



Quarantine and Isolation

Interim Recommendations for Airline Crew: **Novel Coronavirus in China**

Updated Jan 17, 2020

Purpose

This document provides interim guidance for the commercial airline industry about the novel (new) [coronavirus](#) first identified in Wuhan, China. Because this is a new virus in humans, CDC is following this situation closely and responding out of an abundance of caution in coordination with domestic and international partners. CDC is reminding air carriers of the requirement under Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations section 71.21 to report ill travelers to CDC who have certain signs and symptoms during flight, and all deaths onboard, prior to arrival in the United States. This document also contains recommendations for managing ill travelers onboard if novel coronavirus infection is suspected.

Situation summary

An outbreak of pneumonia caused by a novel coronavirus is under investigation in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Most of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China have reportedly had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting a zoonotic (animal to human) origin to the outbreak. Some patients in the outbreak, however, reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets, suggesting that some limited person-to-person spread may be occurring. Some cases have been exported to other countries in the region.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with [MERS](#) and [SARS](#).

Symptoms of this illness to date include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. These symptoms also can occur with many other common respiratory infections, including influenza (flu). There is an ongoing investigation to determine more about this outbreak. This is a rapidly evolving situation and this guidance will be updated as more information becomes available.

Report to CDC travelers with specific symptoms arriving from Wuhan, China.

- Report travelers with
 - fever, i.e., person feels warm to the touch, gives a history of feeling feverish, or has an actual measured temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher, OR
 - persistent cough or difficulty breathing.
- Report, as soon as possible before arrival, by one of the methods described in the [Guidance for Air Travel Industry Reporting of Onboard Death or Illnesses to CDC](#).

Review CDC's [Infection Control Guidelines for Cabin Crew](#)

- CDC recommends that companies review and update, as needed, their personal protection policies and communicate and train employees on how to manage sick travelers.

CDC recommends the following measures for cabin crew to protect themselves, manage a sick traveler, clean contaminated areas, and take actions after a flight.

- Practice routine handwashing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after assisting sick travelers or touching potentially contaminated body fluids or surfaces.
 - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available.
- Identify sick travelers who meet the above description.
 - Minimize contact between passengers and cabin crew and the sick person. If possible, separate the sick person from others (2 meters or 6 feet is ideal), and designate one crew member to serve the sick person.
 - Offer a facemask, if available, and the sick person can tolerate it. If a face mask is not available or cannot be tolerated, ask the sick person to cover their mouth and nose with tissues when coughing or sneezing.
- Treat all body fluids (such as respiratory secretions, diarrhea, vomit, or blood) as if they are infectious.
 - Wear disposable gloves when tending to a sick traveler or touching body fluids or potentially contaminated surfaces. [Remove gloves carefully](#)  [PDF – 1 page] to avoid contaminating yourself then wash hands.
 - When tending to a sick traveler from Wuhan who has fever, persistent cough, or difficulty breathing, consider using additional protective equipment in the [Universal Precaution Kit](#)  [PDF – 1 page]  : face mask, eye protection, and a gown to cover clothing.
 - Properly dispose of gloves and other disposable items that came in contact with the sick person or body fluids in biohazard bag or a secured plastic bag labeled as “biohazard.”
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces according to airline protocol.

After arrival, CDC Quarantine Station staff will conduct a health assessment of the sick traveler's symptoms and possible exposures. If necessary, CDC staff will coordinate transport to a health care facility for medical evaluation and testing. CDC will update the airline about the results of the testing and any need for follow-up of exposed crew members or passengers.

More information about 2019-nCoV

- [Novel Coronavirus \(2019-nCoV\) Wuhan, China](#)
- CDC travel health notice: [Novel Coronavirus in China](#)
- World Health Organization, [Coronavirus](#) 

Page last reviewed: January 17, 2020

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases \(NCEZID\), Division of Global Migration and Quarantine \(DGMQ\)](#)