



PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY *of* CANADA  
AGENCE DE LA SANTÉ PUBLIQUE *du* CANADA



Public Health  
Agency of Canada

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publique du Canada

Canada

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# The Office of Quarantine Services - OQS

- Staff located at PHAC HQ and at six international airports (Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa and Halifax) consisting of 22 Quarantine Officers and 3 Quarantine Medical Officers
- Provides a 24/7 service to all Air, Marine and Land Points of Entry (POE)
- ~92% of international flight travel is through these 6 airports.

# Quarantine Act

## Purpose and Scope

- Purpose is to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable diseases (CD) into or from Canada. It is applicable to persons, conveyances, goods and cargo, cadavers, body parts and other human remains arriving in or departing from Canada
- Provides measures for the screening, health assessment, medical examination and detention of travellers to determine if they have a CD and measures for preventing the spread of CD
- Enforcement of the Act is shared by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) OQS and Health Canada (HC) Environmental Health Officers

## Airport Authorities and OQS

- Captain of Aircraft on international flight MUST notify Office of Quarantine Services through the Airport Operations Centre of any traveller who appears obviously unwell (IATA is similar):
  - Cough with blood
  - Fever (38C or greater ) with any of the following:
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (recent onset)
    - Persistent coughing
    - Persistent diarrhea
    - Persistent vomiting
    - Headache
    - Confusion (recent onset)
    - Skin rash
    - Bruising or bleeding (without previous injury)

## Airport Operations Centre

When notified by Captain, Duty Manager liaises with Quarantine Officer (QO)

Does aircraft come to gate?

May need to collect QO to go to aircraft

Informs:

- Emergency Medical Services (ambulance)

- Fire and Rescue Service

- Police

- Canada Border Services Agency (Immigration and Customs)

QO is Incident Commander until Assessment complete

## Quarantine Officers

QOs are Registered Nurses with university degrees

Medical Officers are also QOs

For ONE or a FEW travellers, aircraft will come to gate

QO will be first to board and **assess** the traveller

- Travel history

- Symptoms – onset, etc,

- Signs of illness – temperature, pulse rate, respiratory rate

QO does not diagnose

## Quarantine Officers

QO may seek advice of QMO on call

Choices:

Unconditional release – no CD of significant risk

CD present but not significant – recommend medical exam as soon as convenient or if urgent transfer to Hospital

CD but of low risk – Order to Report to Public Health

CD suspected – order to undergo Medical Examination – voluntary but under Quarantine authority until diagnosis allows release

## Numerous Travellers

Depending on number and circumstances:

Aircraft may be held away from gate to allow assessment of many travellers without disrupting other terminal operations for a significant CD but if there is no potential need for more than a few hours (<12) isolation

QO would call for other QOs to assist in the assessments

## Numerous Travellers

Where the aircraft and travellers are likely to be held in isolation for >12 hours

Airport Authority will seek to accommodate:

In Toronto at present an empty hanger might be available and the National Emergency Supplies System of PHAC could provide a Quarantine Facility – cots, blankets etc

There is an Infield Terminal building that was used whiel the new terminal Pier was built and that might be designated a Quarantine Facility by the Minister of Health

## AFTER ASSESSMENT

Unconditional release – the traveller is not deemed to have a significant CD and can proceed on journey

Low Risk – if traveller has a questionable illness – perhaps a history of TB – they may be allowed to carry on to the destination with recommendation to see own doctor

OR they may be ordered to go to a Public Health clinic and given a deadline. This allows OQS to have a peace officer take the person to a Clinic if failure to attend

## AFTER ASSESSMENT

### Medical Examination

This takes place at a nearby Clinic or Hospital and includes all diagnostic tests to confirm or eliminate the diagnosis of significant CD

If the traveller is non-compliant, QO can issue a Detention Order and a peace officer accompanies traveller to the medical examination and may provide security to ensure treatment

## OTHER MEASURES

The Minister of Health may determine that a class of persons could pose a risk and refuse entry (for example, travellers from a country with an epidemic)

Through Transport Canada, an aircraft may be diverted from an international airport without a Quarantine Station to an airport where assessments may be more readily conducted



# Questions?



**Thank you**