Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service

Guidelines for International Flight Operations on COVID-19 Safety at the Kotoka International Airport

August 2020

Introduction

The Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first detected in China in December 2019 and was declared a global Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30th January 2020. Following this declaration, several countries instituted measures to curb the spread of the disease. Key among these were institution of lockdowns and ban on air travel. In Ghana, similar measures were instituted in addition to Executive Instrument (EI) 61 requiring some practices to be enforced. Ghana closed its borders to international flights on the 21st of March 2020 and the ban has been in force since. There are plans to reopen the Kotoka International Airport on the 1st September 2020 if all necessary conditions for the safe reopening are met.

Although there is active community transmission of COVID-19 in Ghana, the first two cases recorded on the 12th March 2020 were related to international travel. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak in most countries with significant numbers of Ghanaian populations, the Ghana Health Service/Ministry of Health is instituting the following measures to prevent and control the spread of COVID 19 in Ghana related to international travel. These guidelines are intended to provide information on travel requirements for both arriving and departing passengers from the Kotoka International Airport (KIA) and any other airport in Ghana where international departures or arrivals may occur.

The guideline is intended for use by the following individuals, organisations, and their staff:

1. Ghana Airport Company Limited (GACL)
2. Ghana Civil Aviation Authority
3. Airlines operating in Ghana
4. Ghana Immigration Service
5. Port Health Unit of the Ghana Health Service
6. National Security
7. Ghana Police Service
8. Ghana Immigration Service
9. Bureau of National Investigation
10. Ghana Revenue Authority- Customs Division
11. Narcotics Control Board
12. Plant Quarantine

13. Veterinary Services

14. All potential passengers

15. Other airport users

The Ghana Health Service in collaboration with other partners will provide Port Health Services to ensure safety of passengers and users of the airport. Port Health Services at the airport includes all health-related activities within the terminal including laboratory testing, inspection of relevant health documents, screening and triaging of passengers and the management of ill persons including transfer to appropriate health facilities; environmental inspections, supervision of cleaning and disinfection of aircrafts and the entire airport terminal among others.

The sections of this guideline are based on the following categories of persons accessing the KIA as follows:

1. Departing Passengers
2. Arriving Passengers
3. All Airport Staff and other airport users

Departing Passengers

All passengers on international travel originating in KIA will be required to meet the following requirements before departure:

1. Departing passengers will be required to adhere to COVID-19 testing requirements for the destination countries.
2. Departing passengers will be required to always wear a face mask appropriately (extending from the middle of the nasal bridge to halfway between the chin and the neck) and adhere to social distancing and hygiene protocols
3. All departing passengers will undergo COVID-19 screening including the checking of temperature

Arriving Passengers

All international arrivals including those from the ECOWAS region will be required to meet the following health requirements prior to admission into Ghana by the Ghana Immigration Service

1. Must not have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 including body temperature >38°C
2. Possession of a COVID-19 negative PCR test result from an accredited laboratory in the country of origin.
    a. The test should have been done not more than 72 hours before the scheduled departure time from the country of origin
    b. For passengers who transit through other countries before arriving in Ghana, the first country of departure will be the reference point
    c. For passengers who depart Ghana and return within one (1) week, the passengers will not be required to present a COVID-19 test result from the country of departure. A negative COVID-19 test from Ghana used on departure
    d. Airline crew are exempted from the pre-departure and arrival testing and should follow airline policy for testing
    e. Airlines who board passengers without a PCR test result or a Positive PCR test result will be sanctioned
    f. Children under-5 years of age will not be required to undergo testing at the airport
    g. Persons who arrive under emergency circumstances such as diverted flights will not be required to undergo testing if they do not leave the airport or remain in transit such that they do not leave the hotel.
3. Must be wearing a face mask appropriately (extending from the middle of the nasal bridge to halfway between the chin and the neck)
4. Be subject to a mandatory COVID-19 test at the airport terminal at the cost to the passenger
5. All persons testing positive will receive further clinical assessment and treatment
6. All persons testing negative will be advised to continue to observe COVID-19 safety precautions following arrival in Ghana

Airport Staff and other Airport Users

Issued by the Ghana Health Service

Due to the evolving nature of the outbreak and the high proportion of infected persons in Ghana being asymptomatic, there is the need to ensure that staff providing services at KIA are not potential sources for disease transmission. To ensure the safety of all users of the KIA, the following measures are to be implemented and strictly adhered to:

1. All staff **MUST WEAR FACE MASKS AT ALL TIMES** in the terminal building. Port Health Staff will always be monitoring and enforcing the use of face masks in the terminal

2. Staff must ensure adherence to other COVID-19 safety protocols including hand hygiene, social distancing etc always

3. Any member of staff with **ANY** of the following symptoms must report immediately to the Port Health Unit or to the Ghana Airports Company Clinic or to the nearest health facility:
   a. Fever or chills
   b. Dry cough
   c. Shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing
   d. Fatigue
   e. Muscle or body aches
   f. Headache
   g. Loss of taste or smell
   h. Sore throat
   i. Congestion or runny nose
   j. Nausea or vomiting
   k. Diarrhoea

Management of Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

All persons confirmed COVID-19 positive will be handled by the Port Health Unit for the remainder of their arrival processes. Following completion of the arrival procedures, they will be sent to the Ga East Municipal Hospital for further clinical assessment and management.

Figure 1: Passenger flow for International Arrivals at the Kotoka International Airport

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┌─────────────────────────┐        ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Passenger arrives at KIA │───────▶│   Port Health COVID-19   │
│                          │        │         testing          │
└─────────────────────────┘        └─────────────────────────┘
                                                 │
                                                 ▼
                                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                                    │ Port Health  Inspection and │
                                    │  Triaging for COVID-19   │
                                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                        ╱               ╲
                                       ╱                 ╲
                                      ▼                   ▼
                    ┌──────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │       Negative       │    │  Positive >>>  Isolation │
                    └──────────────────────┘    └──────────────────────┘
                               │                            │
                               ▼                            ▼
                    ┌──────────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │ Immigration and Passport │  │  Port Health-Assisted  │
                    │        Control        │    │ Immigration and Passport Control │
                    └──────────────────────┘    │     Baggage Claim      │───┐
                               │                 └──────────────────────┘   │
                               ▼                            │                │
                    ┌──────────────────────┐               ▼                │  ┌──────────┐
                    │     Baggage Claim     │    ┌──────────────────────┐   ├──│ Isolation │
                    └──────────────────────┘    │  Clinical Assessment  │───┘  └──────────┘
                               │                 └──────────────────────┘
                               ▼
                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │ Proceed to Customs and Exit │
                    │       terminal        │
                    └──────────────────────┘
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