



## SAFETY DECISION 2020-01

Issue 19

Date of Issue: June 23, 2020

### SUBJECT:

FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS DUE TO CORONAVIRUS SARS-CoV-2

### REFERENCE PUBLICATIONS:

N/A

### APPLICABILITY:

This Safety Decision applies to all aircraft operators conducting flights from/to the UAE.

This Safety Decision does not apply to:

- aircraft in state of emergency (as per international standards);
- operations related to medical flights for the purpose of carrying UAE nationals only (all crew on-board shall be subject to COVID-19 related Public Health Authority Requirements unless crews leave UAE territory);
- technical landings where passengers do not disembark. The same restrictions shall apply to crew unless it is for the purpose of walk around inspection and preparation of the intended flight and provided that precautions measures are in place to ensure limited interaction with other persons;
- aircraft operated for the purpose of evacuation (this Safety Decision does not alleviate the need for obtaining necessary authorisation from UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation);
- UAE registered aircraft that are out of base on 24 March 2020 23:59 Local Time will be allowed to return to base carrying only UAE nationals and operator's crewmembers;
- domestic flights (refer to SAFETY DECISION 2020-13); and
- over-flights.

### INTRODUCTION:

Following the global developments concerning the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2, also named 2019-nCoV) outbreak in the city of Wuhan, People's Republic of China (PRC), and based on the reports published by the WHO, and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the GCAA, in collaboration with the concerned entities including NCEMA, has decided to impose restrictions on flights from affected areas by SARS-CoV-2.

Note 1: On 12 February 2020, the novel coronavirus was renamed "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" (SARS-CoV-2), while the disease associated with it is referred to as COVID-19.

This issue will supersede and cancel **ISSUE 18**. This change is to cancel OMDB and OMDW provisions from previous issue.

The UAE government is closely monitoring the situation and will provide further updates and instructions as necessary.



## REQUIREMENTS:

Scheduled or non-scheduled flights from/to the UAE shall not be allowed, except the following flights:

### a) **Flights carrying travellers:**

#### i) **Flights other than International Private and Business aviation:**

- A) Flights other than connecting flights: the flight is permitted provided the operator is compliant with:
- Public Health Measures developed for transit/transfer flights (Refer to Attachment 1); and
  - the COVID-19 travel protocol<sup>1</sup> for UAE citizens and UAE residents endorsed by NCEMA.
- B) Connecting Flights: the flight is permitted provided the operator has been approved by the GCAA to conduct the flight in accordance with Public Health Measures developed for transit/transfer flights (Refer to Attachment 1).

#### ii) **International Private and Business aviation flights: the flight is permitted provided all following conditions are met:**

- A) The operator has been approved by the GCAA to conduct the flight in accordance with Public Health Measures developed for transit/transfer flights (Refer to Attachment 1).
- B) The operating Crew Members do not cross the UAE borders for layover purposes. It is the obligation of the applicable operators to plan their flights accordingly to comply with the Flight Duty Period & Rest requirements (applicable to foreign aircraft operators only).
- C) Persons other than the operating crew members may be allowed to cross the UAE borders provided that they:
- Meet one of the following conditions:
    - They are UAE National;
    - They hold a valid UAE Residence Visa or are exempted from pre-entry permit/visa requirements to enter the UAE; or
    - They hold a special approval.
  - Comply with the quarantine and COVID-19 test requirements as per the preventive and the precautionary measures applied in the UAE.

### b) **Flights carrying cargo only:**

- The flight is limited to crew and personnel required for the intended flight (deadheading or positioning crew included);
- A combination of passenger and cargo transportation in the cabin is not allowed unless the design change has been approved;

<sup>1</sup> Contact GCAA as per "CONTACT" section to obtain the protocol. Non-UAE Operators shall also be approved by the GCAA prior to commencement of their flights.



- iii) All persons on-board are SARS-CoV-2 screened/quarantined on arrival at the UAE airport, unless an alternative means has been accepted by the GCAA;
- iv) The screening/quarantine regime shall be as prescribed by the UAE Health Authority;
- v) The UAE airport is equipped to conduct the prescribed screening/quarantine regime; and
- vi) The operator has made the necessary pre-arrangement with the airport operator and screening provider.

**CONTACT:**

Further instructions or guidance may be obtained through:

- a) UAE operators: their principal flight operations inspectors;
- b) Foreign operators: Foreign Operators Affairs, at e-mail [foa@gcaa.gov.ae](mailto:foa@gcaa.gov.ae)



## ATTACHMENT 1: PROCEDURE FOR TRANSIT AND TRANSFER OPERATIONS IN UAE AIRPORTS

### 1. Objective:

Objective of the document is to explain end-to-end process for transit and transfer operations that includes operations, passengers, crew, and airport requirements to ensure safety of passengers transport whilst minimizing the risk of exposure during COVID-19 pandemic.

