



Information for the airline industry (including flight crew)

There is an outbreak of COVID-2019 (formerly known as novel coronavirus) in mainland China.

What is Australia doing?

Australia has put in place extra border measures, health screening and isolation recommendations for people and aircraft travelling to Australia from mainland China.

On 1 February 2020, Australia introduced isolation requirements for people arriving in Australia who have left or transited through mainland China on or after this date.

Biosecurity officers will board each aircraft arriving from mainland China and provide every incoming passenger a surgical mask and fact sheets that outline key information on the virus and the isolation measures required.

Biosecurity officers are not required to board any international flights from other locations. Information for other travellers will continue to be made available in arrival halls in the form of announcements, banners and passenger information sheets.

Pilots and airline crew on active duty are exempt from isolation requirements so long as the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and layover requirements set out in this fact sheet are adhered to.

What are aircraft required to report?

All aircraft entering Australian territory are legally required to report ill 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 do this by administering the Traveller with Illness Checklist (TIC) to the ill 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.

Is there information available for passengers and crew?

The Australian Government Department of Health is providing additional communication material for travellers (including passengers and crew) at all Australian international airports and seaports. This material informs travellers about COVID-19 and what to do if they have come from a risk area and are ill or become ill. The information sheets are updated as significant developments take place and are available at <https://www.health.gov.au/information-about-novel-coronavirus>.

How can I reduce the risk to passengers and crew?

Crew are advised to continue to follow their existing infection prevention work instructions when in contact with ill passengers, including the use of PPE when recommended by employer work instructions.

The following measures will help to reduce the risk of spread:

- Crew and passengers should be encouraged to practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand rub, before and after eating as well as after going to the toilet; and
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Crew should use appropriate PPE if close contact with an ill passenger is required.
- If PPE is used, it should be fitted and worn properly.
- Airlines should ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection activities are undertaken between each flight.

What should I do if a passenger or crew member is ill?

If possible, ill passengers (and their close personal contacts e.g., family members) or crew experiencing fever, sweats or chills, runny nose, sore throat or cough should:

- be separated from other travellers as a precaution, with at least one spare seat on either side or a window seat with a spare seat next to them. Ideally, the row should be kept empty;
- be given a surgical mask to wear; and
- be allocated a specific toilet for use of affected passengers/crew only.

Crew members should:

- wear gloves when handling and receiving items from affected passengers;
- ensure removal of gloves before touching other persons or any surfaces;
- use alcohol-based hand rub following removal of gloves and contact with any persons or surfaces;
- use appropriate PPE if close contact with an ill passenger or their bodily fluids is required; and
- ensure ground officials are notified.

What PPE are pilots and flight crew required to wear?

Airline crew and pilots are not routinely required to wear any additional PPE for the duration of any flight.

If a crew member is required to assist a passenger (and their close personal contacts) who is ill, the crew member should:

- wear a surgical mask, disposable full-length gown, gloves and eye protection;
- remove any PPE carefully (without touching the front of mask, gown or outside of gloves) to avoid self-contamination;
- dispose of used PPE carefully in biohazard bags and use alcohol-based hand rub immediately after tying the bag tightly closed; and
- wear gloves to clean and then disinfect surrounding surfaces with a broad spectrum disinfectant.

When cleaning lavatories used by ill passengers or surfaces visibly contaminated with body fluids, crew members should:

- wear a surgical mask, disposable full-length gown, gloves and eye protection;

- clean and then disinfect surrounding surfaces with a broad spectrum disinfectant;
- remove any PPE carefully (without touching the front of mask, gown or outside of gloves) to avoid self-contamination; and
- dispose of used PPE carefully in biohazard bags and use alcohol-based hand rub immediately after tying the bag tightly closed.

For layovers in mainland China

- When transiting through airport terminals and other crowded places, wear a surgical mask and keep a safe distance (at least one metre) from people who appear to be ill.
- Proceed directly to the crew hotel on exiting the terminal.
- Avoid crowded or public places, and stay and eat meals at the crew hotel.
- Practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene:
 - wash your hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet; and
 - cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes, and nose with unwashed hands.
- Interact with other crew and hotel staff but avoid all unnecessary interaction with others.
- Limit your physical contact with other persons (avoid hand-shaking etc.).

Other information

While COVID-19 is of concern, it is important to remember that it is currently influenza season in the northern hemisphere. It is likely that the majority of travellers displaying infectious symptoms have a common respiratory infection, rather than COVID-19. However, COVID-19 vigilance is important.

Where can I get more information?

The Australian Department of Health is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation in collaboration with the World Health Organization and Australian states and territories. For the latest advice, information and resources, go to the Australian Government Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au.

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line 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 telephone number of your state or territory public health agency is available on the coronavirus page at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts.

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