SAFO

Safety Alert for Operators

SAFO 20003
DATE: 3/12/20

Flight Standards Service
Washington, DC

**U.S. Department
of Transportation**

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

http://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo

A SAFO contains important safety information and may include recommended action. SAFO content should be especially valuable to air carriers in meeting their statutory duty to provide service with the highest possible degree of safety in the public interest. Besides the specific action recommended in a SAFO, an alternative action may be as effective in addressing the safety issue named in the SAFO.

Subject: COVID-19: Interim Health Guidance for Air Carriers and Crews.

Purpose: This SAFO cancels and replaces SAFO 20001 and provides interim health guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for Air Carriers and Crewmembers regarding COVID-19. The CDC and FAA are providing this health guidance for air carriers and crews to protect crewmembers from exposure and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 onboard aircraft or through air travel.

Background: The CDC is responding to an outbreak of respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and which has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally, including the United States. Air carriers and crews conducting flight operations that have a nexus to affected countries, as identified by the CDC, including the United States, should be particularly aware of potential exposure and follow the associated CDC and FAA health guidance.

Discussion: On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the outbreak of COVID-19 constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), and, on March 11, 2020, WHO characterized the outbreak of COVID-19 as a pandemic. The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has declared that COVID-19 constitutes a public health emergency.

Although CDC publishes information on COVID-19 transmission internationally and domestically within the United States, because of the rapidly changing situation, this information cannot be relied on to accurately judge the risk to crewmembers in any given location. Therefore, FAA and CDC recommend that air carriers and crewmembers take precautions to avoid exposure to COVID-19 and to ensure crewmembers do not work while symptomatic, regardless of crewmembers' places of residence or flight itineraries. The strength of the global aviation system depends upon the health of air crewmembers.

Recommended Action: All U.S.-based air carriers and crewmembers and non-U.S.-based crewmembers on flights with a U.S. nexus should use the CDC and FAA health guidance in the attached appendix regarding practices for limiting the spread of COVID-19.
Air carriers should also review the CDC guidance for airlines and aircrew:
https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/ncov-airlines.html

Contact: Questions or comments regarding this SAFO should be directed to the FAA Washington Operations Center, 202-267-3333.

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APPENDIX

COVID-19: Interim Health Guidance from the Federal Aviation Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Air Carriers and Crews

Guidance for Flight and Cabin Crews on Passenger or Cargo Flights

Crew members who are on layovers internationally or in the United States should stay in their hotel rooms to the extent possible, limit their activities in public, and practice social distancing. Social distancing means avoiding crowded places, not going to mass gatherings, and, generally staying about 6 feet (2 meters) from others, when possible. This recommendation is made because COVID-19 is spreading in many countries around the world and also in the United States.

Crew members should also pay attention to their health at all times and remain in communication with their employer's occupational health program. If they develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, crew members should immediately self-isolate and be excluded from work on flights until cleared by public health authorities. Crew members with high-risk exposures to COVID-19 (defined as exposure to a sick household member or intimate partner, or providing care in a household to a person with a confirmed case of COVID-19) may also need to be excluded from work until no longer at risk for becoming infectious.

U.S.-based crews

While on a layover in the United States or internationally:
- Travel as a group in private transport provided by the air carrier when traveling between the airport and hotel.
  - Minimize contact with ground personnel and time in public areas while moving between the aircraft and the private transport.
  - Do not use public transportation, including when traveling between the airport and hotel.
- Stay in your hotel room to the extent possible.
- Minimize going out into the general population and use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) whenever out in public. Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people.
- Eat in your hotel room with either room service or delivery service. If in-room dining options are not available, eat at a restaurant located in the hotel. If not available at the hotel, eat at a restaurant located close to the hotel.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Use soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your face.

While at your U.S. residence or home base:
- Be aware of the risk of COVID-19 in your local community.
- Follow guidance of your state or local health department.
- Avoid crowded places and use social distancing.
- Avoid contact with sick people.

- If you become sick, or have had a high-risk exposure to COVID-19, follow the guidance applicable to those situations in the *Monitor your health before, during, and after travel* section of this document, below.

