
ACI ADVISORY BULLETIN

Security screening best practices during COVID-19

Montreal, 20 March 2020 – As the COVID-19 global pandemic continues to unfold, Airports Council International (ACI) World has gathered the following best practices from airports and screening authorities to help protect screeners, passengers and staff while preserving aviation security objectives.

Checkpoint management

Prior to passengers or staff approaching screening points, hand sanitizers and disinfection products should be provided. If health screening is required, non-contact thermometers should be used in a designated area prior to the checkpoint.

It should be noted that hydrogen peroxide-based hand sanitizers may increase the likelihood of false alarms with ETD testing.

Appropriate measures should be established with government departments when passengers show signs of illness and need to be quarantined.

If passenger traffic permits, operate security lines that are not adjacent to each other.

This is effective in maintaining a minimum 1.5 meter gap between checkpoints and mitigates the risk of exposure for screeners and passengers.

Checkpoint managers, however, should be mindful that the creation of queues prior to the checkpoint should be avoided.

Alcohol-based or hydrogen peroxide-based hand sanitizers should be distributed to staff for the cleaning and disinfection of their hands, and screening staff should wear gloves.

At regular intervals, screening staff should conduct routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched/exposed surfaces and security screening equipment, including trays at the security checkpoint and baggage areas.

Employees are encouraged to wash their hands after cleaning and after removing gloves.

Screening of passengers and staff

If agreed by local screening authorities, screeners can allow passengers or staff to keep their gloves and/or masks on during screening.

When conducting screening using walk through metal detectors, screeners should minimize the use of hand searches. To facilitate this, screeners should reinforce communication with passengers in front of the walk-through metal detector (WTMD) or body scanner, so they have properly divested and are less likely to cause an alarm.

For a WTMD, this includes removal of all metallic objects, for a body scanner, removal of all items from pockets or items on the body that would usually cause an alarm.

For alarm(s) resolution, airports should opt for resolution by explosive trace detection equipment (ETD) or explosive detection dogs (EDD) instead of hand search.

If other methods of resolution are unavailable, passengers/staff should be requested to go back and further divest objects that could be the cause of the alarms until no alarm is triggered.

This will depend on volume of passengers – a risk assessment should be made to determine risk of creating a queue with people in close proximity versus deployment of targeted hand search.

In the case where the people being screened still trigger alarms after further divestments, airports should opt for targeted hand search instead of a full hand search.

When using ETD, screeners should limit their contact with the hands of people being screened. If the concept of operations (CONOPS) allows for the reuse of the swabs, if possible, this should be discontinued, and one swab used per person. There is some opinion that the high temperature used by ETD may be sufficient to kill a virus enabling swabs to be used multiple times. Airports should confirm with their local health authority.

If there is a need to conduct a hand search, screeners should adapt their methodology to avoid being face-to-face with passengers or other persons being screened.

One method is to perform the hand search while remaining behind the persons being screened. Screeners should also change gloves after each hand search.

Screening of cabin baggage or other items carried

For screening with ETD, the same methodology for screening passenger applies – One swab to be used per tray.

When using explosive detection system equipment (EDS), screeners should limit the use of hand search to the strict minimum.

Where the identity of an article is unclear the baggage should be screened again by one or more of the following methods where possible:

- X-ray equipment, whereby the same screener examines the baggage from a different angle than that used during the original screening
- explosive detection dogs
- explosive trace detection.

In the case where hand search is still necessary, screeners should change gloves after each hand search.

For conducting screening of liquids, aerosols and gels (LAGS), alcohol-based hand disinfectants could be exempted from screening if the airport's regulatory body permits.

This exemption should be granted after a visual check to determine such item is indeed a hand disinfectant.

Protection for screening agents

When security inspection personnel are on duty, disposable gloves should be provided to the staff. If able, surgical masks, uniform caps or disposable medical caps, goggles, and protective suits, should be provided as needed.

Attention should be paid to the following points:

- hands should be disinfected before wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)
- protective masks should be changed every 4 hours
- caps should fully cover all hair, including shock hair on the hairline
- long hair should be fastened tightly on top the head and put into the cap, and the edges of caps should fit close to the sides of ears
- protective equipment needs to be replaced immediately when exposed to passenger's blood, vomit and other potentially contagious body fluids
- reusable goggles should be promptly sterilized and dried after each use
- hands should not touch faces when taking off protective equipment, and
- the removed disposable protective equipment should be put into medical waste bags.

A method should be put place to collect the discarded gloves (and swabs) as they may be considered hazardous material.

For staff screening checkpoints, screeners should avoid touching others' access control cards.

Signage for passengers






To promote best practice in slowing down the spread of COVID-19, States may ask airport operators to provide displays informing the public of measures that should be undertaken.

The displays should be in view of all passengers approaching the checkpoint. Here is an example of a display.




CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

WHILE OUTSIDE OF CANADA, YOU MAY HAVE COME IN CONTACT WITH THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES COVID-19



For the next 14 days:

-  self-isolate (stay home and keep your distance from others)
-  do not have visitors, especially older adults or those with medical conditions, who are at a higher risk of developing serious illness
-  monitor your health for **fever (greater or equal to 38°C), cough and difficulty breathing**
-  wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available
-  cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing or sneezing

MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

-  **FEVER**
-  **COUGH**
-  **DIFFICULTY BREATHING**

IF YOU START HAVING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

-  Separate yourself from others as soon as you have a symptom of COVID-19.
-  Visit the provincial or territorial public health website where you are located for more information, including when to contact your public health authority.

Ends

State regulations supersede the information contained in this advisory where applicable.

Airports Council International (ACI), the trade association of the world's airports, was founded in 1991 with the objective of fostering cooperation among its member airports and other partners in world aviation, including the International Civil Aviation Organization, the International Air Transport Association and the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization. In representing the best interests of airports during key phases of policy development, ACI makes a significant contribution toward ensuring a global air transport system that is safe, secure, customer-centric and environmentally sustainable. As of January 2020, ACI serves 668 members, operating 1979 airports in 176 countries.