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## **GUIDELINE ON AVIATION PERSONNEL WITH A CONFIRMED COVID-19 POSITIVE DIAGNOSIS**

### **PREAMBLE:**

**WHEREAS** the World Health Organization (WHO) has, on March 11, declared COVID-19 a pandemic, pointing to the over 118,000 cases of the Corona virus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the associated risk of further global spread;

**WHEREAS** the Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs has, on 15 March 2020 and in terms of section 27 of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) issued a Declaration of a National Disaster and has classified COVID-19 as a National Disaster;

**WHEREAS** the President of the Republic of South Africa has imposed a travel ban on foreign nationals from high-risk countries such as Italy, Iran, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom and China as from 18 March 2020 and later prohibited all cross-border travel by persons, with certain exceptions;

**WHEREAS** the Minister of Transport (the Minister) has, on 18 March 2020 and in terms of section 43(1)(h) of the International Air Services Act, 1993 (Act No. 60 of 1993) issued the International Air Services Regulations, 2020 (the Regulations) to deal with the prohibition of embarkation and disembarkation of foreign nationals at international airports designated as ports of entry; to provide for improved hygiene control and disinfection facilities at international airports designated as ports of entry operated by licensed airport operators; cargo handling facilities; airports repair facilities; providers of airport maintenance or services; airport terminals; terminal operations and licensed airport operations; and the implementation of a tracking, tracing and monitoring system at airports and the reporting of such, and the prohibition of holding of mass gatherings in and around airports;

**WHEREAS** the Minister has, on 18 March 2020 and under section 100(1)(a) of the Civil Aviation Act, 2009 (Act No. 13 of 2009) made a Ministerial Order (the Order) for the South African Civil Aviation Authority to take all the necessary steps to give effect to the Order and the Directions issued by the Minister;

**IN ORDER TO** give effect to the Regulations and the Minister's Directions, the SACAA is, in terms of the Ministerial Order, mandated to issue guidelines, monitor, oversee and enforce

compliance with International Air Services (COVID-19 restrictions on the movement of Persons and Crew) Regulations, 2020;

**WHEREAS** the Minister has, on 26 March 2020, issued Directions in terms of regulation 10 (7) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) in order to provide for the prohibition of International and Domestic passenger flights, conditions for cargo flights entering the country, improved hygiene control and disinfection facilities at international airports designated as ports of entry operated by licensed airport operators, cargo handling facilities, airports repair facilities, providers of airport maintenance or services, airport terminals, terminal operations and licensed airport operations and oversight responsibilities;

**RECOGNISING THAT** the Minister has, on 31 March 2020, amended the Directions issued in terms of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002) in order to provide for international and domestic passenger flights, cargo transportation, technical flights, crew, medical evacuations, evacuations, and repatriation;

**AND THAT** pursuant to Regulation (4)(7), 20(1) and (2) of the Disaster Management Regulations, 2020, the Minister issued Directions on 04 May 2020 to provide for measures necessary to manage and eliminate the risk of spreading of COVID-19, as applicable to aviation personnel;

**IN ORDER TO** prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 through aircraft and air transportation, and to act in accordance with the principle of "targeted and detailed prevention and control measures";

**WHEREFORE, IN ORDER TO ensure compliance with the Regulations, the Ministerial Order and the Minister's Directions, as amended, in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the interests of aviation safety, the Director of Civil Aviation issues the Guideline hereunder to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 through aircraft and air transportation, and to act in accordance with the principle of "targeted and detailed prevention and control measures" for aviation licenced personnel.**

## **1. REFERENCE MATERIAL**

- a) World Health Organisation;
- b) Civil Aviation Regulations; and
- c) Other States.

## **2. APPLICABILITY**

### **Classes of medical certificates**

This Guideline is applicable to the holder of a Class 1, 2, 3 and 4 Medical Certificate, as well as a Class 5 Medical Certificate.

## **3. PURPOSE**

- 3.1 To ensure proper management of an aviation personnel member diagnosed with COVID-19 and who holds a licence and a medical certificate;

3.2 To provide for the conditions under which aviation personnel diagnosed with COVID-19 may return to duty; and

3.3 To outline the process to be followed for submission of the required specialists' reports that must be submitted to the Medical Assessors of the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) prior to the applicant exercising the privileges of their medical certificates and licences.

#### **4 ISSUING OF MEDICAL CERTIFICATES IN TERMS OF CIVIL AVIATION REGULATION (CARS) 67.00.8**

Part 67.00.8 provides that if a medical certificate has been issued to an applicant who does not comply with the appropriate medical requirements and standards referred to in regulation 67.00.2 (6), the Medical Assessor may cancel the medical certificate; or endorse the medical certificate with such requirement or limitation as necessary, if the medical conclusion requires that—

- a) additional examinations or tests be performed;
- b) medical examinations or tests be performed at shorter intervals; or
- c) the safe performance of the duties essential to the operation of an aircraft by the holder of the medical certificate depends on compliance with any special medical limitation.

