Safely Restarting Aviation
ACI and IATA Joint Approach

Restarting aviation

Almost every challenge in aviation requires a team effort to solve it. Today we face the biggest challenge in commercial aviation's history: Restarting an industry that largely has ceased to operate across borders, while ensuring that it is not a meaningful vector for the spread of COVID-19.

This living document represents the joint efforts of the airline and airport industry to identify a roadmap to resuming operations, based on their longstanding commitment to safety as our highest priority. It depends for success on a partnership and collaborative approach among the key participants in the travel chain, including public authorities

The Guiding Principles

This paper is guided by the following principles:

- All measures should be **outcome based**, supported by **scientific evidence** and a robust **fact-based risk assessment**

- All measures should be aimed at **minimizing** the **risk** of **transmission** at airports (both landside & airside) and onboard aircraft through a **layered approach**.

- **Collaboration** is vital to ensure **harmonized** measures:
  - Among governments, to implement internationally consistent, mutually accepted measures that are essential to restoring air connectivity and passenger confidence in air travel;
  - Between governments and industry, particularly to ensure the practicable development and implementation of operational measures.

- Measures should be **limited in time** and **re-evaluated/ monitored** under a fixed schedule. When **more effective**, suitable, less disruptive and scientifically supported **measures** become **available**, they should be **implemented** at the earliest opportunity and **defunct measures removed**

- **Should** health **screening** measures be **necessary**, it should be introduced as **upstream** as possible in the passenger process while **minimizing impact on operations**. It is preferable for passengers to arrive at the airport **"ready to fly".** Likewise, and for international travel, it is preferable for **admissibility** to be **determined** at the **point of departure.**

- **Existing roles and responsibilities** of governments, airlines, airports and other operational stakeholders should be **respected** in implementing the response to COVID-19.

- **Public funding** of the measures should be ensured, including but not limited to infrastructure or operational changes needed for their implementation.

Moving Forward

Meeting the challenge of restarting, will mean making significant changes throughout the end-to-end passenger journey, i.e.
  - It will require governments efforts to assume their pre-existing responsibility for managing the risk of communicable diseases at airports and its funding
  - Airlines and airports will need to adapt their premises and processes to minimize transmission risks
  - Passengers will need to be empowered to take more control of their travel journey, including responsibly assessing their own level of health risk before a journey.

The recommendations presented here are outcome-based, not prescriptive. The recommendations draw on the current understanding of how COVID-19 is transmitted, and therefore what are the risks to be mitigated, what are the best solutions to do this effectively while ensuring passenger confidence. Because there is no silver bullet solution at present, we recommend a layered approach for the initial restart, as is already done with safety and security, while avoiding unnecessary redundancies, ineffective remedies and incoherent measures. As improved risk mitigation methods become available, more burdensome and less effective measures should be replaced.

We believe that this paper outlines a risk-based approach that assures that aviation continues to be the safest form of long distance travel the

world has known, and that it does not become a meaningful vector for the transmission of COVID-19. Successfully restarting air passenger travel while restoring confidence in the safety of air travel are vital pre-requisites to enabling the global economy to recover from COVID-19. In normal times, aviation delivers $2.7 trillion in global GDP contribution. More than a third of global trade by value moves by air.

Today, airlines and airports are providing irreplaceable services in the fight against COVID-19, transporting critical medical supplies—including PPE—and pharmaceuticals. When the crisis ends, aviation needs to be ready for another role—helping to restore battered economies and lift people's spirits through the power of travel. We hope this document is a useful tool in that effort.

The end-to-end passenger journey

Pre-flight

Passenger contact tracing

We foresee the need to collect more detailed passenger contact information which can be used for tracing purposes.

Where possible, the data should be collected in electronic form, and in advance of the passenger arriving at the airport including through eVisa and electronic travel authorization platforms.

IATA and ACI strongly recommend that states set up government internet portals in order to collect the required passenger data. Using internet-based technology would allow the use of a wide range of devices for the data capture (computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones, etc.).

Airport Terminal

According to each airport's specificities and the national legislation in place, airport terminal access may be restricted to workers, travelers and accompanying persons in situations such as for passengers with disabilities, reduced mobility or unaccompanied minors in an initial phase, as long as it does not create crowds and queues which would then enhance risks of transmission

Entry/Exit temperature screening measures

They have not proved to be 100% effective in delaying or mitigating a pandemic due to the low sensitivity of the systems used to detect mildly symptomatic infections and their inability to detect cases during the incubation period (false negatives).

We acknowledge, however, that these measures can play a useful role in reassuring the travelling public and act as a deterrent for travel in case of

suspicion of infection. For this reason, governments should apply a common approach on this matter to ensure consistency.

If required for such purposes, temperature screening should be implemented:
- Under conditions which minimize impact on operations at the airport and the passenger experience – in particular as regards passenger throughput across key terminal processes.
- By professional medical staff.
- Early on in the passenger process.

Social/physical distancing

It is a useful measure to limit transmission of airborne spread diseases, and it could be part of a multilayered measures approach to limiting droplet & contact (surface) spread diseases like COVID-19.

According to the local rules and regulations, as deemed necessary and in conjunction with the local airport authority, if social/physical distancing measures are considered, these should be:
- Consistent with what is applied for other transport modes – in particular urban public transport used for access to/from airports,
- As deemed necessary across the passenger flow ensuring consistency with what is applied for other transport modes – in particular urban public transport used for access to/from airports.
- Limited to the initial restart phase, as they are incompatible with the restoration and development of air connectivity over-time given their limiting factor on airport capacity and aircraft capacity.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

We recommend the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)in airport terminals following

Guidance of the local health authorities.

