



PAKISTAN AIR LINE PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

AFFILIATED WITH :
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AIR LINE PILOT'S ASSOCIATIONS &
INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION.

INFO

Dear Members, السلام عليكم

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In view of fast changing dynamics of aviation industry vis-à-vis COVID-19 pandemic, IFALPA has issued new guidelines to pilots. The guidelines are enclosed for better understanding of COVID-19 and safety of crew.

With Best Regards,

Capt. Narejo
GENERAL SECRETARY

Room Lockdown during COVID-19 Pandemic

During layovers authorities or operators in many countries require complete room lockdown. This is also compliant with the ICAO Public Health Corridor (PHC)¹ concept. The lockdown requirement is either due to the quarantine requirements of the destination country or requirement to avoid quarantine when arriving back to home base.

This complete lockdown may have detrimental effects on mental health, especially if the layover is long, and if further quarantine is required at home base regardless of isolation during layover.

It is not expected that operators or pilot associations would be able to remove these authority requirements but listed below are some mitigating measures that could be recommended. These require agreements between associations and operators, but also agreements and discussion between operators and authorities.

ROSTERING

- Lockdown layover should be allocated evenly to the crew members
- Long (two days or more) layovers should be on a voluntary basis
- At least the minimum days-off in a roster shall be days without any quarantine requirement

DESTINATION HOTEL

- A room service or option to order food from outside of the hotel (preferable) should be provided.
- Hotels should have proper internet access provided. This way crew members can maintain contact with their families and friends in addition to finding entertainment.
- A bigger hotel room, especially for longer lockdowns might be beneficial for crew well-being.
- Crew members should be allowed to exercise outside if it is possible to keep safe distance from others.
- During layovers, crew members could be allowed to live in their own crew-bubble with other members operating the flights, i.e. being able to visit each other's room or having

¹ <https://www.icao.int/covid/cart/Pages/CART-Take-off.aspx>

allocated a dedicated crew room only for one crew. In any case, crew members are in contact with each other during the flight.

MAINTAINING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Connect socially with others

Even if it is not possible to meet other people face to face, it is suggested to connect with other people by calls, video calls, or social media. The single most important factor in coping with life's stressful events is to have a good social network in place.

Pilot associations and operators should ensure resources are available for crew to seek support if they are battling with loneliness during lockdowns.

Get Active

Physical exercise improves mental well-being. If exercising or just walking outside of the room is allowed, it is suggested. There are also many free apps for different kind of workouts, stretching, or yoga that can be performed in a hotel room.

Relaxation

Learn and practice relaxation techniques e.g., breathing or meditation to control stress reactions.

Keep learning

Learning new things can generate satisfaction and thereby maintain or improve mental well-being. If you have subjects to study or a new hobby to explore, lockdown may be a good time to investigate these things.

Think of things that can be done in a hotel room that you have wanted to do, e.g., read a certain book, a knitting project, write a novel, etc., and think of this as an opportunity to fulfill this.

COVID-19 Guidance for Crews

Please note: this is the second update to 20SAB04.

At all times, crews should follow the advice of their health authorities, operators, and the health authorities of the destination country. The following is general advice about COVID-19 as understood at the date of publication.

The risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the flight deck is very low, provided appropriate hygienic and precautionary measures are taken. The biggest risk is fellow pilots, and therefore it is of utmost importance pilots not go to work if they have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a close contact with a person suspected of having or testing positive for COVID-19.

Transmission in the aircraft is likely due to direct contact, via droplets, or to lesser via aerosols or surfaces. The SARS-Cov-2 virus can survive on surfaces from a few hours to a few days.

Recirculated air is not considered to be a source of infection, as it passes through HEPA filters, which are used, for example, in operating theatres. The SARS-Cov-2 virus is approximately 0.125 µm in diameter which is within the particle-size range that HEPA filters capture with a high level of efficiency.¹

Crews should consider the following recommendations:

Before the Flight

- Crew planning should consider using crews as teams – this would restrict the potential infection only to the team members.

¹ Submicron and Nanoparticulate Matter Removal by HEPA-Rated Media Filters and Packed Beds of Granular Materials, Page 7, <https://ntrs.nasa.gov/archive/nasa/casi.ntrs.nasa.gov/20170005166.pdf>

- Operators should consider the balance of the effects of quarantine and the effects of extended duties, within the FTL or FRMS, when deciding to operate a turnaround or layover.
- Crews and other personnel with any symptoms of flu should not be working – this is to prevent potentially infected persons in the flight deck and thus prevent spread of the virus to surfaces of the flight deck.
- If a pilot has had a close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, they should stay at home and should not work
- Procedures should be put in place to minimize crew exposure to ground personnel.
- Crews should make use of separate crew channels in the airport, where they are available, to minimize interaction with the public.
- All personnel should follow proper hygiene practices before entering the cockpit.
- During turn-around when pilots are in contact with ground personnel, a mask should always be worn.

