Safe Practices in Passenger Transport Networks Flowing from COVID-19

Canada's Airline Sector

Effective May 4th, Air Canada, Canada's largest airline, has mandated pre-flight temperature checks for customers, as well as face coverings, and several other measures, as part of a new safety program.

Titled Air Canada CleanCare+, the new program aims to emphasize personal safety and enhanced aircraft grooming, to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

In addition to temperature checks and mandatory masks, the program promises more personal space in Economy Class at least until June 30, personal care kits containing disinfectant and safety items, and revised food products, minimizing crew and passenger contact. To supplement these new measures, Air Canada CleanCare+ will also strengthen the airline's cabin grooming standards with the introduction of electrostatic spraying of cabin interiors.

The airline will also expand its existing aircraft grooming procedures, which already incorporate the use of hospital grade disinfectant and specialized techniques to maintain cabin cleanliness across its fleet. Air Canada is the first in the Americas to administer pre-flight temperature checks across its entire system.

Passenger Rail Sector

VIA Rail, Canada's national passenger rail operator, continues to closely monitor the development of COVID-19 (also known as coronavirus), and remains in close contact with Canadian health agencies and the federal government. VIA announced a reduction of services over its routes in various parts of the country in March, as well as preventive measures in an effort to support the ongoing efforts deployed by the public health authorities across the country to limit the COVID-19 propagation, including recommendations for social distancing and in order to further reduce health risks to rail passengers and employees.

VIA has instituted measures on board all of its trains to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres between passengers and crew, VIA is not requiring all passengers to wear masks or face covering at this time, except for passengers arriving from international trips who are using the train to get to their place of quarantine or isolation.

The Government of Canada has mandated a series of health checks that must be conducted by VIA Rail employees with customers before boarding the trains. This includes asking simple health question and looking for visible signs of illness prior to boarding. Passengers are denied boarding the trains if:

- They are experiencing symptoms similar to a cold or flu (fever, cough, difficulty breathing)
- They have been denied boarding for travel in the last 14 days due to medical reasons related to COVID-19

In the event the passenger meets any of these criteria, VIA Rail will refuse boarding and travel for a period of 14 days, or until a medical certificate is presented that confirms the passenger's symptoms are not related to COVID-19.

Although not mandatory and in a view to limit the risks of propagation of COVID-19, VIA Rail nevertheless recommends to all its passengers to wear a non-medical mask or face covering that covers the nose and the mouth when travelling on its trains and when it is impossible to respect a distance of separation of 2 metres with others. It is the passengers' responsibility to bring their non-medical mask or face covering. VIA Rail will not provide masks to passengers, except in some limited circumstances (i.e. for international travellers without mask or face covering or if passengers develop symptoms while en route).

VIA reminds passengers that wearing a non-medical mask or face covering does not in any way diminish or replace the need to observe the other public health practices aimed to reduce exposure to the virus, especially physical distancing when possible and rigorous hand-washing.