Monitor your health before, during, and after travel:
- Know how to contact the state or local health department for your residence.
- Monitor your health condition, following the guidance provided by your employer's occupational health program.
  - During periods when you are working, take your temperature twice a day (morning and evening). Monitor yourself for fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
    - Fever means feeling feverish OR having a measured temperature of 100.4 degrees F (38 degrees C) or higher.
  - At all other times, pay attention to your health. If you feel feverish or develop a cough or difficulty breathing, take your temperature.
  - Your employer's occupational health program also is recommended to check in with you periodically to make sure you are well.
- If you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing:
  - Stay home or in your hotel room and avoid contact with others.
  - Immediately report your symptoms to your employer's occupational health program.
    - Seek occupational health clearance before working your next flight segment. You or your employer's occupational health program should also get clearance from public health officials before you return to work.
  - If symptoms occur during flight, separate yourself from others following CDC's guidance, to the extent possible.
  - If you are at your residence, call your state or local health department or a doctor for medical advice before seeking care. Tell them your symptoms and that you work as a crewmember for an air carrier.
  - If you are in the United States, your employer's occupational health program should notify the state or local health department where you are located at the time. If you are at an international location, your employer should notify the public health authority for that location and help you get health care, as needed.
  - Your employer should also notify CDC if you worked one or more flight segments while symptomatic.
  - If you are sick, do not travel via jump seat, deadheading, or as a regular passenger.
  - Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizers.
- Notify your employer's occupational health program if you have a high-risk exposure to COVID-19, for example, if a member of your household is sick with COVID-19.

Your employer's occupational health program may choose to exceed these recommendations based on their own policies.

Crews based in other countries

While on a layover in the United States:
- Travel as a group in private transport provided by the air carrier when traveling between the airport and hotel.

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- o Minimize contact with ground personnel and time in public areas while moving between the aircraft and the private transport.
  - o Do not use public transportation, including when traveling between the airport and hotel.
- Stay in your hotel to the extent possible.
- Minimize going out into the general population and use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) whenever out in public. Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people.
- Eat in your hotel room with either room service or delivery service. If in-room dining options are not available, eat at a restaurant located in the hotel. If not available at the hotel, eat at a restaurant located close to the hotel.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Use soap and water when your hands are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your face.

Monitor your health while on flights with a U.S. nexus or during layovers in the United States:
- Monitor your health condition, following the guidance provided by your employer's occupational health program.
  - o Take your temperature twice a day (morning and evening). Monitor yourself for fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
    - ▪ Fever means feeling feverish OR having a measured temperature of 100.4 degrees F (38 degrees C) or higher.
  - o Your employer's occupational health program also is recommended to check in with you periodically to make sure you are well.
- If you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing:
  - o Stay in your hotel room and avoid contact with others.
  - o Immediately report your symptoms to your employer's occupational health program.
    - ▪ Seek occupational health clearance before working your next flight segment. Your employer's occupational health program should also get clearance from public health officials before you return to work.
  - o If symptoms occur during flight, separate yourself from others following CDC's guidance, to the extent possible.
  - o Your employer's occupational health program should notify the state or local health department where you are located and help you get health care, as needed. Your employer should also notify CDC.
  - o If you are sick, do not travel via jump seat, deadheading, or as a regular passenger.
  - o Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizers.

Your employer's occupational health program may choose to exceed these recommendations based on their own policies. Also follow instructions from public health authorities in your country of residence.

Guidance for U.S. Air Carriers

Regardless of residence or travel history, crewmembers who have known exposure to persons with COVID-19 should be assessed and managed on a case-by-case basis. Crewmembers with high-risk exposures may need to be excluded from work.

Housing flight and cabin crews on layovers (in the United States or internationally):
- Arrange to move crewmembers as a group between the airport and the hotel aboard private ground transport that has been sanitized in advance. Advise your crews to avoid public transport unless it is an emergency.
- Arrange to house flight crews in hotels that are in close proximity to the airport. Ensure that the hotel rooms are sanitized in advance of the crews' arrival.
- Provide crew with at least a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Encourage crews to:
  - Avoid contact with sick people
  - Stay in their hotel rooms to the extent possible
  - Minimize going out into the general population
  - Use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) whenever out in public
  - Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people
  - Eat in their hotel rooms with either room service or delivery service. If in-room dining options are not available, they should eat at a restaurant located in the hotel. If not available at the hotel, they should eat at a restaurant located close to the hotel.
- Crewmembers may commute to their residence when they return to their home bases.

