



Australian Government

Department of Health

West African Ebola Virus Disease (Ebola) Outbreak Information for Border Agencies

Key Points

- There is an outbreak of Ebola in West Africa. There are no cases of Ebola in Australia and the risk of an outbreak in Australia remains very low.
- While Ebola is a very serious disease, it is not highly contagious. Ebola is not influenza. It is not caught through coughing or sneezing. It is only caught through contact with the bodily fluids of an infected person or animal. Ebola can cause sudden onset of fever, muscle aches, weakness, headache or sore throat, followed by vomiting or diarrhoea.
- The Department of Health (Health) has developed banners and electronic signs which alert travellers from Africa to the signs and symptoms of Ebola. The banners and signs direct travellers to airport border officers, a doctor or hospital if they feel unwell. All sick travellers at the airport should be referred to Department of Agriculture (Agriculture) Biosecurity Officers, who should administer the “Traveller with Illness Checklist” as per the *Yellow Fever Action Cards and Ill Traveller Assessment Instruction and Guideline*.
- Any travellers profiled by the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs) as having travelled to an Ebola affected country should also be referred to Agriculture Biosecurity Officers. Agriculture Biosecurity Officers should administer the “Checklist for Travellers from West Africa”, provide the traveller with a Health Ebola Information Card and refer the traveller to a state Human Quarantine Officer for further assessment if necessary.
- Consistent with standard procedures:
 - there is no requirement for additional Personal Protective Equipment to be used during these processes; and
 - good hygiene practices should be observed whenever interviewing sick travellers, including frequent handwashing or application of alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- Any travellers seeking further information about Ebola should be given an Ebola Information Card or referred to the Health website at www.health.gov.au/ebola.

Background

- This outbreak of Ebola was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on 23 March 2014. As of 4 August 2014, there have been 1,711 clinical cases, of which 1,070 have been laboratory confirmed and 932 have died.
- On 8 August 2014, the World Health Organisation announced this outbreak to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. This announcement does not change the very low risk to Australia. Very few people travel to Australia from West Africa. Australia’s border measures are consistent with the WHO recommendations, which are primarily aimed at the affected, transmitting countries.
- Health, in collaboration with Border Agencies, will continue to monitor the situation and the efficacy of border measures. Any additional border protection measures will be considered proportional to the risk.
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s Smartraveller has issued advisories for affected countries: www.smartraveller.gov.au.
- This information is current as of 11 August 2014. It will not be updated unless there is a significant change in the outbreak. Further updates are available online via the Health website at www.health.gov.au/ebola. A list of frequently asked questions is also attached for reference.