### 2. Operational considerations:

- Whenever possible all transit passengers should be transported via same aircraft with crew change and clean disinfection process should match the operation.
- Whenever possible “tail-to-tail” transfer should be considered to avoid passenger entering the terminal and bus transfer to departing aircraft should be considered.
- Planning transfer passenger operations should be based on detailed risk assessment with due consideration for the number of passengers per each transfer to avoid crowd formation and surcharge of the designated area for transfer passenger operations.
- Transfer passenger operations should be restricted to one specific designated area within the airport.
- Transfer passenger operations should aim at ensuring the time between arriving flight and departing flight does not exceed 4 hours.
- All arriving gates should be close to departing gates.
- Designated waiting area should be disinfected as per airport’s guidelines after every flight.
- Thermal screening of all passengers and crew is recommended before boarding the flight and declaration forms should be completed and handed over to the ground crew at boarding gate.

### 3. Passenger evaluation and assessments:

- Pre-flight assessment
  - ✓ Declaration should be submitted prior to travel. Declaration form should contain: personal and demographic information, flight and seat number (important for tracing if needed) with following general questions: do you have symptoms?; have you been in close contact with positive case?; have you been diagnosed with COVID 19?. Declaration should be dated.
  - ✓ Thermal screening should be conducted at check-in or entrance of the departing airport.
  - ✓ COVID-19 symptom check should be conducted during check in.
  - ✓ Thermal screening check should be conducted during pre-boarding.



- ✓ Any passenger showing symptoms or abnormal temperature should be evaluated and denied travel.
- During the boarding and the flight, passengers should be regularly monitored for active symptoms.
- Passengers should wear a mask at all times during their travel inside airport's premises including airport transport facilities and during the entire flight.

#### 4. Social distancing while travel:

- Airport facility:
  - ✓ Check-in counters should be equipped with barriers whenever possible, alternatively full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be worn including but not limited to face mask, eye or face shield, and gloves. Gloves may be replaced by appropriate hand sanitation measures.
  - ✓ Stickers and signs encouraging social distancing should be installed at check-in and immigration counters.
  - ✓ Hand sanitization stations should be installed within the airport's facility.
  - ✓ Signs to refrain from "crowding" should be installed/displayed within the airport's facility.
  - ✓ Barriers and roping of areas should be installed wherever required to avoid cross contamination.
- Smoking area should only be used by a maximum of 1 or 2 person(s) depending on the size of the smoking booth.
- Airport and airline lounges should be closed at time of transit or transfer.
- Airport restaurants and other entertainment facility:
  - ✓ Should be closed at all times.
  - ✓ All other stores should be closed.
  - ✓ Pharmacy can remain operational.
  - ✓ Pre-packaged meals and drinks should be provided by airlines if passengers remain in the terminal for more than 2 hours.
- Airport toilet facility:
  - ✓ Should be equipped with signs on how to clean before use.
  - ✓ Hand sanitizers and Hand hygiene poster should be installed at appropriate location.
  - ✓ Seat covers or disinfection wipes should be available in toilets.
  - ✓ Passenger toilets should be separated from airport staff and 3rd party's staff.
  - ✓ They should be cleaned every one hour and whenever needed. Domestic staff should wear adequate PPE, including but not limited to face mask, and gloves.
- Airport medical facility:
  - ✓ Airports should establish clear processes for providing medical help.
  - ✓ Medical help desk station should be, whenever possible, made available near transfer passengers.



- ✓ Paramedic stations should be, whenever possible, made available near transfer passengers.

#### 5. On the Aircraft:

- Airline should provide face mask for passengers who are not wearing the mask.
- Boarding should be process by rows and in a manner that avoids crowd formation while boarding.
- Carry-on bag should be limited for essentials use only.
- Social distancing measure on aircraft should be applied whenever possible.
- An isolation area shall be assigned at the back of the aircraft for suspected cases (should be 3 rows in the back).
- Cabin crew shall be trained and equipped to deal with suspected cases.

#### 6. In-flight service delivery:

- Passengers should wear face mask at all times.
- On-board bar and common areas should be closed to avoid social gathering.
- Change of seat should be limited as much as possible.
- Providing children with toys should be avoided.
- All waste on board the flight should be handled and disposed as medical waste.
- Service should be limited to essential service only.
- Meals should be pre-packed.
- Food should be supplied covered.
- Extra water or juices should be supplied packed.
- On demand catering should be avoided.
- Crew in the galley should be limited to galley service and should be segregated from crew providing servicing to passengers.

#### 7. Aircraft amenities and products:

- All magazines and newspapers should be off-loaded.
- Headsets should be disposable.
- Blankets and pillow should be disposable.
- Menu and safety cards should be disposable or electronic and unnecessary prints like food menu should be avoided.
- Biohazard bag or vomit bag should be placed in the seat back pocket for disposing passenger's masks.
- Distribution of unnecessary gifts, like kids toys, should be avoided.



