



March 9, 2020

RE: Recommended disinfection and sanitation practices for aircrafts

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to inform you that, as part of the Government of Canada's efforts to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Public Health Agency of Canada has developed recommendations for disinfection and sanitation practices for airlines.

The protection of public health is a shared responsibility. The Public Health Agency of Canada enforces the Quarantine Act (2005) at points of entry into Canada, and is responsible for ensuring that conveyances and their contents are not a source of communicable disease of quarantine concern. Airlines play a key role in efforts to prevent the introduction and spread of communicable disease in Canada. During this period of heightened concern, we are encouraging all airlines to take additional precautions on flights arriving from regions affected by local transmission of COVID-19 in order to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus from potentially contaminated surfaces inside an aircraft.

Based on available information, it is estimated that coronaviruses can survive on hard surfaces from 24 hours to several days. Although the transfer of the virus from inanimate objects to humans is unknown, the virus can be transmitted by hand contact to the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth where infection is likely to occur. Hand and respiratory hygiene are important ways of interrupting this transmission.

Increasing the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces is an important measure in controlling the spread of infection during any outbreak. On a precautionary basis, the Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that, in addition to routine grooming practices, passenger aircraft arriving from regions affected by local transmission of novel coronavirus thoroughly clean and disinfect frequently touched areas following disembarkation (see attached Annex for details). A listing of regions affected by local transmission of COVID-19 is available at the World Health Organization website <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>.

The Public Health Agency of Canada also recommends that, following the identification of ill passengers onboard, the area within a two (2) meter radius of the affected passenger's seat be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected (see attached Annex for details). These measures should be implemented in addition to the enhanced routine sanitation practices mentioned above.

Upon identification of a suspected ill passenger with symptoms consistent with COVID-19, PHAC advises your airline and asks that these enhanced sanitation measures be implemented. If deemed necessary, PHAC may be required to take measures under the *Quarantine Act* to address any potential public health risk.

If you have any questions about the recommendations for disinfection and sanitation practices, please contact the Public Health Agency of Canada at phac.obth-aspc.bssvf@canada.ca

The current situation for COVID-19 is dynamic. As the situation and knowledge of the virus evolves, we will inform you of additional relevant information. Additional information is available on the Canada.ca website <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>.

The health and safety of Canadians is our priority. We thank you for your continued assistance in this regard.

Sincerely,



George Samiotis
Director, Office of Border and Travel Health
Public Health Agency of Canada

Annex: Environmental Sanitation Practices for Airlines to Control the Spread of Novel Coronavirus

This guidance is based on current available scientific evidence and expert opinion and is subject to change as new information on transmissibility and epidemiology becomes available. This guidance builds upon relevant Canadian guidance developed for the current and previous coronavirus outbreaks (e.g. MERS CoV and SARS-CoV), in addition to available guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The following guidance is provided by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in response to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19). It is intended to complement PHAC's guidance on [Environmental Sanitation Practices to Control the Spread of Communicable Disease in Passenger Conveyances and Terminals](#).

Recommendations

Personal Hygiene

- [Wash your hands regularly](#), and whenever they become soiled.
 - Washing hands with soap and running warm water is best, because of the removal action of soap and water on transient microorganisms.
 - Hands should be washed using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) can be used as a temporary measure until handwashing can be done. ABHS containing 60-90% alcohol concentration (optimally over 70%) are the most rapidly active of all agents used in hand disinfection. However, ABHS may not be effective when there is organic material on your hands (e.g. after using the toilet). For this reason, ABHS alone should not be used on visibly soiled hands. Use wipes to remove soil, followed by an ABHS.
- Practice proper respiratory etiquette. Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when you cough or sneeze to reduce the spread of germs. If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible. Wash your hands afterwards.

Equipment

The following equipment should be available for cleaning and disinfecting. Equipment should be kept and stored together as part of a kit that can be easily accessed and transported to the area where it will be used.

- Personal protective equipment (as required by the operator's health and safety protocol)

- Disposable cloths
- Paper towels and absorbent materials
- Waste disposal bags, labels and tape
- Cleaning agents
- Appropriate hard-surface disinfectants
- Test strips for verifying disinfectant concentrations.

Disinfectants

For areas potentially contaminated with COVID-19, a disinfectant with a broad-spectrum virucide claim is acceptable. To be consistent with PHAC's guidance for disinfecting body fluids (ie. Diarrhea, vomit, blood) a broad-spectrum virucide with a claim of effectiveness against human Norovirus is recommended for all contaminated surfaces

For routine disinfection for most environmental surfaces, a general or hospital disinfectant is acceptable. Disinfectants with efficacy as a general or hospital disinfectant may have the label claims "germicide" or "kills germs". Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the recommended dilution rates, contact times and conditions specific to the surface.

