

## Recent events and developments

Last week the European Commission released a package concerning the re-emergence of tourism and travel in the wake of COVID-19. The Commission identified the possibility to resume travel this summer in correlation to three criteria; epidemiological development, containment measures and economic and social considerations. It is therefore important to analyse when and whether it will be safe to resume air travel for work.

### Assessment

In the wake of pathogenic uncertainty and the proximate plausible resumption of air travel, a key question to ask is, what will, if any, be the dangers of taking a plane? The WHO and CDC have highlighted how travellers are unlikely to contract COVID-19 on commercial airlines. Airplanes recycle air at a superior rate than most public spaces by distributing all recycled air through high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filters, which proficiently deter the recirculation of particles containing viruses. The filters can capture up to 99.99% of airborne microbes in the air. HEPA filters can be found in most airlines such as KLM, China Southern, Ethiopian, Emirates and Turkish airlines. Nevertheless, the WHO has stated that passengers seated within 2-3 rows of an infected traveller are at a higher risk of contracting the virus, especially on longer flights. The risks are however lower than contracting the virus while transiting in the airport. In prospect, there is yet to be any official recollection of cases in which COVID-19 has spread within a passenger plane, hence, following standard protocol is likely to suffice for now.

### Impact

Re-opening the air space to all-purpose travel will allow organizations to resume their operations abroad, however, such a transition can result in a number of hindrances. First of all, an organizations resilience and contingency plan towards business continuity and risk reduction will be tested, if an employee were to become ill during their travel. How well they can mitigate such risks will demonstrate the organizations 'Duty of Care' capacities. Hence, applicable insurances tailored to the specific needs (balancing potential risks with the area of deployment) and an adaptive security framework will be of essence to reduce physical and mental hazards to the employees and to prevent any economic backdrops. Secondly, it is important to consider that some smaller airlines during domestic travel in developing countries might not have HEPA measures, increasing the likelihood of contracting the virus amongst passengers. Hence, organizations need to apply travel risk management (TRM) protocols to reduce any potential risks.

### Advice from Expat Preventive:

- What health and safety protocols should one follow during travel?
  - To minimize contact at departure, passengers should buy tickets and check in online.
  - Try to minimize your time spend in the airport, avoid loitering by going straight to the gate.
  - If necessary, utilize personal protective equipment (PPE) and always follow hygienic practises.
- If possible, book a window seat in the front section of the plane. Passengers in window seats have the lowest likelihood of coming in contact with an infected person as they will have fewer encounters.
- Provide your airlines with your contact information when booking a ticket so they can contact you in the event that you are exposed to a sick passenger on the flight.
- Follow local government updates on immigration developments. Check our partner organization Safeture's tool for information on border restrictions and flight openings: <https://openupforbusiness.com/>

### Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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