

SAFETY INFORMATION 07/2023

26 December 2023



COMPREHENSIVE COVID-19 COUNTERMEASURES FOR AVIATION PERSONNEL

1 Purpose

The purpose of this Safety Information is to communicate critical safety information to all stakeholders in the aviation industry in response to the increasing spread of COVID-19 in Malaysia. The Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) aims to ensure the well-being of aviation personnel, air passengers, and the broader community by outlining key safety measures and recommendations in order to ensure aviation sector is protected and safe.

2 Background

With the recent notification from the Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia on 18 December 2023, highlighting the escalating spread of COVID-19, it is imperative that the aviation industry takes measures to safeguard public health. This evolving situation necessitates a unified response from all aviation stakeholders to mitigate the risk of transmission within aviation.

3 Recommendations

This information is applicable to the air operators (i.e. airlines), airport operator and other providers of airport services and facilities in Malaysia covering all phases of an air transport journey. The measures contained in this information incorporate existing requirements as well as guidance previously issued by CAAM.

3.1 Stringent Adherence to Health Protocols:

Both air operators (i.e. airlines) and airport operators play a critical role in ensuring health and safety by implementing health safety measures and protocols provided by the MOH Malaysia. It is their responsibility to ensure that all aviation personnel, including flight crews, ground staff, and maintenance crews, comply with these established protocols.

Simultaneously, aviation personnel are expected to consistently use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks, gloves, and face shields as required. They should also actively practice and encourage others to maintain the recommended physical distance from co-workers or passengers where possible, and while in public places. This collective effort is essential to create a safe environment within the aviation community.

3.2 Regular Sanitization Protocols:

Air operators (i.e. airlines) and airport operators are advised to carry out regular cleaning and sanitization of aircraft, airport facilities and equipment using disinfectants approved by the health authority. Airport operators should ensure that all cleaning and sanitization works are conducted according to the standard operating procedures outlined by the MOH on a regular basis.

For aviation personnel, cleaning and disinfection should be done thoroughly and effectively, particularly on equipment, aids and/or surfaces that are frequently touched and most likely be contaminated in public places.

3.3 Passenger Communication:

Air operators (i.e. airlines) and airport operators should proactively inform passengers about the current situation and the safety measures in place. This involves displaying clear signages and making announcements to encourage passengers to follow safety and health guidelines, including proper mask wearing and good hand hygiene practices (i.e. regularly clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer). Additionally, aviation personnel are expected to be actively engaged in communicating with passengers and implementing safety measures during interactions.

3.4 Crew Training and Awareness:

Air operators (i.e. airlines) and airport operators play a crucial role in arranging regular training sessions to keep aviation personnel updated on the latest health advisories. Furthermore, they have the responsibility to ensure that all crew members are well-informed and strictly adhere to the established reporting procedures for any reported cases.

Simultaneously, aviation personnel are urged to actively engage in these training sessions and diligently follow the reporting procedures for suspected or confirmed cases. This collective dedication significantly contributes to upholding a high standard of health and safety throughout the aviation industry.

3.5 Monitoring and Reporting:

To enhance the safety measures within the aviation community, it is essential to establish and sustain a robust monitoring system, ensuring the early identification of potential cases among aviation personnel. This involves creating clear and efficient reporting channels dedicated to suspected or confirmed cases, thus a proactive and coordinated approach in responding promptly to any emerging health concerns.

3.6 Contingency Planning, Including Business Contingency Plan (BCP):

Organizations are urged to develop and consistently review contingency plans aimed at addressing potential disruptions in operations. This involves the identification of critical functions and resources essential for maintaining operational resilience. Additionally, it is essential to establish clear protocols for communication, both internally and externally, to ensure a coordinated and effective response to potential disruptions.

3.7 Collaboration with Health Authorities:

Air operators (i.e. airlines), airport operators, and aviation personnel are encouraged to foster and maintain close communication with the MOH and other health agencies. Additionally, they should collaborate fully on contact tracing efforts in the event of positive cases within the aviation community. This cooperation is essential for a swift and effective response to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

4 Conclusion

CAAM would like to emphasize the crucial role of air operators (i.e. airlines), airport operators, and aviation personnel in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 within the industry. All stakeholders are encouraged to participate, cooperate and contribute to the regular review and update of protocols based on evolving situations and guidance from the health authority, such includes;

- Seek medical attention when required;
- Take two doses of the primer vaccine;
- Practice MOH TRIIS (Test, Report, Isolate, Inform, and Seek) procedures;
- Consider treatment using antiviral medication, Paxlovid (if eligible); and
- Maintain good personal hygiene by washing hands using water or hand sanitizer.

These guidelines serve as precautionary measures to ensure that operators and aviation personnel maintain an acceptable level of safety and remains safe to facilitate and support the operations of Malaysia's aviation industry.

CAAM remains committed to ensuring aviation safety and will continue to closely monitor developments related to the COVID-19 situation in the country. This information is regularly reviewed to ensure the currency of safety measures and guidelines are proportionate with the latest developments and recommendations from both international and national public health authority. It is not intended to prevail over any written law in Malaysia or any Directives, Directions or Circulars issued by CAAM in respect of any matter relating to health safety measures to mitigate risk of COVID-19 in aviation.



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