January 24, 2020

Ed Bastian, CEO
Delta Air Lines, Inc.
P.O. Box 20706
Atlanta, GA 30320

    Re: Recommendations for Airline Response to the Novel Coronavirus Outbreak

Dear Mr. Bastian:

Flight Attendants are becoming increasingly concerned about the risks to health and international air travel caused by the novel coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, in December 2019 (2019-nCoV).[1] The virus implicated in this outbreak is part of a large family of coronaviruses that circulate in animals and occasionally cross species barriers to infect humans. Past examples of coronaviruses that have infected humans and adversely affected international travel include SARS and MERS. AFA is recommending specific steps for airlines to provide crew with information and resources for proper precaution and containment.

Within the past week, there have been reports of multiple human deaths due to the virus in China[2]. Infections of returned travelers from China have been confirmed in Thailand and Japan,[3] Korea,[4] and most recently, the state of Washington in the U.S.[5] In its latest press release, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states, "[w]hile originally thought to be spreading from animal-to-person, there are growing indications that limited person-to-person spread is happening. It's unclear how easily this virus is spreading between people."[6] In addition, highlighting the potential widespread impact of this outbreak to U.S. commercial aviation, CDC reports that since January 17, 2020 they have begun "implementing public health entry screening at San Francisco (SFO), New York (JFK), and Los Angeles (LAX) airports" and this week "will add entry health screening at two more airports – Atlanta (ATL) and Chicago (ORD)."[7]

To protect airline workers and the public from potential exposure to 2019-nCoV, AFA is asking all airlines to institute emergency measures immediately. Most urgently we ask that airlines provide crew members the latest information regarding the 2019-nCoV outbreak, identification of signs/symptoms of illness (in oneself and others), and procedures to manage

---

[1] U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; "Update and Interim Guidance on Outbreak of 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Wuhan, China;" https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00426.asp; accessed January 21, 2020.
[2] *Id.*
[3] *Id.*
[4] World Health Organization; "Novel Coronavirus – Republic of Korea (ex-China);" https://www.who.int/csr/don/21-january-2020-novel-coronavirus-republic-of-korea-ex-china/en/; accessed January 21, 2020.
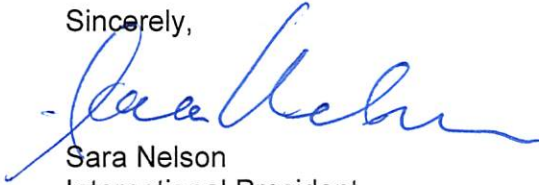[5] US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; "First Travel-related Case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus Detected in United States;" https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0121-novel-coronavirus-travel-case.html; accessed January 21, 2020.
[6] *Id.*
[7] *Id.*

potentially ill persons. This information should be sourced from relevant U.S. authorities including the CDC, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and international authorities including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). In addition, AFA recommends adoption of the Communicable Disease Incident Response Checklist that follows. The checklist is a product of decades of experience with spread of communicable disease through air travel. These active steps will help to ensure the health of Flight Attendants and the traveling public in the face of the rapidly expanding 2019-nCoV outbreak. Acting quickly will also help stop the spread of the virus by air travel and mitigate the harm it can cause to the industry. We are eager to coordinate with the appropriate personnel at the airline to implement procedures effectively, and we offer any help and resources we can provide in this effort.

