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Dear Industry Member,

**COMPLIANCE BY AIRLINES, AIRPORTS AND PASSENGERS TO APPLICABLE
INDUSTRY REGULATIONS, DIRECTIONS AND GUIDELINES ISSUED BY THE MINISTER
OF TRANSPORT**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has, on March 11 declared COVID-19 a pandemic and on the 15 March 2020 the President of South Africa declared a state of National Disaster in line with section 27 of the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002).

Consistent with the COGTA Regulations, the Minister of Transport issued several versions of Directions and guidelines applicable to the transport industry and more specifically civil aviation. In order to give effect to the Minister's Directions, the SACAA is mandated to monitor and ensure compliance to these guidelines. The guidelines are meant to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 throughout the air transportation value chain.

On 09 December 2020, the Health Minister Dr Zweli Mkhize announced that South Africa has, according to its statistic models, entered a second wave of COVID-19 infections. The Government also announced that a new variant of the COVID-19 virus is driving the country's current resurgence of the disease, which is seeing higher numbers of confirmed cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SA Civil Aviation Authority approved procedures from operators in line with the regulations and guidelines mentioned above. I would like to congratulate industry in its response to the pandemic in terms of compliance based on the procedures approved and the number of compliance inspections conducted.

The SACAA has unfortunately learnt of some incidents reported to the Regulator indicating some lapses in the system. This letter is to remind all operators of their obligations in ensuring strict adherence with immediate effect of the Regulations and Directions as published by the Minister.

1. PCR Test Requirement for State of Destination (Outbound):

Consistent with the requirements of the state of destination, operators must not allow passengers with positive COVID-19 results to board an aircraft. Operators must ensure that

all requirements of the state of destination are adhered to in full and all health protocols in this regard must be observed.

2. PCR Test Requirements for Passengers to South Africa (Inbound):

The Directions dictate that airline operators must not board any passenger without a 72-hour valid PCR Test coming to South Africa. This provision is mandatory and must be adhered to at all times as per the Transport Directions. It is only under specific unforeseen circumstances that a passenger upon arrival and without a test certificate shall be tested upon arrival at their own cost. Airlines will have to demonstrate compliance with this provision upon investigation.

3. Wearing of Masks & Unruly Passengers

Operators have reported a number of cases of passengers that are refusing to wear masks inside the aircraft which is in contravention of the COGTA Regulations in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002. Operators are reminded that the wearing of a mask is law. Passengers who fail to comply must immediately be disembarked and or reported to the authorities upon arrival at the destination. Only passengers with medical conditions, who present a valid medical certificate and children under 5 years are exempted from wearing a mask on board the aircraft.

4. Passengers fail to disclose Positive Covid-19 Test Results

Operators are required to proactively educate passengers on the impact of flying while positive. If a passenger is displaying Covid-19 symptoms, the operator must implement appropriate measures to ensure that they do not board a passenger who may pose a danger to the crew and other passengers. Such passengers must be referred to medical authorities for further observations.

5. Authenticity of COVID-19 Results

Airlines and travel agents must encourage passengers to submit authentic tests, as there are various measures internationally to monitor the authenticity of tests.

6. Non-essential services such as magazines are not recommended on board an aircraft

The guidelines prohibit the distribution of magazines on board an aircraft and this must be strictly adhered to. Studies have shown that the Covid-19 virus can survive on surfaces such as paper up to 4 - 5 days, hence it is not recommended that magazines be kept on board an aircraft, in order to minimise the risk of infection.

7. Ventilation of the Aircraft /Air System Operations

Aircraft operators must ensure that there is proper ventilation in the cabin while the aircraft is on the ground and airborne consistent with the aircraft manufacturer's specifications.

The Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) of the aircraft should be permitted to be used at the gate to enable the aircraft's air conditioning system to be operated (for both embarkation and disembarkation).

8. Social Distancing on airport buses

Operators are reminded to conduct risk assessment and ensure that there is adequate social distancing on board the buses since the passengers on board airport buses are standing in very close proximity and often breath close to each other. Buses must not be filled to capacity disallowing social distancing.

9. Self Service by Passengers to minimize contact

Operators must continue to encourage passengers to prioritise the use of self-services (e.g. online check-in, e-boarding pass, baggage tag kiosks, baggage drop, automatic boarding pass scanners, passport control, etc.).

10. Crew Monitoring

Crew was recently exempted from COVID-19 Testing by the Minister of Health. The Operators shall conduct a rigorous risk assessment to ensure that only Crew who are fit to operate are deployed. Crew must confine themselves in their hotels and avoid unnecessary movements until they depart. The Operator shall take full responsibility to ensure the safety of the Crew in a controlled environment. The Operator shall also provide crew accommodation details to Port Health.

All health protocols including but not limited to the following, shall be the responsibility of the Operator:

- (a) Provide private transport, sanitised in advance, with capacity for physical distancing between crew members;
- (b) Crew members are to don a face mask and observe good hand hygiene and physical distancing measures when commuting between the aircraft and their individual hotel room.
- (c) At accommodation: One crew member to one room, which is sanitised prior to occupancy must be provided.

Crew must:

- i. Avoid contact with the public in public spaces and always remain in the hotel except to seek medical attention;
- ii. Avoid the use of common facilities in the hotel, including the pool or gym;
- iii. Regularly monitor for symptoms and fever.

Observe good hand hygiene and physical distancing measures and don a face mask when required to leave the hotel room for the reasons specified in (i), (iii) or emergency situations.

Health monitoring: Crew members should monitor themselves for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.

- The operator must ensure that crew members take their temperature at least twice per day during duty periods and at any time they feel unwell;
- Crew members should stay at home or in their hotel room, notify their employers, and not report for work if they develop COVID-19 symptoms including loss of smell, a fever, shortness of breath, or other symptoms related to COVID-19 and should not return to work until cleared by the public health practitioner.

11. Passive Passenger Screening by Passenger Agents & Airport Staff

Airline and Airport Operators are reminded to ensure that their staff continues to conduct passive screening and thermal screening.

12. Airport Compliance

International Airports are reminded that they hold an international status and have to comply with the Directions as approved by the Minister of Transport and in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization Article 14, Annex 14 and ICAO-CART Document as they are a gateway to other States. Measures must be complied with to protect both departing and arriving passengers to mitigate the risk of the pandemic spreading to other States and provinces. Airport management must continually ensure that the following, amongst others, are complied with in line with the Transport Guidelines issued by the Minister:

- i. Social distancing (1.5 meter) of passengers and airport staff at the airport building;
- ii. Comply with the frequent disinfection procedures especially in commonly touched areas such as lifts, escalators, kiosk, check-in counters, baggage trolleys, security and other areas;
- iii. Contactless measures in the parking lot, check-in counters, security and others are encouraged.
- iv. Avail sanitisation preferably wet wipes for passengers to clean trolley handles over and above the periodic disinfection of the same and availability of sanitizers at highly commonly touched areas.
- v. Availability of airport monitors throughout the day in various areas including in the baggage areas to control social distancing at all times.

Conclusion

Operators are invited and encouraged to notify the SACAA if they experience any challenges in the implementation of the guidelines. The virus is evolving, and operators must continuously familiarise themselves with the changes.

Yours Sincerely,



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Ms Poppy Khoza
Director of Civil Aviation