



via email

December 5, 2020

Rick Domingo
Aviation Safety
Executive Director, Flight Standards Service
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591

Dear Mr. Domingo,

As of 6 pm EST on Friday, Dec. 4, 2020, according to the Washington Post COVID-19 tracking database,¹ at least 277,000 people have died from coronavirus in the United States, and at least 14,338,000 cases have been reported. The Post report goes on to note that during this past November, "the country was recording more new cases than ever — well over 100,000 per day — and many states reported record-high caseloads and hospitalizations. The average number of deaths per day again shot past 1,500, despite improvements in treatment that make survival more likely."

Given these facts, which attest to the present extreme and increasing severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA) strongly supports maintaining (if not strengthening) the current SAFO 20009 Rev. 1c recommendations that 14 days of quarantine be provided to any Flight Attendant potentially exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.²

The Appendix to SAFO 20009 specifies that:

- Crewmembers should stay home or in their hotel room, notify their employer's occupational health program, and not report to work if they meet any of the following conditions:
 - o Develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19, even if mild;
 - o Test positive for SARS-CoV-2, even if no symptoms are present; or
 - o Are exposed, as defined below, to a sick person with symptoms of COVID-19, even if the person has not been tested for SARS-CoV-2.
- Exposures of concern include:
 - o A sick household member or intimate partner;
 - o Taking care of a sick person without using personal protective equipment (PPE); or
 - o Being within 6 feet (2 meters) of a sick person (including co-workers and passengers) for a prolonged period of time (i.e., 15 minutes or longer).

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/coronavirus-us-cases-deaths/>

² https://www.faa.gov/other_visit/aviation_industry/airline_operators/airline_safety/safo/all_safos/media/2020/SAFO20009.pdf



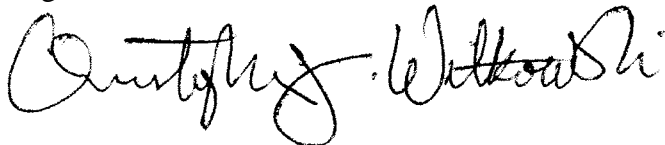
In the past few days, several AFA union officers have been notified by their employers that reductions of quarantine periods for Flight Attendants per new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance³ are being considered. Specifically, this new guidance allows some travelers to quarantine, in the absence of symptoms, 10 days without a negative test and 7 days with a negative test, with the caveat that "[a]fter stopping quarantine, people should [w]ear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19." (quoted from the link above)

Clearly, these guidelines should not apply to Flight Attendants working in the aircraft cabin, since it is impossible to perform work duties and at the same time socially distance 6 feet from others, avoid crowds, and immediately access onboard handwashing facilities (given delays due to lavatory queuing).

In conclusion, it is clear to AFA that this recent CDC guidance does not apply to the Flight Attendant workforce, and with the pandemic worsening as winter approaches, it is unacceptable to backtrack on existing quarantine practices that are critical for limiting infections. Therefore, AFA requests that the FAA remind all airline operators that the 14 day quarantine period specified in SAFO 20009 Rev. 1c remains in effect, and that the new CDC quarantine guidance does not apply to Flight Attendants.

Thank you for considering this request. Please email me, or contact me at 202-549-8189 if you have any questions.

Regards,



Christopher J. Witkowski,
Director
Air Safety, Health and Security Department

Cc: Sara Nelson
Steve Dickson

³ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>