



Organización de Aviación Civil Internacional

Oficina Regional Sudamericana

**Séptima Reunión del Grupo Estratégico de la Región Sudamericana
sobre la Respuesta al COVID-19**

(Plataforma Zoom, 21 de julio de 2021)

GESAM7 - WP/05

15-07-2021

Agenda ítem 5: Aspects of Harmonization of measures in the aviation system in response to COVID-19 to raise to the Virtual Meeting of Directors General of Civil Aviation of the SAM Region

IMPACT OF OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON AIR TRANSPORT RECOVERY

(Presented by Airports Council International Latin America and the Caribbean ACI-LAC)

ABSTRACT

This note expresses ACI-LAC's concern about the operational restrictions imposed by several countries in the region as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the negative impact they have on the recovery of air transport. ACI-LAC points out that these restrictions are not necessary since the protocols and recommendations of ICAO and other international organizations recommend the need for these measures to be flexible and to respond to the conditions of risk and risk tolerance in order to allow the recovery of the sector.

Recommended Actions: ACI-LAC recommends that the countries of the region consider the recommendations of international organizations before imposing operational restrictions..

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, airports in our region have implemented all the protocols and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), Airports Council International (ACI) and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States (CDC) and Europe (ECDC), in order to provide a safe airport environment for air transport workers and users

1.2 In fact, the airports in our region were among the first in the world to obtain ACI Airport Health Accreditation (AHA), which evaluates the degree of adequacy of their health measures against the guidelines of the document "Take-off: Guidelines for air travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis" of the ICAO Council's Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART).

1.3 However, capacity restrictions implemented in some countries of the region continue to be a limiting factor for the recovery of the sector. Measures such as limiting the number of operations per hour or number of passengers per day limit supply and hinder the recovery of air transport.

1.4 Similarly, some countries have imposed limitations on the increase of air operations to ensure physical distance between passengers within airport terminals. This has led to situations where, while airlines are willing to increase air operations due to increased demand, the authorities do not allow this because of the difficulty of maintaining physical distance between passengers due to the increased traffic resulting from these additional air operations.

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 The recommendations included in the CART document mentioned above, as well as the other international bodies also mentioned, clearly state that these physical distancing measures should be applied as far as possible, and when this distancing cannot be guaranteed, appropriate risk-based measures should be used. In addition, distancing standards should be re-evaluated when epidemiological conditions permit..

2.2 In particular, the CART document mentions that measures should be as uniform and harmonized as feasible, but at the same time flexible enough to respond to the risk conditions and risk tolerance of each region or situation. The acceptance of equivalent measures based on shared principles and internationally recognized criteria will be a key enabler for the restoration of global air services.

2.3 In addition, if physical distancing is not feasible, the CART document mentions that appropriate measures should be taken according to the risk, such as, for example, in the shipping processes.

2.4 The CART document also notes that the physical distancing measures to be applied at airports should:

- a) At least consistent with what is applied for other transport modes, particularly in urban public transport used for access to and from Airports.
- b) Applied to the greatest extent possible throughout the airport.
- c) Re-evaluated as epidemiological conditions permit.

2.5 The multiple checkpoints along the different airport processes allow to constantly check the compliance with the protocols implemented to combat the transmission of COVID-19. This makes air transport one of the safest activities in the context of the global health crisis.

2.6 From ACI-LAC we extend our concern and request support to the States of the region to eliminate measures such as border closures or the imposition of operational limitations on air transport, mainly because there is no direct relationship between these measures and the evolution of the pandemic.

2.7 The airline industry in our region is fundamental for economic and social development. Experience in our region and around the world shows that there is a clear desire to travel; therefore, it is essential to maintain connectivity between countries and domestically.

2.8 The recovery of the sector needs the fundamental support of governments, driving initiatives such as the implementation of internationally recognized digital (and paper) certificates for the submission of negative tests and vaccination guidelines, as well as the urgent harmonization of the different measures to support the recovery of the aviation industry.

3. **SUGGESTED ACTIONS**

3.1 We invite GESAM to:

- a. Consider the recommendations of the ICAO through its CART document " Take-off: Guidelines for air travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis " as well as those of other international organizations when implementing operational restrictions..
- b. Promote initiatives such as the implementation of digital (and paper) certificates for the presentation of negative tests and vaccination guidelines.
- c. Harmonizing the different measures amongst all countries for the recovery of the aviation industry.

