



## COVID-19: 2019 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (2019-NCOV) IMPLICATIONS & BEST PRACTICES FOR BUSINESS AVIATION

By the end of December 2019 a new virus epidemic was reported in central China, originating in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province.

The disease is caused by a novel virus of the Coronavirus family, and was officially named Covid-19 by the World Health Organization on 11 February, 2020.

This document outlines MedAire's guidance to those in business and general aviation.

### AREAS WITH WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION?

The CDC has a publicly available Geographic Risk Assessment for COVID-19 Transmission.

Visit the site to view risk assessment by country and for the latest information about countries with widespread sustained transmission.

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers)

### HOW DOES COVID-19 (2019-NCOV) SPREAD?

Transmission is believed to occur via two methods:

**Environment-to-human:** Information suggests that the novel coronavirus is zoonotic (transmitted from an animal source to humans).

The initial cluster of cases appears to have a common source of exposure - a seafood and animal market in Wuhan, China.

**Human-to-human:** Transmission occurs from a sick person infected with Covid-19 to others who are in close contact.

In general, coronaviruses spread through infected respiratory droplets, just like other respiratory infections, including colds and influenza.

A sick person expels these droplets when they cough, sneeze, or talk.

Others can get the disease via contact (direct or indirect) with these contaminated droplets, via inhalation or by touching their face.

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# CONTAINMENT STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTION & MITIGATION

## HOW CAN I IDENTIFY IF SOMEONE HAS A CONTAGIOUS DISEASE LIKE COVID-19?

The identification process, as recommended by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) - and aligned with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) - is as follows:

A case 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 coughing
- ▶ Impaired breathing
- ▶ Persistent diarrhoea
- ▶ Persistent vomiting
- ▶ Skin rash
- ▶ Bruising or bleeding without previous injury
- ▶ Confusion of recent onset

In addition, the following questions may be asked:

- ▶ Are they in - or have they visited - an area with widespread community transmission within the past 14 days?
- ▶ Have they had close contact with a person under investigation for Covid-19 / n-CoV?

## WHAT IF I SUSPECT SOMEONE ON MY AIRCRAFT IS ILL?

### PRE-FLIGHT

MedAire usually recommends against allowing anyone with active signs of a contagious disease to fly, regardless of the cause.

However, the approach can vary significantly depending on the medical profile of the country of departure, the clinical situation, and the medical resources available (medication and equipment).

MedAire clients are encouraged to call for a pre-flight fitness-to-fly assessment if they have concerns about their - or others' - symptoms.

### IN-FLIGHT

MedAire urges clients to call MedAire's MedLink service for help assessing the medical situation on board.

MedAire's medical team is well experienced in handling these situations and providing recommendations aligned with best practices and the specific medical situation for that specific passenger.



## IN-FLIGHT MITIGATION CHECKLIST

- If the ill person is coughing, provide tissues. Request the tissues be used to cover their mouth and nose when they are speaking, sneezing and coughing.
- Provide an airsickness bag for the safe disposal of the tissues.
- Advise the ill person to practice proper hand hygiene - washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water must be used.
- Ask the ill person to wear a surgical mask. As soon as it becomes damp, provide a replacement mask.
- Dispose used masks safely in a biohazard bag or equivalent.
- Practice proper hand hygiene immediately after handling the mask.
- If the mask is refused, the crewmember(s) or any person in close contact (less than 1 meter) with the ill person should wear a mask.
- Try to limit the person's interaction with others on board.
- Leave a space of two meters (6 feet) between the ill person and all others on board. If this is not possible, provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to anyone within the vicinity.
- Anyone attending the ill person should wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) found in the Universal Precaution Kit (UPK) onboard the aircraft if they will be touching the ill person, their mask, or clothes and/or if there is a risk of direct contact with body fluids.
- If there is more than one lavatory on board, restrict one for the exclusive use of the ill person. If there is only one lavatory on board, thoroughly clean the surfaces after each use by the ill person. Use PPE when cleaning the lavatory.

### DISINFECTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ As of 07 February 2020, there are no specific recommendations in regards to n-CoV disinfectant.
- ▶ Most disinfectants labelled as germicides are deemed to be effective against this virus when used in recommended concentrations and contact time. Bleach-based products could be corrosive and should be avoided.
- ▶ You may also contact the aircraft manufacturer's customer support for the cleaning and disinfection products they recommend.

### DISPOSING OF BIOHAZARD MATERIAL

- ▶ Any contaminated material should be disposed into the biohazard bags.
- ▶ Biohazard disposal bags are included in the UPKs and are often red in colour.
- ▶ Follow airport-specific procedures at destination for the handling of the materials upon arrival.

