

COVID-19 Guidance for the Canadian Aviation Industry

Background

1. The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is the lead Federal agency responsible for coordinating efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Transport Canada (TC) has collaborated with PHAC to provide the Canadian aviation industry with guidance to protect crew members when operating in areas with known or suspected community transmission of COVID-19. Refer to:
 - a. travel.gc.ca for countries with a Travel Advisory of Level 2 or higher; and,
 - b. [World Health Organization website](https://www.who.int) for a country's "transmission classification" in Table 1 of the most recent Situation Report.
3. This guide should be used in conjunction with [direction on COVID-19 from PHAC](#) and other public health authorities.

Guidance for Operators

4. Operators should regularly check these websites for updates on COVID-19: travel.gc.ca, the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](https://www.who.int), the [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](https://www.iata.org), and [PHAC](#).
5. Operators should develop guidance for COVID-19 prevention consistent with [PHAC recommendations](#), including hand hygiene, social distancing, and cough/sneeze etiquette.
6. Operators should ensure that their Hazard Prevention Program (required under the Canada Labour Code Part II) has been updated with the participation of the Policy or Workplace Health and Safety Committee or Representative. Updates should include the known hazards related to COVID-19 and that control measures are included to protect their employees from this virus, include mental health considerations. Employees must be trained in these measures. The Labour Program has posted [guidance for stakeholders](#).
7. Operators should develop guidance for COVID-19 passenger screening that complies with the Interim Orders for persons boarding flights [to Canada](#) and [within Canada](#).
8. Operators should ensure that crews and aircraft are well-provisioned with supplies such as: [hand sanitizer](#), [hard-surface disinfectants](#), disposable gloves, facial tissues, garbage bags, and surgical face masks for use and distribution, as necessary, by crew members.
9. Operators should ensure that aircraft lavatories are well-provisioned with potable water (where possible), soap, and paper towels to enable frequent handwashing by passengers and crew members.
10. Operators should develop guidance for spacing passengers aboard aircraft when possible to optimize social distancing.
11. Operators without the expertise, trained crews, and equipment necessary for Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) should not accept requests for MEDEVAC of ill patients known or suspected to have COVID-19.
12. Operators should avoid planning long stopovers or layovers in areas with known or suspected community transmission of COVID-19.
13. Operators should clearly assign tasks and cabin areas of responsibility for crew members in direct contact with passengers. This will allow easier contact tracing if a crew member or passenger becomes ill.

14. Operators should limit non-essential tasks that would require crew members to be in direct contact with passengers
15. Operators should provide detailed instructions on proper cleaning of [high-touch surfaces](#) aboard aircraft and the disposal of potentially contaminated items.
16. Operators should arrange local transport for crew members to hotels that avoids large groups, crowded areas, and public transit.
17. Operators should facilitate crew member feeding that avoids crowded restaurants, such as by using room service.
18. Operators should develop clear procedures for crew members who feel unwell, whether prior to or during a duty period.

Guidance for Crew Members

19. All crew members should continue to self-monitor and not report for duty if unwell in any way.
20. Crew members should regularly check these websites for updates on COVID-19: [travel.gc.ca](#), the [WHO](#), [IATA](#), and [PHAC](#)
21. Crew members should remain up to date on [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#) (commonly fever, cough, difficulty breathing).
22. Crew members should follow operator guidance for COVID-19 prevention, including proper hand hygiene, social distancing, and cough/sneeze etiquette.
23. Crew members should limit contact with local workers, crowded areas, and public transit.
24. Crew members should limit access to the aircraft by local ground workers to essential tasks only.
25. Crew members who become ill with symptoms associated with COVID-19 or who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the directions of the public health authority. Crew members should immediately advise the operator so that appropriate steps to prevent further spread can be taken.
26. This situation may be stressful and affect mental health. Crew members should check with their operator to see what mental health resources are available. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has posted a [COVID-19 Resource](#) that may also be helpful.

Managing Ill Persons Aboard an Aircraft

27. During a flight, crew members should be prepared to manage ill passengers or crew members.
28. The ill person should be given a surgical face mask to prevent the spread of droplets.
29. If a surgical face mask is not available or not tolerated, the ill person should be instructed to cough/sneeze into their elbow or a facial tissue.
30. The ill person should remain seated as much as possible to prevent droplet spread above seat height.
31. Crew members should determine whether the ill person should be moved:
 - a. For short or full flights or when there are travel companions (e.g. family members) seated with the ill person, it may be best to leave the ill person seated where they are to minimize movement through the aircraft
 - b. For long flights with extra seating capacity, it may be worthwhile to move the ill person to the rear row window seat, for air circulation purposes. Except for travelling companions, consider moving passengers out of the two rows ahead of the ill person.
32. Ideally, one designated crew member should provide in-flight service to the ill person and their travelling companions.

33. If the ill person uses a lavatory, the designated crew member should immediately disinfect high touch hard surfaces in the used lavatory.
34. The designated crew member should wash hands or use hand sanitizer after each interaction with the ill person.
35. Upon landing, the ill person should be transferred to emergency health services in accordance with direction from public health authorities after the other passengers have disembarked.
36. Out of an abundance of caution, the designated crew member should be provided with an opportunity to change clothing before returning to duty. Used clothing should be washed in a regular hot water laundry cycle and may be laundered with other clothing.

KEY POINTS

- Regularly check these websites for updates on COVID-19: travel.gc.ca, the [WHO](https://www.who.int), [IATA](https://www.iata.org), and [PHAC](https://www.phac.gc.ca).
- Limit contact with local workers, crowded areas, and public transit
- Follow operator guidance on hand hygiene, social distancing, and cough/sneeze etiquette
- [Self-monitor](#) and do not report for duty if unwell in any way
- This situation may be stressful and affect mental health. Check with your Operator to see what resources are available. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has posted a [COVID-19 Resource](#) that may also be helpful.