



Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service

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

August 2020

## **FOREWORD**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented several public health challenges to global health. The negative impact of COVID-19 on global air travel has been extreme. The international community recognises the need for a resumption of international air travel taking cognisance of knowledge on the risk factors for COVID-19 transmission. Ghana, like most countries closed international borders because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resumption of international flights thus requires that the Ghana Health Service/Ministry of Health (MOH/GHS) institute measures to promptly identify cases of COVID-19 and prevent spread to other persons. The MOH/GHS thus developed this document for use by all persons accessing or providing services at the Kotoka International Airport (KIA) including passengers, airline staff, port health staff, security services, the Ghana Airports Company and the Ghana Immigration Service among others. Strict adherence to the measures instituted are the only sure way to ensuring that the KIA does not serve as a COVID-19 transmission hub. It is therefore imperative that all users of the airport support the Ghana Health Service through the Port Health Unit at KIA to ensure successful implementation of the guideline.

The Ghana Health Service has in addition to these guidelines liaised with Ghana Ambulance Service and the security agencies to provide safe transport for eligible persons to designated treatment/isolation centres. This is to ensure that persons diagnosed with COVID-19 on arrival or departure received optimum care for successful recovery from the disease.

The GHS/MOH will continue to liaise with all relevant agencies during the implementation of these guidelines and appropriately revise sections of the document where necessary to facilitate smooth implementation. Continuous review of operations and implementation will be undertaken.

**DR PATRICK KUMA-ABOAGYE**

**DIRECTOR GENERAL, GHANA HEALTH SERVICE**

## Acknowledgements

The Ghana Health Service/Ministry of Health is grateful to the following officers for their contribution to the development of this guidelines.

1. Dr Patrick Kuma-Aboagye     Director General, GHS
2. Dr Anthony Ofori             Deputy Director General, Ghana Health Service
3. Dr Badu Sarkodie             Director Public Health, GHS
4. Dr Franklin Asiedu-Bekoe     Head Disease Surveillance Department, GHS
5. Dr Dennis Odai Laryea        National Coordinator, Port Health, GHS
6. Dr Lawrence Lartey            SMO, Disease Surveillance Department, GHS
7. Mr Gideon Akwei              Head, Port Health KIA, GHS

The GHS/MOH also wishes to acknowledge the role of the following partners in the finalisation of the draft Guidelines:

1. Dr Anthony Nsiah-Asare- Presidential Adviser on Health
2. Dr Anarfi Asamoah-Baah, COVID-19 Coordinator, Office of the President
3. Prof Yaw Adu-Gyamfi, Office of the President
4. Dr DaCosta Aboagye- Director Health Promotion, Ghana Health Service
5. Ms Angela Nortey- Deputy Station Manager, Air France/KLM, Accra
6. Dr Ali Samba, Korle Bu Teaching Hospital
7. Dr Lawrence Ofori-Boadu, Institutional Care Division, Ghana Health Service
8. Dr Emmanuel Parbie Abbeyquaye, 37 Military Hospital
9. Mr Charles Hanson Adu- Group Executive, Ghana Airports Company Limited
10. Mr Eric Prempeh- Customer Service Manager, Ghana Airports Company Limited
11. Mr Benjamin Ahlijah- Head KIA, Ghana Airports Company Limited

## **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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2020 and the ban has been in force since. There are plans to reopen the Kotoka International Airport on the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 12<sup>th</sup> 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 health screening for symptoms of COVID-19 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. Must complete a Health Declaration Form
3. 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
  - d. Children under-5 years of age **will not be required** to present a negative COVID-19 PCR test result
  - e. Airlines who board passengers without a PCR test result or a Positive PCR test result will be sanctioned
4. Must be wearing a face mask appropriately (extending from the middle of the nasal bridge to halfway between the chin and the neck)
  5. Be subject to a **mandatory COVID-19** test at the airport terminal at the cost to the passenger. The following persons are exempt from the mandatory COVID-19 test on arrival
    - a. Children less than 5 years of age
    - b. Airline crew **BUT** will be required comply with their respective airline's policy on testing for **COVID-19**
    - c. 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.
  6. All persons testing positive will receive further clinical assessment and treatment

### **Airport Staff and other Airport Users**

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 and all public areas of the airport. 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.

### **Review**

This document will be updated periodically taking into consideration new evidence and operational modifications.

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