- On-board duty free should not accept cash and no samples or testers should be offered.

#### **8. Lavatories on aircraft:**

- Cleaning of lavatories every 1-2 hours and whenever required.
- Cabin crew cleaning lavatories should have complete PPE (gown, face shield). Mask should be changed after cleaning.
- Cleaning instruction should be made available for passenger to clean before use.
- Hand hygiene instruction should be made available in toilets for hand sanitization.
- Toilet covers or disinfection wipes should be available in toilets.
- A toilet should be assigned for crew usage only.
- Items that can be shared (perfume bottles) should be removed.

#### **9. Infection control measure for crew in-flight:**

- PPE requirements for cabin crew: face shield or goggles, mask, gloves during service, disposable gowns as minimum requirements. Mask should be changed every 6 hours (according to the latest WHO guideline a face mask can be used multiple times and for longer periods).
- Crew should maintain regular hand hygiene in particular before and after each service.
- Crew should not handle personal items from passengers.
- Crew should avoid handling masks and gloves from passenger and crew should ensure passengers use dedicated bag (vomit bag or biohazard bag).
- Cabin crew should be trained in donning and doffing PPEs.
- An area should be designated for cabin crew donning and doffing PPE
- Pilots are required to wear mask when leaving cockpit and in the cockpit unless flight safety can be compromised.
- No cabin crew is allowed inside the cockpit.
- Pilot's food and beverage should be left on the doorstep of the cockpit to limit interaction with pilots.
- Cabin crew should clean galley surfaces regularly.
- Cabin crew should be limited to certain cabin area and should not mix between cabin during the flights (unless for an emergency).

#### **10. On board aircraft practices:**

- Education of passengers on practices related to new services should be assured.
- Aircrew briefing on covid-19 and upwards before each flight.



- Passenger behavior COVID related safety measures video or electronic should be developed and displayed that includes the following measures:
  - ✓ Avoid passenger movements in the aircraft.
  - ✓ No change of seat after allocated seating.
  - ✓ Don't wait in queue for toilet and always look at occupancy signs.
  - ✓ Maintain social distancing while speaking to anyone in the flight.
  - ✓ Do not cross the galley.
  - ✓ Maintain regular hand hygiene.
  - ✓ Importance of wearing mask.
- All individuals entering aircraft should wear mask. Gloves are not necessary especially if hand sanitizer is used.
- There should be no document exchange except for immigration documentation or declaration forms.
- all unnecessary signatures and sharing pen or documentation should be avoided.
- Social distancing should be maintained at all times between crew external individual and pilots.

#### **11. Handling of inflight emergency and suspected cases:**

- If there is a person showing fever, difficulty in breathing, cough, or fatigue, the suspected person should be taken to isolation area allocated in last 3 rows. Only one dedicated crew should attend sick person.
- If possible one toilet should only be dedicated for sick person.
- Crew should inform the ground airport services in advance.
- First aid and other medical intervention should be provided as required by medical guidance training manual.
- Emergency situation should be handled as per airline guidelines.

#### **12. Operations layover requirements:**

- All layover should be avoided as most countries still at high risk.
- Extra Long haul flights assessments should be conducted.
- A risk matrix will be established and will be assessed weekly to determine layover possibility. Risk matrix is approved MOH, DOH and DHA.
- Whenever layover is approved the following should be considered:
  - ✓ Layover should be minimal (not exceeding 24 hours).
  - ✓ Hotel should only be inside the airport or safe hotel nearby the airport.
  - ✓ Transportation should be through a contracted provider known to the airline and public transport or taxis should be avoided.





- ✓ Crew are not allowed to leave hotel and airline should accordingly establish a monitoring process.
- ✓ Food should be delivered in the room and access to buffet, bar and restaurant should not be allowed.
- ✓ No visiting or visitors should be allowed.
- ✓ Leaving premises should not be allowed unless medical emergency.

### **13. Transport of crew or passenger**

- Pilots should be segregated from cabin crew.
- Pilots should be seated on last 2 rows and there should be two rows separating them from the cabin crew.
- Pilots should leave the bus last.
- All occupants should be wearing masks.
- There should be a separation between driver and crew.
- Social distancing should be maintained during transport.
- No public transport should be used.

### **14. Quarantine measures post-flight:**

- Quarantine should be at centralized quarantine.
- For flight requiring crew layover : Crew scheduling should be on an allocated pattern of 30 days operation or less, PCR test is re required after each flight, upon ending the allocated pattern if PCR test is negative and the crew has no symptoms, a 7 days quarantine shall be applied before existing to community.
- For turnaround flight: Crew scheduling should be on a pattern of 30 days operation or lesson PCR test is required after each flight, test is required at the end of the allocated pattern; if PCR test is negative and the crew has no symptoms, a 7 days quarantine shall be applied before existing to community

### **15. Cleaning and disinfection procedure**

Cleaning and disinfection procedure should be as per approved airline guidelines for Covid-19.