During the flight

- Disinfect all surfaces with appropriate disinfectant wipes before starting your flight preparations.
- Disinfect hands often, and always before eating anything.
- Avoid touching your face – eyes, nose, mouth.
- If routine use of OXY mask is required (such as for operations above a given Flight Level), disinfect the OXY mask before and after use.
- A face mask may be used during the flight as long as the operator has performed a proper risk assessment and recommends or allows the use of masks and crews feel that it does not interfere with safe performance of duties. However, crews should have an option not to wear a facemask during the flight due to flight safety issues.
- There should be a dedicated cabin crew member who attends the flight crew as this reduces number of contacts.
- In flights with in-flight rest, each pilot should have personal bedding.

At layovers

- Avoid contact with the public.
- Maintain physical distancing measures with crewmembers.
- Remain in your room except to seek medical attention, or for essential activities including exercise, while respecting physical distancing requirements.
- Do not use the common facilities of the accommodation unless physical distancing measures are in place.
- Consider dining in-room, get take-out, or dine in a restaurant preferably within the accommodation facility, maintaining physical distancing.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer often, and always after entering the hotel room or before eating.
- Use face mask when leaving the hotel room.

- Monitor signs and symptoms. If you are sick, seek medical advice before operating or travelling in any capacity.

It is the responsibility of the operator to provide appropriate disinfectant wipes that are suitable for the aircraft environment. The wipes need to be effective against SARS-Cov-2, and also be approved for aviation use. Disinfection of aircraft surfaces with self-provided products performed by the crew members may lead to chemical reactions, which can have negative effects (corrosive) on the aircraft.

The need to self-isolate after flights needs to be decided by your responsible authority. If a flight has no layover, it is not expected that there would be a need to self-isolate. For flights with a layover, the decisions will depend on the destination, risk of infection, and any exposure risks at the destination. Crews who secure private transportation, stay at the hotel, eat via room service, and maintain the social distance of 2 meters can keep the risk of infection low.

Use of Masks in the Cockpit

PLEASE NOTE

Regarding the prevention of transmission of COVID-19, flight crews are reminded that signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact with a person suspected of having or testing positive for COVID-19 render them unfit for duty until considered fit by the operator and public health authority (e.g. following a suitable negative test). The operator should also have a proper sick-leave policy and procedure so that there is no additional burden for pilots to call in sick.

The use of face masks is currently recommended or compulsory in many countries, especially if social distancing is not possible. Most of the authorities and airlines require passengers and cabin crew to use face masks. In the recommendations of ICAO, CAPSCA, and IATA, the use of face masks in the cockpit while operating the aircraft has not been compulsory. In EASA/ECDC the recommendation is that a face mask is not used in the cockpit during the flight due to safety reasons.

When an operator makes a decision on mask use in the cockpit, it should involve a safety risk assessment. IFALPA's position is that flight crew should have the option to remove their mask in the cockpit when the door is closed in the interest of flight safety.

The reason for wearing masks in the cockpit is mainly to prevent transmission of COVID-19 from the mask wearer to the other pilot(s) and to a lesser extent, protect the mask wearer from inhaling potentially infected respiratory droplets. Infected people appear to be most infectious just before they develop symptoms (namely 2 days before they develop symptoms) and early in their illness, but asymptomatic people can also spread the disease. Thus, a risk of infection remains even if all symptomatic pilots or pilots who have had close contact with a person suspected of having or testing positive for COVID-19 stay at home.

The World Health Organization recommends the use of a three-layer fabric mask or a medical-grade mask¹.

¹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

OPERATOR RISK ASSESSMENT

The risk assessment should weigh the risk of transmission against risks to flight safety. Operator safety risk assessments should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Transmission of COVID-19
 - Prevalence of COVID-19 in the region
 - Crew personal risk of complications from a COVID-19 infection
 - If using the mask in the cockpit, the risk of transmission while eating and drinking
- Flight safety risks
 - Effects on the use of the supplemental oxygen mask
 - Effects on inter-crew communication including the inability to read lips and non-verbal communication
 - Effects of air traffic control communication
 - Possible disturbing effects of wearing a mask during critical phases of flight (e.g. take-off and landing)
 - Diminished senses (sight or smell)
 - Possible increase of stress or fatigue

MITIGATIONS

Risks associated with mask use should be mitigated using appropriate means, including:

- training on correct use of masks, and,
- training on emergency procedures with the face masks.

FLIGHT CREW DECISION FRAMEWORK

The crew should follow the operator policy of the mask use, but if using the mask is considered a flight safety risk, the crew should have the option not to use it.

If a pilot becomes symptomatic during the flight, all pilots should wear medical masks and it should be considered if the symptomatic pilot should be removed from duty.

In the event of a disagreement between the crew members on the use of masks, an open discussion on the risks using CRM principles should follow. If the disagreement is not able to be resolved, the crew should follow the appropriate company procedures for similar conflicts.

MASK USE IN THE SIMULATOR

The simulator does not pose risks to the safety of flight and therefore the use of masks in the simulator should be in accordance with public health authority and operator requirements.