



ICAO recommendations on COVID-19 risk management for international air travel

For immediate release

Montréal, 18 January 2023 – ICAO has issued reinforced recommendations for countries on risk management and the introduction of COVID-19 related national air travel requirements.

Issued in a [new ICAO bulletin](#) from its Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation, or 'CAPSCA' programme, the guidance is designed to help countries maintain air connectivity while taking prudent and evidence-based measures to mitigate ongoing risks of SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

“This new ICAO bulletin clearly emphasizes that as more States lift their COVID-19 related cross-border restrictions for air travellers, it is important for increased air travel connectivity and improved facilitation everywhere that pandemic related restrictions should only be introduced and maintained based on evidence-based risk management, and following World Health Organization (WHO) and ICAO recommendations and guidance,” commented ICAO Secretary General Juan Carlos Salazar. “This approach contributes to enhanced travel, tourism, trade and economies.”

The CAPSCA recommendations begin with the principles countries should consider before introducing air travel requirements and related mitigations.

“A need for regular, thorough risk assessments, based on evidence and comparable indicators is noted in this bulletin, in addition to assessing applicable public health resources in both the departure and destination States, assuring good communication among the diverse stakeholders involved, and balancing the public health risk with the need for continuation of services,” stressed ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano. “All of these priorities were highlighted by the ICAO Council’s CART recommendation’s which helped aviation recover from the pandemic, and the principles remain just as relevant today as we face these new variants.”

Additional recommendations are provided on how countries can mitigate COVID-19 risks in aviation, including through increased global vaccination.

The guidance also reviews the current COVID-19 variants circulating globally, provides suggestions on maintaining open borders and assuring the recognition of air crew and other key civil aviation professionals as essential workers, and explores the considerations to be assessed by countries when deciding whether to implement testing strategies.

“Our work through the CAPSCA collaboration is importantly and closely supported by the WHO,” Secretary General Salazar added, “and these recommendations have taken into account the many factors national governments now need to consider in terms of air travel health measures.”

The diverse factors noted in the recommendations include among others the current wide geographical variation of circulating SARS-CoV-2 variants and vaccination levels, other respiratory pathogens posing risks, evolving COVID-19 case and fatality numbers country by country, and the capacities of public health systems to manage new COVID outbreaks in addition to their regular workload.



Resources for Editors

[ICAO's COVID-19 portal](#)

[ICAO's Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation \(CAPSCA\)](#)

About ICAO

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a United Nations agency which helps 193 countries to cooperate together and share their skies to their mutual benefit.

Since it was established in 1944, ICAO's support and coordination has helped countries to diplomatically and technically realize a uniquely rapid and dependable network of global air mobility, connecting families, cultures, and businesses all over the world, and promoting sustainable growth and socio-economic prosperity wherever aircraft fly.

As it enters a new era of digitization, and of incredible new flight and propulsion innovations, air transport is relying more than ever on ICAO's expert support and technical and diplomatic guidance to help chart a new and exciting future for international flight. ICAO is innovating itself to answer this call, and expanding its partnerships among UN and technical stakeholders to deliver a strategic global vision and effective, sustainable solutions.

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