#### **4.1 PART 67.00.2 OF CIVIL AVIATION TECHNICAL STANDARD (CATS)**

Part 67.00.2 of the SA-CATS provides that any disease or abnormality, or result of disease or surgical operation, affecting the lungs, mediastinum, pleura, chest wall or respiratory passages of a severity likely to cause infection, functional disorder or sudden or subtle incapacitation at altitude, will be disqualifying, unless acceptable and effective treatment has controlled any additional risk of functional disorder or sudden or subtle incapacitation. The relevant protocols are contained in Schedules 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Document SA-CATS 67.

### **5 PRE-ASSESSMENT OF AVIATION MEDICAL PERSONNEL FOR FITNESS TO FLY**

#### **5.1 REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICANTS WITH LABORATORY-CONFIRMED COVID-19 AND WHO HAVE HAD SYMPTOMS**

5.1.1 This is applicable to medical certificate holders or applicants who:

- a) Tested positive for COVID-19 and who have been symptomatic; or
- b) Have been subjected to quarantine or self-isolation orders under the direction of a Public Health Authority or treating Physician, due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19.

5.1.2 The Applicant may discontinue home isolation and return to work on condition that:

- a) A medical report from a treating Physician has been submitted to the SACAA Medical Assessors for the panel's consideration of the applicant's fitness to fly. The treating Physician's report must outline at least the following:
  - (i) That there are no other household members with respiratory illness;
  - (ii) The resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications;

- (iii) The resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g. no cough or shortness of breath); and
- (iv) The clinical course, including complications and the results of any tests or studies conducted.

## **5.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR AVIATION PERSONNEL WITH CONFIRMED POSITIVE COVID-19 RESULTS, INCLUDING PERSONNEL WHO HAVE NOT HAD SYMPTOMS**

**5.2.1** This is applicable to medical certificate holders or applicants who:

- a) Tested positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic; or
- b) Were subjected to quarantine or self-isolation orders under the direction of a Public Health Authority or treating Physician due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19.

**5.2.2** The Applicant may discontinue home isolation and return to work on condition that:

- a) A medical report from a treating Physician has been submitted to the SACAA Medical Assessors for the panel's consideration of the applicant's fitness to fly. The treating Physician's medical report must outline at least the following:
  - (i) That no other household member has had a respiratory illness;
  - (ii) That at least 7 days have passed since the date of the aviation personnel member's first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test; and
  - (iii) The clinical course and results of any tests or studies conducted.

## **5.3 REQUIREMENTS FOR AVIATION PERSONNEL EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 WHO HAVE NOT HAD A CONFIRMED POSITIVE TEST:**

**5.3.1** Aviation Personnel evaluated or treated by a medical professional who are directed to self-care at home may discontinue home isolation and be eligible to return to work on condition that:

- a) A medical report from a treating Physician has been submitted to the SACAA Medical Assessors for the panel's consideration of the applicant's fitness to fly. The treating Physician's medical report must outline at least the following:
  - (i) That no other household member has had a respiratory illness;
  - (ii) That at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery;
  - (iii) That there is a defined resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications;
  - (iv) That there is resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g. no cough or shortness of breath);
  - (v) That at least 7 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared; and
  - (vi) The clinical course and results of any tests or studies conducted.

**5.3.2** Aviation Personnel who present with signs of illness but have not been evaluated or treated by a medical professional:

- 5.3.2.1** An Employer should advise such aviation personnel to seek medical attention upon first learning of an employee's illness.

**5.3.2.2** If such aviation personnel are not able to consult a medical provider, such personnel may only return to work on condition that:

a) A medical report from a treating Physician has been submitted to the SACAA Medical Assessors for the panel's consideration of the applicant's fitness to fly. The treating Physician's report must outline at least the following:

- (i) That at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since the recovery from illness;
- (ii) That there is a defined resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications;
- (iii) That there is resolution of respiratory symptoms (e.g. no cough or shortness of breath);
- (iv) That at least 7 days have passed since the symptoms first appeared; and
- (v) The clinical course and results of any testing or studies conducted.

**5.3.3** Aviation Personnel who were subjected to quarantine or isolation ordered under the direction of a Public Health Authority, or treating Physician, due to a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19 and have not had any symptoms:

**5.3.3.1** Aviation Personnel who were subjected to quarantine or isolation as ordered, may return to work on condition that:

- a) No symptoms of COVID-19 were noted or presented during the entire quarantine or isolation period for 14 days; and
- b) There was no subsequent exposure to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 during the 14-day period of quarantine and isolation.

## **6 EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENT**

These Guidelines are effective immediately on date of approval by the Director for Civil Aviation and are subject to change at the discretion of the Director of Civil Aviation.

**Director of Civil Aviation**  
South African Civil Aviation Authority

**15 MAY 2020**