

Requirements for International Airline Crew: Precautions to Reduce Risk of COVID-19 Infection

Revised 26 June 2020

The border is the strongest line of defence in maintaining the gains that have been achieved to date in keeping COVID-19 out of New Zealand. Part of this defence is requiring almost everybody who crosses the border to undertake 14 days quarantine or isolation. Because of the importance of maintaining international air routes, air crew are mostly exempt from the requirement for isolation or quarantine. However, air crew living in New Zealand and returning from high-risk layovers are required to self-isolate, have a COVID-19 test on day 2 after their arrival in New Zealand and continue to self-isolate until the results of that test have been returned.

As they are exempt from most requirements for isolation and quarantine, it is strongly recommended air crew meet certain conditions – both in flight and during layovers.

The exemption from managed isolation or quarantine only applies to aircraft pilots and flight crew members undertaking international flights as part of their paid duties. The following are not exempt:

- Air crew who commute overseas to undertake a rostered duty
- Air crew who have periods of duty outside of New Zealand of longer than seven days.

This document outlines the Ministry of Health requirements for aircrew operating internationally to allow them to remain exempt from quarantine or isolation, except when returning from high-risk layovers. Implementation of these requirements will ensure the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for air crew is reduced

New Zealand-based aircrew who do not adhere to the requirements detailed in this document may be required to complete 14 days of isolation or quarantine before returning to work.

These requirements **do not apply** to aircrew who:

- are on official duties with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF)¹; or
- are flying only within New Zealand; or
- only remain airside while in New Zealand.

Aircrew who must follow these requirements

These requirements apply to all aircraft pilots and flight crew members undertaking international flights as part of their paid duties. This includes crew who are based, or resident, outside of New Zealand. For the purposes of these requirements this includes flight crew members (as defined in New Zealand Civil Aviation Authority rules), aircraft pilots, flight engineers, flight attendants, flight examiners, cabin crew members, crew

¹ NZDF has a separate guideline for military operational purposes. This guideline meets the Ministry of Health requirements outlined in this document and covers exceptions when military operational flying circumstances require different and additional mitigation or controls.

undergoing essential regulatory training, essential aviation support staff, repositioning crew². The requirements apply to crew on international commercial, cargo/freight, chartered and private flights.

Requirements in flight

The following personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn by crew on international flights coming into New Zealand:

- gloves and masks whenever in passenger areas
- full PPE, when dealing with a sick passenger suspected of having COVID 19.

All crew must, at all times, practice regular and thorough hand hygiene.

Requirements on arrival

All arriving international aircrew are required to undertake a health assessment on arrival. This is the same assessment that all arriving air travellers complete. The aircrew complete a COVID-19 crew health card on arrival. This is a record of the health check. Overseas based aircrew must record the name of their hotel accommodation on the COVID-19 crew health card.

Aircrew should move through the airport through a safe corridor to minimise potential contact with others. If any crew develop symptoms of an acute respiratory infection or have had close contact with a COVID-19 case during layover, they will be referred to the appropriate managed quarantine or isolation facility hotel for further assessment and management.

Air crew living in New Zealand and returning from high-risk layovers are required to self-isolate, have a COVID-19 test on day 2 after their arrival in New Zealand and continue to self-isolate until the results of that test have been returned.

Requirements for New Zealand-based aircrew during overseas layovers

Aircrew are most likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during layovers in countries where there is community transmission and where there are limited measures in place to mitigate the risk to crew in the short time they are in that country.

The following table outlines the risk mitigation measures that are required to be in place during overseas layovers, depending on the risk identified. The risk of exposure at each overseas layover is determined by the length of stay and how the stay is managed. The risk description does not currently include the country risk of COVID-19 transmission. The transmission risk of country/port and its influence of the layover should be discussed with the Ministry of Health on a case by case basis.

Airlines may impose more stringent risk control measures for their employees, in which case aircrew must follow the more conservative requirements.

² Repositioning crew is defined as: crew who are flying from or to any port as part of a rostered duty and are being paid to do so by their employer'

