



## Advice on managing the health risks from COVID-19 on international flights

### What is Australia doing?

Air travellers must quarantine in designated accommodation for 14 days after entering Australia. Travellers may also be subject to health screening at the airport.

Entry restrictions apply to all foreign travellers, except New Zealand citizens living in Australia.

The 'COVID-19 information for international travellers' fact sheet is given to everyone arriving at international airports.

More information is available at the arrival halls of every Australian airport. This information explains the symptoms of COVID-19 and encourages travellers to report to biosecurity officers if they have symptoms.

Staff will assess sick travellers on aircraft using the 'Traveller with Illness Checklist'. This checklist includes questions to screen for COVID-19.

The Australian Government is also working with the airlines to support crew members travelling to and from international destinations. Crew are advised to:

- take particular care on layovers
- use dedicated private transport
- avoid crowded public spaces
- practise good hygiene
- use personal protective equipment (PPE) when needed
- monitor for symptoms
- not to fly if they have any symptoms of a respiratory illness.

### How can we reduce the risk to passengers and crew?

The risk to passengers and crew is influenced by the COVID-19 situation in the departure country and other countries where passengers have recently travelled. This includes the prevalence of cases, the presence of community transmission and geographical spread of cases.

Crew should follow their existing infection prevention work instructions when in contact with sick passengers. This includes using personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves when recommended.

### Steps to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 while on board

#### *Hygiene*

- Encourage crew and passengers to practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene by:

- Washing hands often with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand rub before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, disposing of tissues and immediately washing hands.
- Avoiding touching their mouth, eyes and nose with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Support good hygiene with signs, reminders and appropriate facilities or hand hygiene products and waste disposal bins.

### ***Physical Distancing***

- Maintain physical distancing and measures to decrease touch and increase spacing during check in, boarding and disembarkation.
  - This could include boarding by rows or in other smaller groups of passengers.
  - Limit passengers to one small piece of hand luggage.
- Minimise contact between aircrew and passengers. For example, provide pre-packaged meals and limit meal and drink services.
- Space travellers out wherever possible and seat flight crew away from passengers for take-off and landing.
  - Use a maximum of 80 per cent capacity of a flight.
  - Leave empty seats between passengers.
  - Do not change assigned seats.
  - Seat groups together and separate non-related groups.

### ***Movement***

- Minimise movement of passengers and crew. Passengers should remain in their allocated seat unless going to the toilet.
- Crew should have a separate rest area for the use of crew only. Crew may use a designated bathroom.

### ***PPE***

- Passengers should wear a mask for the whole flight, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
  - Staff should wear a mask while interacting with passengers to reduce the risk of transmission.
- PPE should be fitted and worn properly, with training provided to crew on appropriate use.
- Crew should wear gloves when touching passenger items or other potentially contaminated items. Gloves should be removed or washed and hands washed after these activities.
- Designate an area such as the galley, as a clean area for one-way traffic. Clean PPE enters galley and moves one way looping around in a horseshoe direction to remove PPE and dispose.
- No PPE to be worn in crew area unless freshly applied and clean.
- If a crew member helps a passenger (and their close personal contacts) who is sick, the crew member should:
  - Wear a surgical mask, disposable full-length gown, gloves and eye protection.

- Remove any PPE without touching the front of mask, gown or outside of gloves to avoid self-contamination. Wash hands after removing PPE.
- Dispose of used PPE in biohazard bags and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser after tying the bag closed.
- Wear gloves to clean then disinfect surrounding surfaces with a broad spectrum disinfectant and use alcohol-based hand rub after removing gloves.

### **Aircraft setup**

- Pre-load sick bags into seats and snacks into self-help bars.
- Remove magazines from seat backs.
- Provide passengers with individual waste bags in each seat pocket as well as masks, hand sanitiser and government paperwork.

### **Cleaning**

- Airlines should arrange cleaning and disinfecting of high use areas between and during each flight, such as bathrooms. The disinfectant should be a broad spectrum disinfectant with a claim for effectiveness against norovirus infection.
- Crew should wear gloves, a disposable full-length gown and a surgical mask to clean toilets or surfaces contaminated with body fluids or used by a sick person.
- Aircrew should review guidelines and ensure enhanced infection control measures as part of normal in-flight practices.
- Consider additional training or inflight specialist support for infection control.
- Collect passenger waste at the end of meal service and place it in waste bags and store in waste carts.
- Remove any PPE without touching the front of mask, gown or outside of gloves to avoid self-contamination. Wash hands after removing PPE.
- Dispose of used PPE in biohazard bags and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser after tying the bag closed.