### NOTIFICATION OF AUTHORITIES

- ▶ The Captain is required to report the suspected case(s) to air traffic control.
- ▶ Advise the destination station that specific cleaning and disinfection procedures may be required by local public health authorities.
- ▶ Some airports are requiring automatic reporting about the presence or absence of any suspected case prior to landing, for flights and/or connecting passengers originating from areas with widespread community transmission.



## BEST PRACTICES FOR CREW: **PREVENTION & MITIGATION**

### **I WAS RECENTLY IN AN AREA WITH WIDESPREAD COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION. AM I SICK?**

Crew and travellers should self-monitor their health for 14 days:

- ▶ Take temperature twice daily for fever 38°C (100.4°F) or higher, and watch for cough or difficulty breathing.
- ▶ Report any of the above signs or symptoms to your employer.
- ▶ Call doctor or local health department for advice.
- ▶ Notify local health department and authorities if above symptoms occur **and** there was travel to an area with widespread community transmission **or** there was potential exposure to a person suspected of being infected with Covid-19.

### **SHOULD MASKS BE WORN AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE BY NON-ILL PEOPLE?**

Face masks are not recommended for healthy people as protection from respiratory viruses, including 2019-nCoV/ Covid-19.

Coronaviruses spread through infected respiratory droplets, just like other respiratory infections, including colds and influenza. A sick person expels these droplets when they cough, sneeze, or talk.

Ill people should wear face masks to protect others from the risk of getting infected. Masks should be for those who are ill or have close contact with those who are ill and healthcare workers.

### **THE USE OF FACE MASKS**

A facemask should be used by people who have been exposed to 2019-nCoV and are showing symptoms of 2019 novel coronavirus.

### **INFLIGHT CONSIDERATIONS: CLOSE QUARTERS**

Surgical masks should be offered to anyone on board that is coughing or sneezing.

Anyone in direct contact with a suspected case should also don a mask and additional personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed.

PPE is usually available in the UPKs and other on-board medical kits.

When considering the appropriate number of surgical masks to have available on a flight, consider the number of flight crew on board, the number of passengers, and the duration of the flight.

### **WHAT MASKS TO HAVE ON BOARD?**

Surgical masks are usually protective enough for the affected person onboard.

Surgical masks should also be worn by the person attending the ill passenger and anyone in close proximity (within 2 meters/ 6 feet).

N95 Masks are meant for the trained medical professional. They must be fitted properly for maximum protection.

For crew and passengers on board, surgical masks should suffice if needed.



## PREVENTION

- ▶ MAINTAIN GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE
- ▶ WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY AND CARRY HAND SANITIZER
- ▶ AVOID TOUCHING YOUR FACE
- ▶ AVOID DIRECT CONTACT WITH ANIMALS & THEIR ENVIRONMENT
- ▶ ENSURE FOOD, INCLUDING EGGS, ARE THOROUGHLY COOKED
- ▶ KEEP AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE SICK
- ▶ DO NOT TRAVEL IF YOU ARE ILL

### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

MedAire is continuously monitoring developments and providing travel safety information to clients via the **MedAire Portal**.

MedAire Members can access the latest information about medical and travel safety events in the areas where they operate - and have updates delivered directly to their inbox.

Resources are also available on the MedAire website. Visit [www.MedAire.com/coronavirus](http://www.MedAire.com/coronavirus) to see webinars, panel discussions, and download an informative pocket guide.

In addition, the following sources provide reliable information about the latest developments:

- ▶ World Health Organization
- ▶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Managing Ill Passengers/ Crew
- ▶ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Novel Coronavirus
- ▶ IATA: Air Transport & Communicable Diseases

### HOW CAN MEDAIRE SUPPORT MY OPERATIONS?

MedAire provides a number of services to support operators with mitigating their exposure to infectious disease.

#### 24/7 MEDICAL ADVICE & ASSISTANCE

MedAire Members may call for medical advice and assistance 24/7.

Members are encouraged to call and speak with a medical professional if they are concerned about their fitness to fly.

In addition, should they become ill while on travel, they can call MedAire for an initial assessment of their symptoms, and be referred to a quality medical facility if an in-person visit is recommended.

#### ONBOARD MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

MedAire provides a variety of medical kits for your aircraft.

MedAire's UPK (Universal Precaution Kit) equips crewmembers and passengers with the necessary equipment to protect themselves from exposure to communicable diseases.

#### TRAINING ON PROPER PPE TECHNIQUE

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) - and how to properly don and doff the equipment - is featured in MedAire's Management of Inflight Illness & Injury training.

All crew and those who fly with the aircraft are encouraged to participate in the training.