Sincerely,

Sara Nelson
International President

cc: Jatawne Wells, EDV MEC President

Communicable Disease Incidence Response Checklists

Prevention for All Crew Members

- ☐ Provide an adequate supply for every Flight Attendant on all flights of non-allergenic medical gloves and masks that are determined appropriate protection by the CDC and/or WHO.
- ☐ Provide an adequate supply of medical gloves and masks that are determined appropriate protection by the CDC and/or WHO for any volunteer medical personnel assisting with medical situations.
- ☐ Ensure each flight has one universal precaution kit for every Flight Attendant on duty plus two additional kits for intervening healthcare personnel. Universal precaution kits should include all items specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) as follows:
    Universal precaution kit:
    — Dry powder that can convert small liquid spills into a sterile granulated gel
    — Germicidal disinfectant for surface cleaning
    — Skin wipes
    — Face/eye mask (separate or combined)
    — Gloves (disposable)
    — Protective apron
- ☐ Permit Flight Attendants working on flights to wear gloves any time during the flight without any discriminatory or disciplinary actions being taken against them.
- ☐ Issue guidance to all crew in the event that a passenger exhibits signs or symptoms of infectious disease during a flight.
- ☐ Develop realistic procedures and/or engineering controls for isolating symptomatic passengers if the incident aircraft is too full to permit isolating an unoccupied radius around the symptomatic individual(s) consistent with WHO and/or CDC recommendations.
- ☐ Require pre-flight briefings to communicate the use of universal precaution procedures and equipment to prevent exposure on a flight and to review guidance in the event that a passenger exhibits signs or symptoms of infectious disease during a flight.
- ☐ Provide an adequate supply of surgical masks for any passengers who exhibit symptoms on a flight.
- ☐ Provide a leak-resistant airsick bag that is immediately available for each passenger.
- ☐ Ensure all aircraft meet the federal requirements for access to soap and running water.
- ☐ Provide on all flights equipment necessary to take temperatures of potentially infected persons without requiring physical contact with those individuals.

- ☐ It is a federal requirement to have running water, soap and clean towels on every flight – but if a flight is scheduled to leave in violation of this regulation then the airline should ensure Flight Attendant(s) has the ability to wash hands with running water and soap prior to departure of every flight and provision a sufficient quantity of alcohol-based hand rub (minimum concentration of 60%) as foam or gel, with moisturizers.
- ☐ Make all of the above stated supplies no-go items (required for aircraft dispatch).

Aircraft Cleaning

- ☐ Require airlines to follow CDC recommended guidelines for cleaning aircraft and any contaminated areas after a flight with a sick traveler who may have a communicable disease, including protection and training for the aircraft cleaners.

Post-Incident Measures to Protect Crew Members on a Flight with Person(s) Suspected of Being Infected with a Communicable Disease

- ☐ Immediately lock-down crew names, similar to an airline incident/accident.
- ☐ Immediately contact the union leadership with the names, cell phone numbers, current locations, and in-sheltering locations of impacted crewmembers.
- ☐ Coordinate with the crewmember union leadership around any issues related to care and protection of the crew.
- ☐ Immediately remove crew with pay and benefits for the entire disease incubation period.
- ☐ Provide all resources necessary to safely in-shelter the crewmembers during the incubation period; for example, safe and secure location with meals and medical supplies provided, including, but not limited to, thermometers for self-monitoring and protective masks.
- ☐ Cover all medical costs related to potential exposure, including, but not limited to, tests, doctor visits, and medications.
- ☐ Once the in-sheltering period is over, provide transportation to each crewmember's choice of base or home.
- ☐ Provide an external (non-airline employee) mental health professional who can make daily confidential telephonic wellness calls to the in-sheltering crewmember. Crewmembers may accept or decline calls at their own discretion.
- ☐ Within 8 hours of knowledge of the incident, the company and union will implement the communications plan.

Management Plan Checklist

- ☐ Establish an unrestricted, transparent, and confidential on-going communication flow plan between the company, union(s), and managing public health authorities.
- ☐ The company and the union(s) will develop a joint communications plan, including message templates, to be used in the event of a communicable disease related incident aboard an aircraft.

- ☐ Establish a plan for in-sheltering of crewmembers following a communicable disease related incident aboard an aircraft.
- ☐ Institute liberal leave policies to ensure that employees do not feel obligated to fly when sick, or when they are in the position of having to care for ill family members.
- ☐ During pandemic periods, ticket change penalties and restrictions on ticket refunds in the event of passenger illness (with doctor's or public health authority's note) should be waived. This will lessen the potential for travel by ill passengers, limit spread of the disease through air travel, and ensure the public that the industry is doing all it can to minimize risks to public health.
- ☐ Require the regular performance of drills and tabletop exercises to test communicable disease response capabilities and procedures. Such exercises must include participation from (at least) airline operations management personnel and affected line employee groups (including their union representatives as applicable.)
- ☐ Require any ground-based medical providers that provide coordinated medical services to airlines and support in-flight crew members during incidents (e.g., airline medical departments, University of Pittsburgh, MedLink) to develop, in coordination with airline management and the airline's affected line employees, communicable disease incident response management plans.