## **Should we conduct pre-flight screening?**

Passengers who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not fly until released from isolation by the local public health authority, if possible.

You should conduct pre-flight screening for international flights. Recommended questions and actions are in Appendix 1.

You should also continue normal processes for the assessment of health risks related to flights.

## **What should I do if a passenger or crew member becomes sick while on a flight?**

If possible, crew and sick passengers (including their close personal contacts and family members) experiencing cough, fever, sore throat, sweats or chills should:

- Maintain distance from other travellers. Keep at least one spare seat on either side of them or a window seat with a spare seat next to them. Keep the row empty if possible.
- Wear a surgical mask.
- Use an allocated toilet for sick people.

Crew members should:

- wear gloves when handling and taking items from affected passengers
- remove gloves before touching other people or any surfaces
- use alcohol-based hand sanitiser after removing gloves and contact with any people or surfaces
- use appropriate PPE if close contact with a sick passenger or their bodily fluids is required
- notify ground officials.

## For layovers at any international destination

While in transit crew should:

- Wear a surgical mask and maintain at least 1.5 metres from people when transiting through airport terminals and other crowded places.
- Proceed directly to the crew hotel on exiting the terminal.
- Avoid crowded or public places, stay at the crew hotel, including for meals.
- Practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene.
- Avoid touching mouth, eyes and nose with unwashed hands.
- Limit interactions with other crew and hotel staff and avoid unnecessary interaction with other people.
- Practise physical distancing and avoid physical contact with others.

## What are aircraft required to report?

All aircraft entering Australian territory are legally required to report sick passengers and crew on the pre-arrival report. A biosecurity officer will then meet the aircraft to screen for COVID-19 and other listed human diseases. Biosecurity officers go through the 'Traveller with Illness Checklist' with the sick passenger or crew member. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer may then issue directions for the management of a suspected case of COVID-19, which are legally required to be followed.

## Who is exempt from the mandatory 14 day quarantine requirements?

There are some exemptions for specific industry groups provided they adhere to the advice in this fact sheet. Exemptions for specific groups are granted because of the industry infection prevention requirements and training these groups have done. They support the vital air bridge between Australia and the rest of the world and ensure supply of critical services during this time.

The following industry groups are exempt from the mandatory 14 day quarantine requirements:

- All air crew (for example airline, medevac, business, air ambulance and general aviation crew), including off-shift crew who are travelling as passengers on an aircraft to reposition at another location
  - All air crew who have been on international flights, other than flights to New Zealand, must quarantine in their crew accommodation or home for 14 days after arrival, or until their next flight, whichever is shorter.

- Essential flight-related duties from a regulatory or safety perspective may be undertaken during this time. This may include flight simulation training, safety and security training.
- Medevac and air ambulance crew may request an exemption from home quarantine requirements to return to duties beyond the essential flight-related duties already exempt. A request for exemption must be made to the relevant [state or territory](#), and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

The following groups are exempt from home quarantine requirements, provided they have only been within Australia and New Zealand for the past 14 days:

- All air crew operating international flights between Australia and New Zealand.

All aircrew should:

- take care on lay overs
- use dedicated private transport
- avoid crowded public spaces
- monitor for symptoms
- not fly if they are sick.

## Other information

The Department of Health is providing information for passengers and crew on-board all aircraft into Australia and at all Australian international airports. This information explains what COVID-19 is and what to do if they have come from a risk area and are sick, or become sick. The information sheets are updated as significant developments take place and are available at [www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-resources)

## Where can I get more information?

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

Call the National Coronavirus Health Helpline on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at [www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts](http://www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts).

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.

## **Appendix 1**

### *COVID -19 screening questionnaire*

This questionnaire is to support facilities to screen for COVID-19 where an infectious case detected would be detrimental. It is designed to be adapted for local use according to risk.

#### **Questions**

1. Do you feel unwell with any cold or flu like symptoms such as runny nose, shortness of breath, cough or sore throat?
2. Do you/have you felt feverish or had a temperature in the last 14 days?
3. Have you been on a cruise ship or in close contacts with a cruise ship passenger in the last 14 days?
4. Have you been in contact with someone that is a suspected (being tested) or confirmed a COVID-19 case in the last 14 days?

#### **Temperature**

An airline may consider taking a person's temperature as part of screening requirements if the passenger answers YES to any of the above questions.

**If anyone answers YES to question 1-4, and/or the temperature recording is >37.5 °C they may require further assessment.**

**Identify an appropriate referral pathway.**