



ASSOCIATION OF FLIGHT ATTENDANTS - CWA, AFL-CIO

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October 17, 2014

Ron Klain
Ebola Response Coordinator
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20210

RE: Control of Ebola Transmission through Commercial Aviation

The Association of Flight Attendants-CWA, AFL-CIO (AFA) is concerned by the health risk to all airline employees, passengers, and the public at-large from the ongoing Ebola epidemic. An Ebola patient has already flown on two domestic commercial flights, on October 10th and 13th. Passengers and crew, including our members, are being interviewed by public health officials to assess risk of exposure.

Given the serious nature of the Ebola virus disease and its potentially grave threat to public health and national security, we continue to believe and insist that voluntary measures and mere guidance from public health authorities are inadequate to bring this situation under control. Included with this letter is a list of measures that AFA urges be put into effect immediately through the relevant government agencies to ensure that the health of all airline workers and the public at large are protected.

INFLIGHT SAFETY PROFESSIONALS



Page 2
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October 17, 2014

Implementing these measures at each of our nation's airlines will also reassure the traveling public and protect our U.S. aviation industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara Nelson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sara Nelson
AFA-CWA International President

cc: Dr. Tom Frieden, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Michael Huerta, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration
John Pistole, Administrator, Transportation Security Administration
Dr. David Michaels, Asst. Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health
Dr. Margaret A. Hamburg, Commissioner of Food and Drugs
R. Gil Kerlikowske, Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection

Ebola and Other Communicable Disease Incident Response Checklists

AFA calls for the federal agencies overseeing aviation safety and health to require that all airlines comply with the following measures.

Prevention for All Crew Members

- Provide an adequate supply for every Flight Attendant on all flights of non-allergenic medical gloves and masks that are determined appropriate protection by the CDC and/or WHO.
- Provide an adequate supply of medical gloves and masks that are determined appropriate protection by the CDC and/or WHO for any volunteer medical personnel assisting with medical situations.
- Ensure each flight has one universal precaution kit for every Flight Attendant on duty plus two additional kits for intervening healthcare personnel. Universal precaution kits should include all items specified by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) as follows:
 - Universal precaution kit:
 - Dry powder that can convert small liquid spills into a sterile granulated gel
 - Germicidal disinfectant for surface cleaning
 - Skin wipes
 - Face/eye mask (separate or combined)
 - Gloves (disposable)
 - Protective apron
- Permit Flight Attendants working on flights to wear gloves any time during the flight without any discriminatory or disciplinary actions being taken against them.
- Issue guidance to all crew in the event that a passenger exhibits signs or symptoms of infectious disease during a flight.
- Require pre-flight briefings to communicate the use of universal precaution procedures and equipment to prevent exposure on a flight and to review guidance in the event that a passenger exhibits signs or symptoms of infectious disease during a flight.
- Provide an adequate supply of masks and sick bags for any passengers who exhibit symptoms on a flight.
- Provide an airsick bag that is immediately available for each passenger.
- Ensure all aircraft meet the federal requirements for access to soap and running water.
- Provide on all flights equipment necessary to take temperatures of potentially infected persons without requiring physical contact with those individuals.

- It is a federal requirement to have running water, soap and clean towels on every flight – but if a flight is scheduled to leave in violation of this regulation then the airline should ensure Flight Attendant(s) has the ability to wash hands with running water and soap prior to departure of every flight and provision a sufficient quantity of sanitary alcohol-based wipes.
- Make all of the above stated supplies no-go items (required for aircraft dispatch).

Aircraft Cleaning

- Require airlines to follow CDC recommended guidelines for cleaning aircraft and any contaminated areas after a flight with a sick traveler who may have Ebola or other communicable diseases, including protection and training for the aircraft cleaners.

Crew Members on a Flight with Person(s) Suspected of Being Infected with Ebola or Other Communicable Disease

- Immediately lock-down crew names, similar to an airline incident/accident.
- Immediately contact the union leadership with the names, cell phone numbers, current locations, and in-sheltering locations of impacted crewmembers.
- Coordinate with the crewmember union leadership around any issues related to care and protection of the crew.
- Immediately remove crew with pay and benefits for the entire disease incubation period.
- Provide all resources necessary to safely in-shelter the crewmembers during the incubation period; for example, safe and secure location with meals and medical supplies provided, including, but not limited to, thermometers for self-monitoring and protective masks.
- Cover all medical costs related to potential exposure, including, but not limited to, tests, doctor visits, and medications.
- Once the in-sheltering period is over, provide transportation to each crewmember's choice of base or home.
- Provide an external (non-airline employee) mental health professional who can make daily confidential telephonic wellness calls to the in-sheltering crewmember. Crewmembers may accept or decline calls at their own discretion.
- Within 8 hours of knowledge of the incident, the company and union will implement the communications plan.

Management Plan Checklist

- Establish an unrestricted, transparent, and confidential on-going communication flow plan between the company, union(s), and managing public health authorities.
- The company and the union(s) will develop a joint communications plan, including message templates, to be used in the event of a communicable disease related incident aboard an aircraft.
- Establish a plan for in-sheltering of crewmembers following a communicable disease related incident aboard an aircraft.