



Coronavirus — Update #3

Background, face masks, what we're doing to help

January 24, 2020

All flight attendants

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses can cause mild to moderate upper respiratory illnesses like the common cold. Occasionally, they can cause lower respiratory tract illnesses like pneumonia or bronchitis – but this is more common with people who have underlying health conditions that have weakened their immune system.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to monitor developments around the new Coronavirus (first identified in Wuhan, China). The first case in the U.S. was announced on Jan. 21.

The CDC's guidance on preventing the spread of Coronavirus

American remains in constant contact with the experts on disease control including the CDC and OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) as well as the FAA and CBP (Customs & Border Protection) to get updates and guidance on this evolving situation. **We are committed to following recommendations from the CDC for cabin crew to protect flight attendants.** CDC protocols for cabin crew are posted on their [website](#), but key recommendations are:

- Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Covering your cough/sneeze with a tissue
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces

What about wearing masks?

On a recent call with many representatives from airline and union leaders, the CDC responded to a direct question on this topic. The CDC answered that **wearing a face mask will not prevent the spread of Coronavirus. And that wearing one as a precaution is not medically recommended** since viruses can pass through a mask because they are so small. Additionally, you may touch your face more while wearing a mask, since they can be a bit uncomfortable. That additional contact between your hands and your face could actually increase your chances of getting a viral or bacterial infection. **The most effective strategy is frequent handwashing.**

While the CDC isn't recommending that airline crews wear masks, we understand many people are concerned and are asking about our mask policy. **That's why we're adjusting our policy on a short-term basis as the situation evolves. While it is not medically recommended, we will allow flight attendants to wear masks on flights to and from Shanghai (PVG), Beijing (PEK) and Hong Kong (HKG).**

We'll continue to monitor the CDC's guidance for cabin crew and will let you know when the use of masks will be discontinued.

Here's what we're doing to help

Our goal is to protect both our employees and our customers – which is why **we've been following and will continue to follow the CDC's guidance.**

Based on CDC recommendations that hand washing is most effective prevention, we're provisioning all departures to Shanghai, China (PVG), Beijing, China (PEK) and Hong Kong (HKG) with additional hand sanitizer wipes in the Flight Attendant Service kit. Supply levels will be monitored in both the U.S. and in PEK/PVG/HKG and replenished if needed.

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