

# Airlines: CDC's Public Health Partner

## *Guidance for Airlines on Reporting Onboard Deaths or Illnesses to CDC*



National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases  
Division of Global Migration and Quarantine



## Goal

*To improve the air crew's ability to recognize and report all onboard deaths and certain illnesses to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*

# Objectives

**After reviewing these materials, you will be able to**

1. Recognize situations in which airlines are required by U.S. regulations to report to CDC, and others that CDC requests be reported.
2. Use reporting tools from CDC's website to help recognize and report ill travelers and onboard deaths.
3. Identify two options pilots have for notifying CDC of ill travelers and onboard deaths.
4. Apply the RING (Recognize, Isolate, Notify, Give Support) steps to recognize and notify CDC of certain ill travelers and onboard deaths.

# U.S. Reporting Requirements

- **(42 CFR\* 71.21(b)) Pilots of international flights arriving to the U.S. are required** to report before arrival any deaths or illnesses (as defined in the regulations) among passengers or crew to the CDC Quarantine Station at or nearest to the airport of arrival.
- **(42 CFR 70.4) Pilots of interstate flights are required** to report a suspected case of contagious disease among passengers or crew members before arrival to the local health authority with jurisdiction for the arrival airport. *(Reporting to CDC will fulfill this requirement.)*

\*CFR stands for code of federal regulations

# What is a Communicable Disease of Public Health Concern?

- Cholera
- Diphtheria
- Infectious tuberculosis
- Plague
- Smallpox
- Yellow fever
- Viral hemorrhagic fevers
- Severe acute respiratory syndromes
- Influenza that can cause a pandemic

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Meningococcal disease

**CDC is authorized by Executive Order of the President to issue federal isolation and quarantine orders for these diseases.**

# How Infections Spread

**Infections are spread in different ways. Some are spread by:**

- **Droplets or aerosols**

Coughing, sneezing, or even singing or talking may spread germs that cause illnesses. These germs may be inhaled or enter through the surfaces of the eyes, nose or mouth.

- **Contaminated surfaces**

Another way of spreading germs is by touching contaminated surfaces with your hands, then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose, before washing your hands.

Note: Any body fluid such as mucous, diarrhea, vomit or blood must be treated as potentially infectious.

# RING: A Response Tool for Air Crews

## **RECOGNIZE**

- All deaths and certain illnesses (see next slide)

## **ISOLATE**

- Separate the ill traveler from others to the extent possible
  - If not possible, minimize exposure to others
- Ask any ill traveler who is coughing or sneezing or has fever and a rash to:
  - cover mouth with a tissue
  - wear a face mask (if tolerated)

## **NOTIFY**

Pilot can use options below:

- Air Traffic Control (*for aircraft outside of U.S. airspace or for U.S. destination*) OR
- Airline's point of contact (*optional for U.S. arrivals or interstate flights*)

## **GIVE SUPPORT**

- Follow your airline's procedures for getting medical assistance
- Follow instructions from CDC Quarantine Station

# **RECOGNIZE** *all deaths and certain illnesses*

*[\*Required by U.S. regulations]*

- **All deaths\***
- **Ill travelers with**
  - **Fever\*** (*warm to the touch, history of feeling feverish, or measured temperature of 100°F/37.8°C or greater*) reported to have lasted more than 48 hours;  
**OR**
  - **Fever\*** of any duration, **AND** one or more of these conditions:
    - Skin rash\*
    - Swollen glands\* (visible)
    - Jaundice\* (yellowing of skin or eyes)
    - Persistent coughing
    - Persistent vomiting
    - Difficulty breathing
    - Headache with stiff neck
    - Decreased consciousness
    - Unexplained bleeding
  - OR**
  - **Persistent diarrhea\***



Note: Refer to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) document 444 and Annex 9, Ch. 8, 8.15 of the Chicago Convention for ICAO reporting requirements.



# Definitions of Symptoms



**Skin rash:** is the abnormal appearance of the skin. It appears as discolored bumps or flat spots or areas, or blisters or bumps containing fluid or pus that are intact or crusted over. This photo shows a child with some fluid-filled bumps on the face due to chickenpox.



**Swollen glands (visible):** is an enlargement of the glands (lymph nodes) located in the head, neck, axilla (armpit), or groin. This photo shows swelling of the glands of the jaw due to mumps.



**Jaundice:** is the yellowish discoloration of skin and/or whites of the eyes. Acute (new onset) or chronic jaundice can be a sign of a liver infection. This photo shows a man with yellowing of the eyes due to hepatitis A.