Disinfectants must be registered for sale in Canada with a Drug Identification Number (DIN). For further information regarding disinfectant products, please refer to [Health Canada's website](#) and the [Disinfectant Guidance Document](#).

Routine Sanitation

Routine cleaning and disinfection practices are essential in minimizing the spread of infection. Increasing the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is an important measure in controlling the spread of infection during any outbreak. It is recommended that all passenger aircraft arriving from areas affected by COVID-19 thoroughly clean and disinfect the frequently touched areas listed below following every flight.

Frequently touched areas include:

- Lavatories including doors, toilet handles, faucets and waste bins
- Seatbacks, tray tables and handles,
- Personal entertainment units including remote controls
- Luggage storage bin handles,
- Overhead lighting, air vents and call buttons
- Arm rests
- Seat covers
- Seatbelts
- Aisle seat headrests
- Windows and window shades.

These enhanced measures should be incorporated into the routine grooming practices and should follow existing cleaning and disinfection protocols.

Response to Ill Traveller - Enhanced Sanitation

Following the carriage of a passenger with coronavirus, the cleaning and disinfecting procedures outlined below should be followed.

Body fluids, such as respiratory tract secretions and excretions (e.g. cough, sneeze, and sputum), blood, vomit or diarrhea, may contain microorganisms that cause disease. These fluids, and surfaces that come in contact with them, should always be treated as infectious and handled with care so that diseases are not spread from one person to another.

As respiratory tract secretions and excretions are not readily visible, an area of two (2) metres in every direction from the location of the ill passenger should be considered potentially contaminated. This area includes the three (3) rows immediately in front of and behind the ill passenger, as well as adjacent seats within the two (2) metre radius, approximately five (5) seats.

Cleaning and Disinfection Steps:

1. Identify areas to be cleaned and disinfected.
2. Where possible, restrict access to the affected area until disinfection activities are completed.
3. Put on disposable, impervious gloves. Direct contact with body fluids should be avoided. Perform hand hygiene following any direct contact. Avoid hand contact with the face, especially the nose and eyes.
4. Bring all supplies needed to the affected area at the beginning of the process. This includes waste disposal bags, a detergent/cleaner, a disinfectant, water, paper towels, and cloths.
5. Use paper towels to absorb any visible body fluids. Place waste into waste disposal bags.
6. Clean visibly soiled surfaces with water and a detergent/cleaner. Cleaning is a critical step prior to disinfection. Clean equipment or surfaces in a way that avoids possible generation of aerosols.
 - Avoid pouring liquids from high above the surface
 - Avoid splashing of cleaning and disinfection products
 - Avoid using motorized cleaning equipment.
 - Vacuum cleaners should only be used after disinfection has taken place.
7. Clean and disinfect all hard surfaces in the affected areas.
8. Apply the disinfectant to the surface as per manufacturers' instructions.
 - Ensure disinfectants are fresh and verify an effective concentration by

- using test strips (for prepared disinfection solutions)
 - To avoid recontamination of disinfected areas, start at one end of the affected area and move in one direction until all surfaces have been disinfected. Do not use a circular motion.
9. Special cleaning of upholstery, carpets, or storage compartments is not required unless obviously soiled with fresh body fluids.
 - If a seat cover is obviously soiled with body fluids, it should be removed and discarded by the methods typically used for contaminated items.
 10. Remove and dispose of items such as blankets or pillows along with the passenger safety card and print materials from the affected area.
 11. Frequently replace cleaning and disinfection cloth; when they become soiled, when moving from one area to another, and when moving between areas of higher and lower likelihood of contamination.
 12. Change gloves frequently during cleaning and disinfection activities, especially if they become heavily soiled or damaged during use.
 13. Dispose of soiled cleaning cloths, disinfection cloths, disposable gloves and any other item in contact with respiratory tract secretions or excretions in a waste disposal bag.
 14. Wash hands when finished, using proper hand washing techniques.
 15. Clean and disinfect sanitation equipment that will be reused prior to storing.
 16. All final waste disposal should be done according to appropriate waste protocols.

Other Considerations

Baggage and Packages

No additional precautions are recommended for baggage and packages that accompany ill travelers. Routine precautions are recommended.

Handling Linen, Dishes, Cutlery

No additional precautions are recommended. Routine practices and precautions for handling potentially contaminated articles are sufficient.

Waste Management

No additional precautions are recommended. All personnel handling waste should use standard precautions and perform hand hygiene after removing personal protective equipment. Waste disposal should be done according to appropriate waste protocols and in accordance with applicable legislation and regulations.