

INDUSTRY COMMUNIQUÉ

13 March 2020

COVID-19 AND SACAA OPERATIONS

In view of the COVID-19 Corona virus outbreak in the country, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) would like to provide the following update in relation to the SACAA operations during this time.

Background

On 10 January 2020, Chinese health officials reported 41 cases of pneumonia due to the novel Corona virus (2019-nCoV), including seven patients with severe illness and one death. Preliminary analysis of the viral genome from China and other countries suggests that initial transmission from an animal reservoir (Fish market in Wuhan, China) to humans could have occurred as early as October 2019.

Information about the Virus

According to the information from the World Health Organization (WHO) a Corona virus is a type of virus that is common across the world. Previously two other outbreaks of the Corona virus were reported. The first type was called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which appeared in China in 2002 and affected 26 countries in 2003 with a total of 8000 cases. The second type of Corona virus, which appeared in 2012, is called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). To date there are 2519 laboratory-confirmed cases of MERS with 866 associated deaths.

COVID-19 is a new strain of the Coronavirus.

In brief, the Coronavirus is a viral infection with similar symptoms to that of the common cold or 'flu. Symptoms of the infection may include a **fever, coughing, sneezing and difficulty with breathing**. These symptoms may range from asymptomatic to severe, and in some cases may result in death. The incubation period of COVID-19 is between 2 and 14 days. This means that if a person remains well 14 days after contact with someone with confirmed Corona virus, it is unlikely that they have been infected.

As at 13 March 2020, a total of 127 countries and territories have been affected by the virus; 134 198 people have been infected and 4990 deaths have been reported. The Department of Health have reported about 19 cases to date in South Africa. No deaths have been reported whilst there are people who have also been cleared or recovered from the infection. This information changes on an ongoing basis.

Precautionary Measures at the SACAA premises and other business environments

Given the fast-spreading nature of this virus, and high interactions between different countries especially in the aviation industry, the organisation has taken the following steps:

As an organisation we are putting the following precautionary measures in place:

- If any industry member display or has been in contact with an infected person, you are encouraged to call the **National Institute of Communicable Disease (NICD) hotline (082 8839920)** and be referred to designated hospitals for further testing.
- The SACAA has encouraged our staff members to report any symptoms experienced by staff or their family members. Affected staff members are expected to stay at home and visit a health facility for testing. This information will also be used to advise staff and clients who have been in contact with that particular employee for further actions.
- The SACAA is reviewing all industry events in the light of the increasing number of suspected or infected cases reported in South Africa. As a result, the National Aviation Conference was postponed and will be hosted within the next three months from now. Kindly look out for other postponements and cancellations which will be communicated by the Regulator whenever necessary.
- Management is monitoring all travel by SACAA employees, especially to affected countries with a view of postponing such engagements to a time that is relatively safe for employees to travel. This will affect inspections or surveillance of some operators. The SACAA will communicate directly with such affected operators on the way forward.
- For clients visiting the SACAA offices in Midrand, Cape Town, Rand Airport and Lanseria, kindly note the following:
 - The SACAA has distributed sanitisers to all employees at their desks including personnel providing cleaning services and physical security.
 - Kindly use available sanitisers that may be found in public spaces to protect yourself and SACAA personnel.
 - The Regulator is encouraging clients who display any of the symptoms highlighted above to postpone their visit to any of the Regulators facilities until they have been tested and cleared.
 - Clients who are walking in to apply for licences, write examinations or any other transaction may be subjected to precautionary questioning with a view of taking appropriate action.
 - Those who display any of symptoms outlined above may be isolated to protect the rest of the staff and clients.
 - The SACAA has made arrangements with Waterfall Park Hospital in Midrand and Netcare 911 for ambulance services to attend to any emergency situations.
 - The SACAA staff has been trained in managing the virus both at work and at home.
 - From an industry perspective, the SACAA has trained over 5000 members of the industry on how to deal with any cases at our different airports in line with the ICAO CAPSCA Programme and Civil Aviation Regulations.
 - Lastly, the SACAA would like to urge industry to minimise face-to-face meetings with the Regulator where such can be avoided until the situation reaches manageable levels. Technology platforms can be explored for remote / virtual meetings such as video or conference calls, etc.

We would like to give the industry assurance that the SACAA has taken precautionary measures to protect clients as far as it is practically possible. The SACAA will continue to monitor the situation and adjust its measures accordingly. Such will be communicated to the Industry as and when necessary.

We appreciate the understanding of our valued stakeholders and apologise for any inconvenience the above measures may cause to your staff and business.

Regards,



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Ms Poppy KHOZA
Director of Civil Aviation