Click on link for [Definitions of Symptoms for Reportable Illnesses.](#)

# Observations or Questions to Consider

## Observations

- Passenger who seems unwell
- You notice a passenger going to the restroom many times

## Questions

- How are you feeling?
- Do you have a fever now or have you had one recently?
- Have you recently been around anyone who has been sick with similar symptoms?
- What countries have you visited during your trip?



**Click on link for** [CDC Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Cabin Crew.](#)

## ***/ISOLATE***

- Separate the ill traveler from others to the extent possible
  - If not possible, minimize the number of persons directly exposed to the ill traveler
- Ask any ill traveler who is coughing or sneezing or has fever and a rash to:
  - cover mouth with a tissue
  - wear a face mask (if tolerated)



**Click on link for** [\*\*CDC Infection Control Guidelines for Cabin Crew Members.\*\*](#)

# **NOTIFY**

## **The pilot can notify CDC using options\* below:**

- ATC (*for aircraft outside of U.S. airspace or for U.S. destination*).

OR

- Airline's point of contact (POC) who will then notify CDC  
(*optional for U.S. arrivals or interstate flights*).



## **Provide information collected by cabin crew:**

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ✓ Aircraft identification   | ✓ Number of persons on board                 |
| ✓ Departure airport         | ✓ Number of suspected cases(s) on board      |
| ✓ Destination airport       | ✓ Nature of the public health risk, if known |
| ✓ Estimated time of arrival |  |

\* Either of these two options meets U.S. federal regulations for reporting to CDC.

# Further Notification Steps

*CDC Quarantine Station staff will communicate with the airline to gather additional information and provide recommendations*



## If pilot notifies ATC

- ATC will notify CDC's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) through the Domestic Events Network using the code "...requests a CDC consult"
- CDC EOC will notify the appropriate CDC Quarantine Station

## If pilot notifies airline POC (e.g., Operations Center, Flight Control, airline station manager)

The POC contacts the:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/QuarantineStationContactListFull.html> at or closest to the airport where you are arriving OR
- CDC EOC (770.488.7100), who will then notify the appropriate CDC Quarantine Station

Click on link for

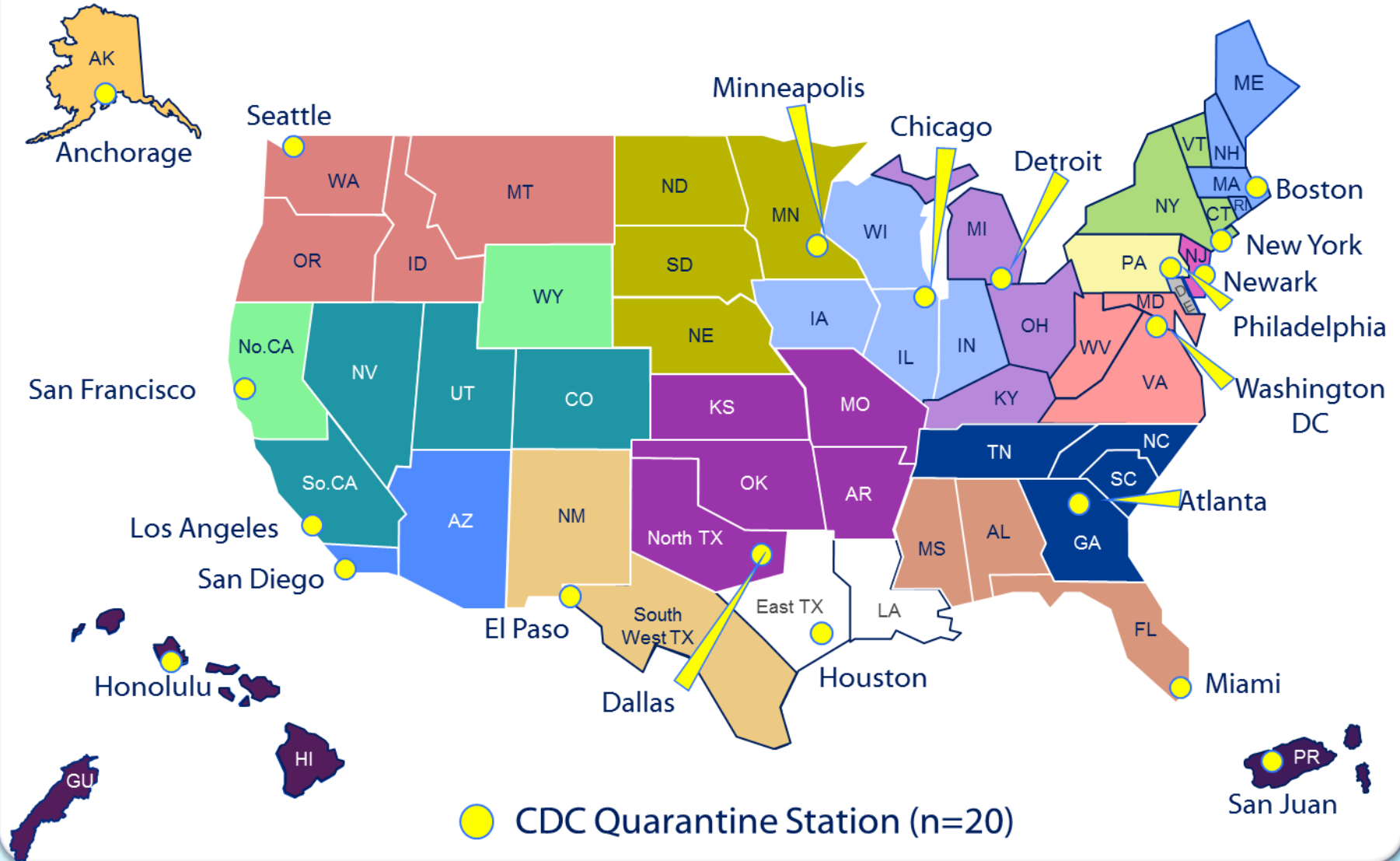
**[CDC's Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Pilots.](#)**

