturers.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

When replacing HEPA filters:

- 1) Wear disposable gloves.
- 2) When removing the filter, avoid hitting, dropping or shaking the filter.
- 3) Do not use compressed air to attempt to clean a filter.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

- 4) The used HEPA filter should be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag. A specific biohazard bag is not required. Put the used disposable gloves in the same plastic bag
- 5) Wash hands with soap and water when the task is finished.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

Vacuum waste tank

Since the external venting of the vacuum waste tanks is not equipped with filtering devices capable of preventing the spread of viral or bacterial contamination, it is not recommended to vent the vacuum waste tanks inside a hangar. If venting of the vacuum waste tanks has to be done inside a hangar, it is recommended to use a technique that exhausts the air outside of the hangar.

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

Bird strike

The issue of a potential health risk to personnel involved in maintenance tasks following a bird strike has been discussed with bio-safety specialists at the World Health Organization and, while the risk is remote, the following measures are recommended:

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Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

Bird strike

- Wear disposable gloves
- If body contact is unavoidable while cleaning the engine, wear a disposable coverall and a face mask
- Do not use air or water under pressure to clean the part of the aircraft hit by the bird.
- Remove the bird remains and put them in a plastic bag.
- Do not touch face, eyes, nose, etc. with gloves
- Remove the gloves and the disposable coverall (if used) and put them in the same plastic bag as the remains and seal the bag.
- Dispose of the bag as for normal garbage.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

Bird Strike

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides detailed guidelines for bird strike in “affected areas”. These guidelines can be consulted on:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentAvianFluBirdCollisions.aspx>

Cargo and Baggage handlers

During the SARS outbreak, the WHO reviewed the situation as it related to cargo handling and declared that there was no evidence that the infection had been or could be transmitted by cargo or baggage handling. Whilst the WHO has not made a similar statement regarding Influenza so far, the United States Center for Disease Control and Prevention has made the following statement on this particular issue:

Cargo and Baggage handlers

“There is no evidence that avian influenza is spread through contact with baggage, packages, or other objects, including items arriving from areas where avian influenza cases have been reported. Special handling of cargo arriving from areas where avian influenza cases have been reported is, therefore, not necessary.

Cargo and Baggage handlers

The above recommendation also applies to hand carried cabin baggage of a passenger suspected of carrying a communicable disease.

Therefore, unless stated otherwise by WHO or a National Public Health Authority in the case of a new communicable disease, special handling of cargo and baggage is not necessary at this time.

Notwithstanding the above, cargo and baggage handlers should use proper hand hygiene and wash their hands frequently as it is recommended to all workers.



Guidelines for Suspected Communicable Diseases

Integration of these Guidelines in training of:

- staff
- ground handling companies
- ground-based advisory companies

In conclusion:

- In the Aviation environment, certain groups of employees and some passengers may be exposed to some risks of communicable diseases.
- It is impossible to achieve zero risk.
- Accepted guidelines should be followed to minimize risk.
- Monitor the WHO, ICAO, ACI and IATA web sites for updated information.

Web Sites

- www.who.int
- www.iata.org/health



Thank you for your attention



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