Supervising self-monitoring of flight and cabin crews:
- Develop a plan in the event a crewmember becomes symptomatic during an overnight layover.
  - Know how to contact public health authorities in locations where crew remain overnight.
    - Contact information for U.S. state and local health departments for COVID-19 is available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Phone-Numbers_State-and-Local-Health-Departments.pdf.
  - Provide information to crewmembers regarding medical facilities in the vicinity of cities in which crewmembers remain overnight.
- Develop a plan in the event a crewmember becomes symptomatic while in the crewmember's lodging or personal residence.
  - Ensure crewmembers know how to contact their state or local health department.
  - Advise crewmembers to notify their state or local health department if they become symptomatic, in addition to reporting to the employer's occupational health program.
- Crewmembers may continue to work flight segments as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Supervise crewmembers self-monitoring of their health condition through the air carrier's occupational health program.
  - Direct crewmembers to take their temperature twice daily during periods when they are working.

- Consider providing crewmembers with thermometers.
    - Remind crewmembers to immediately report a fever, cough, or any difficulty breathing.
    - Check in with crewmembers periodically to make sure they continue to self-monitor and are not symptomatic.
    - Ensure crewmembers are asymptomatic before they board a flight.
- Crewmembers who are symptomatic with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should not work subsequent flight segments until they have been cleared by occupational health and public health officials.
    - Notify the state or local health department where the crewmember is located at the time (if the crewmember is located in the United States). If the crewmember is in an international location, notify the public health authority for that location.
    - Immediately report to CDC any crewmember who has a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, or other flu-like symptoms or is diagnosed with COVID-19 if the crew member worked one or more flight segments while symptomatic. Additionally, consult with CDC if a crewmember is identified to have a high-risk exposure to COVID-19, such as a sick household member with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19.
        - Contact CDC by calling the CDC quarantine station with jurisdiction for the airport where the crewmember is located or by calling the CDC Emergency Operations Center at 770-488-7100.
        - CDC can also assist in contacting state or local health departments or foreign public health authorities, if needed.

The U.S. air carrier occupational health program may choose to exceed these recommendations based on their own policies.

Guidance for Foreign Air carriers Operating in the United States

Housing flight and cabin crews on layovers in the United States:
- Arrange to move crewmembers as a group between the airport and the hotel aboard private ground transport that has been sanitized in advance. Advise your crews to avoid public transport unless it is an emergency.
- Arrange to house flight crews in hotels that are in close proximity to the airport. Ensure that the hotel rooms are sanitized in advance of the crews' arrival.
- Encourage crews to:
    - Avoid contact with sick people
    - Stay in their hotel rooms to the extent possible
    - Minimize going out into the general population
    - Use social distancing (maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet, if possible) whenever out in public
    - Avoid crowds, stores, sporting or mass entertainment events, and other situations likely to attract large numbers of people
    - Eat within their hotel rooms with either room service or delivery service. If in-room dining options aren't available, they should eat at a restaurant located in the hotel. If not available at the hotel, they should eat at a restaurant located close to the hotel.

Supervising self-monitoring of flight and cabin crews on flights with a U.S. nexus and during layovers in the United States:

- Establish contact with U.S. state or local health departments responsible for airports at which the airline operates.
    - Contact information for U.S. state and local health departments for COVID-19 is available at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/Phone-Numbers_State-and-Local-Health-Departments.pdf.
    - The CDC quarantine station responsible for the airport can also help establish contact with the health department.
    - Follow any instructions of the health department for what to do if any of your crewmembers become sick while on a layover at that airport.
- Crewmembers may continue to work flight segments with a U.S. nexus as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Supervise crewmembers self-monitoring of their health condition through the air carrier's occupational health program.
    - Direct crewmembers to take their temperature twice daily.
    - Remind crewmembers to immediately report a fever, cough, or any difficulty breathing.
    - Check in with crewmembers periodically to make sure they continue to self-monitor and are not symptomatic.
    - Ensure crewmembers are asymptomatic before they board a flight with a U.S. nexus.
- Crewmembers who are symptomatic with fever, cough or difficulty breathing should not work subsequent flight segments until they have been cleared by occupational health and public health officials.
    - Immediately notify the state or local health department responsible for the airport and CDC.
        - Contact CDC by calling the CDC quarantine station responsible for the airport or you can call the CDC Emergency Operations Center at 770-488-7100.
        - CDC can also assist in contacting the state or local health department, if needed.

The foreign air carrier occupational health program may choose to exceed these recommendations based on their own policies.