Cleaning and disinfection
Along with the use of PPE, cleaning and disinfection of terminals, infrastructure and all equipment is the most effective means to prevent transmission of droplet & contact (surface) spread diseases like COVID-19. This should be done on a regular basis and its frequency should be increased.

COVID-19 testing
The industry supports the use of testing when reliable. Indications from the medical community are that reliable testing with fast results is not yet available. Moreover, antibodies tests are of no use when it comes to travel and effective containment. Testing as currently performed is not a viable solution in an airport environment. However, if medical testing reliability improves, this is a measure which could be incorporated into the passenger process removing extra measures upstream.

Immunity passports
There is currently no confirmed evidence that people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have antibodies are protected from a second infection. The WHO informed that, as of 24 April 2020, no study has evaluated whether the presence of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 confers immunity to subsequent infection by this virus in humans. For this reason and at this point in the pandemic, the use of such certificates may therefore not be effective in containing transmission risks. However, we believe that immunity passports could play an important role in further facilitating the restart of air travel. If a passenger could be documented as having recovered from COVID-19 and thus considered as possibly being immune, they would not require many of the normal protections and could achieve the airport boarding and on-board processes bypassing many of the protective steps such as face cover, temperature, etc.

Check-in
In order to minimize the time spent at an airport, passengers should complete as much of the check-in process as possible before arriving at the airport. Therefore, IATA and ACI suggest that governments should remove any regulatory obstacles to enabling such things as mobile or home printed boarding passes and electronic or home printed bag tags and personal data capture online.

Self-service options should be made available and utilized as much as possible to limit contact at all passenger touchpoints. A general move towards greater use of touchless technology and biometrics should also be pursued.

Self-Bag drop
Where baggage self-service devices are in use, airlines should proactively guide passengers to self-bag drop options to minimize the interactions (physical handover of baggage) between passengers and check-in agents.

Boarding
An orderly boarding process will be necessary to limit direct physical contact between passengers, especially once load- factors start increasing. Here good cooperation between the airline, airport and government is vital. Airlines will need to revise their current boarding process for that purpose. Airports will need to assist in redesigning gate areas and governments will need to adapt any applicable local rules and regulations. The increased use of automation, such as self-scanning and biometrics should be facilitated.

Especially during the early stages of the restart phase, carry-on baggage should be limited to facilitate a smooth boarding process.

Inflight
Based on information we have analyzed, the risk of transmission of COVID-19 from one passenger to another passenger on board is very low. Possible reasons are that customers sit facing forward and not toward each other, seat backs provide a barrier, the use of HEPA filters and the direction of the air flow on board (from ceiling to floor), and the limited movement onboard aircraft once seated add to the onboard protection. As an added protection against possible in-flight transmission, IATA recommends the use of face coverings by travelers in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including in flight. In this regard, it should not be assumed that physical distancing on board (e.g. through blocked seats) would be necessary.

Comprehensive guidelines have been developed

for cabin crew that includes the management of a suspected case for communicable disease on board, for which WHO also has aligned [guidance](). This includes advice for simplified service and pre- packaged catering.

For added passenger comfort, sanitization wipes could be provided to customers to clean the spaces around them, and procedures to limit movement onboard implemented.

Revised guidelines for aircraft cleaning have been published by [IATA](), [Centers for Disease Control and]() [Prevention]() and [EASA]().

Arrival Airport

Border and Customs Control

Where declarations are required on arrival, governments should consider electronic options (mobile applications and QR codes) to minimize human-to-human contact.

For customs formalities, where possible green/red lanes for self-declarations are recommended.
Appropriate sanitary measures must be taken at secondary screening points to protect passengers and staff.

It is suggested that governments should simplify border control formalities, by enabling contactless processes (e.g. relating to the reading of passport chips, facial recognition etc.), setting up special lanes, and training their agents to detect signs of unwell passengers.

Possible redesign of immigration halls needs to be coordinated between the airport, airlines and the government.

Baggage collection

All efforts need to be made to provide a speedy baggage claim process and ensure that passengers are not made to wait for excessive amounts of time in the baggage claim area.
It will also be important that Governments ensure that the customs clearance process is as speedy as possible, and that appropriate measures are taken in case of physical baggage inspections to ensure that the same health protection measures than on departure are kept.

Transfer screening

Security and health screening for transferring passengers should take maximum advantage of "one stop-security arrangements". This relies on mutual recognition of screening measures at the originating airport and eliminates re-screening in the transfer process, thus eliminating a queuing point in the journey. Where this is not possible for all transfer traffic, consideration should be given to specific arrangements among trusted partners.

Where transfer security screening is required, it should follow appropriate sanitary requirements as previously described in the departure process.

Where health screening measures may be required the recommendations for the arrival process should be followed.

Conclusion

There is currently no single measure that could mitigate all the risks of restarting air travel. However, we believe that an effective implementation on an outcome based and layered approach, of the above-mentioned range of measures that are already possible, represents the most effective way of balancing risk mitigation with the need to unlock economies and to enable travel in the immediate term.

As further clarity is achieved in terms of additional measures such as effective COVID-19 testing and immunity, new measures can be incorporated into the passenger process to further mitigate the risks and further build confidence in air travel, thus taking us further on the journey towards a resumption of 'normal' operations.