# Notification based on Situation

If situation (during flight or upon arrival) involves	Then
Death onboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report as soon as possible to CDC</li><li>• Refer to <a href="#">CDC Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Pilots</a></li></ul>
Ill traveler with symptoms required U.S. law or ICAO requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Report as soon as possible to CDC</li><li>• Refer to <a href="#">CDC Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Cabin Crew</a></li><li>• Refer to ICAO Annex 9, Ch.8, 8.15</li></ul>
Some symptoms but not sure if symptoms are suggestive of a communicable disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refer to <a href="#">CDC Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Cabin Crew</a></li><li>• Refer to ICAO Annex 9, Ch.8, 8.15</li></ul>
Ill traveler without any “required” or “requested” symptoms per U.S. law or ICAO requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do not report to CDC</li></ul>

# CDC Quarantine Station Jurisdictions

[Click here to find this map and contact lists.](#)





# ***GIVE SUPPORT***

## **Follow**

- Your airline's procedure for medical assistance
- Instructions from the CDC Quarantine Station\*

## **If requested by CDC**

- Gather additional information
- Hold release of flight until assessment from CDC
- Read public health announcements
- Assist with distributing
  - passenger locator forms
  - health information



\*Emergency medical services may at times provide recommendations when CDC Quarantine Station staff are not on site.



# Public Health Announcements (PHAs)

## **Read when assessment suggests possible public health risk:**

- Please remain seated for an announcement.
- An ill traveler onboard our flight has been evaluated by public health officials.
- There is a possible risk that passengers seated near this ill person might have been exposed to a contagious disease.
- As a precaution, passengers seated close to the sick person in a designated zone will remain onboard for a few minutes to get some additional information.
- Other passengers are not considered to be at risk and no precautions or follow-up from public health officials are necessary.



# Resources

- ❑ **Definitions of Symptoms for Reportable Illnesses**

<http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/reporting-deaths-illness/definitions-symptoms-reportable-illnesses.html>

- ❑ **CDC Infection Control Guidelines for Cabin Crew Members**

<http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/managing-sick-travelers/commercial-aircraft/infection-control-cabin-crew.html>

- ❑ **CDC's Death and Disease Reporting Tool for Pilots**

<http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/air/reporting-deaths-illness/pilots.html>

- ❑ **CDC Quarantine Station map and phone numbers**

<http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/quarantine-stations-us.html>

- ❑ **ICAO document 444 and Annex 9, Ch. 8, 8.15 of the Chicago Convention**

**By early reporting of potential contagious diseases, prompt ground response can be made for timely care. This will reduce the risk of spreading disease, and minimize travel disruption.**

**For more information, please contact:**

your local CDC Quarantine Station

[www.cdc.gov/quarantine/QuarantineStationContactListFull.html](http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/QuarantineStationContactListFull.html)