Level of risk	Description of overseas stay	Mitigation measures
Low	No overnight stay and crew remain airside OR Airside overnight stay	<p><i>During airside layover</i> – nil</p> <p>On return – Complete arrivals health assessment. Aircrew can return home and operate as usual.</p> <p>Any crew who become unwell must contact Healthline (0800 358 5453) or the GP for further advice.</p>
Medium	Landside overnight stay two nights or less AND Transport and accommodation during layover tightly controlled	<p><i>During landside layover</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aircrew must wear masks and gloves when moving through the airport (or terminal) and to and from the hotel or training facility. • Aircrew must use dedicated crew transport to and from the hotel or training facility. • Aircrew required to self-isolate within the hotel or training facility and to avoid non-essential trips outside hotel or training facility. • Aircrew are not permitted to use the hotel gym, pool, other recreational or communal areas. • Aircrew may not congregate with any other aircrew or hotel guests or trainees <p>In countries with lower rates of COVID-19³, ‘essential’ trips are permitted and are limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One trip per day to a local supermarket to purchase food; • Up to one-hour outdoor exercise per 24-hour period; • Purchase of essential medical supplies, only if directed by the airline’s crew health provider. <p>For any trips outside the hotel or training facility, aircrew:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not use public transport, taxis or ride share apps, such as uber; • May not congregate with others (maintaining physical distancing does not remove this requirement); • Must maintain a distance of two metres from other people, or wear a mask if this is not possible. <p><i>On return</i> – Complete arrivals health assessment. Aircrew can return home and operate as usual. Any crew who become unwell must contact Healthline (0800 358 5453) or the GP for further advice.</p>
High	Landside overnight stay for longer than two nights	<p><i>During landside layover</i></p>

³ The transmission risk of country / port and its influence of the layover to be discussed with the Ministry of Health on a case by case basis.

	<p>Landside overnight for two nights or less and accommodation less tightly controlled and/or no dedicated crew transport</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aircrew must wear masks and gloves when moving through the airport (or terminal) and to and from the hotel or training facility. • Aircrew required to self-isolate in the hotel. • Trips outside the hotel or training facility are not permitted. • Food must be sourced within the hotel or training facility, or delivered to the crew in the hotel or training facility. • Aircrew may not congregate with any other aircrew or hotel guests or trainees • Aircrew are not permitted to use the hotel gym, pool, other recreational or communal areas. <p><i>On return</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete arrivals health assessment. • Must complete self-isolation at home for 2 nights (48 hours) after their arrival, have a COVID-19 test and continue to self-isolate at home until the result of their test is known. • Guidelines for self-isolation can be found here: https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-self-isolation-close-contacts-and-travellers • May fly domestically to their home to complete the self-isolation.
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The mitigation measures described above also apply to repositioning crew. However, because these crew return to New Zealand as passengers, they will be required to wear a face mask while travelling. This requirement is consistent with the PPE requirements for air crew – “gloves and masks whenever in passenger areas”. However, the repositioning crew are not required to wear gloves.

On arrival, repositioning crew can use the normal passenger lanes. They are expected to wear identification and notify public health staff that they are repositioning crew. When completing the passenger arrivals card and health declaration, these crew should write ‘exemption/repositioning crew’ in Questions 18 (for address).

Requirements for overseas-based aircrew

Aircrew who live/are based outside of NZ and who stay one night or more in New Zealand are required to stay in accommodation approved by their airline or, for private operators, ground handlers and that meets or exceeds the criteria for accommodation in a managed facility. Consideration should be given to accommodation on a dedicated floor or wing of the hotel to reduce the likelihood of aircrew coming into contact with other guests. Further information is available on the Ministry of Health website on the requirements for suitable accommodation.

Aircrew must practice good hygiene and physical distancing during their overnight stay:

- wear a mask when moving through the airport and to and from the hotel
- use the dedicated transport provided to and from the hotel (mask required, but not gloves)
- practise hand hygiene frequently
- self-isolate in the hotel - remain in the hotel room, including using room service
- do not take trips outside the hotel - sightseeing, shopping and trips to public places is not permitted
- source food within the hotel or have it delivered to the crew member’s hotel room

- do not use the hotel pools and gyms
- do not congregate with other aircrew or hotel guests
- cover coughs and sneezes
- maintain at least two metres distance from other people.

Any crew who become unwell during this overnight stay can contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for further advice. If an overseas-based crew member is infected with COVID-19, they will be managed medically according to their symptoms and clinical status.

If an airline is not able to provide appropriate accommodation for aircrew, aircrew who live/are based outside of NZ and who stay overnight in New Zealand will be taken to a managed isolation or quarantine facility <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-current-situation/covid-19-border-controls#facilities>.

Airlines responsibility

Airlines and ground handlers are responsible for ensuring the Ministry of Health requirements are being adhered to. Airlines must have in place a process to check and provide assurance of good compliance by aircrew. This may include, but not be limited to surveys, spot checks, contact tracing apps. Airlines must report breaches to the Ministry of Health and to border agencies prior to entry into NZ, if known before arrival, on arrival in New Zealand, or to the Ministry of Health once in New Zealand. Ministry of Health may undertake audits or spot checks to ensure the aircrew requirements are being adhered to.

Non-compliant aircrew, or those who may have been exposed to a positive case, may be swabbed on arrival and/or required to isolate or to go into quarantine at the direction of border health staff.

For overseas based aircrew arriving into New Zealand the airline is responsible for meeting all costs of accommodation at their dedicated hotel (including the managed quarantine or isolation facility if this is used) and transport between the facility and the airport.

Aircrew who are not travelling for duty purposes are not exempt from quarantine or isolation and will be managed as per other travellers arriving into New Zealand.