

Safety Directive

SD No.: 2021-04

Issued: 12 July 2021

Note: This Safety Directive (SD) is issued by EASA, acting in accordance with Art. 76(6)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1139, reacting to an urgent safety problem.

Subject: Operational Measures to Prevent the Spread of Coronavirus `SARS-CoV-2` Infection

Effective Date: 19 July 2021

Supersedure: This SD supersedes EASA SD 2020-03 dated 25 June 2020.

Applicability:

National Competent Authorities (NCAs) responsible for the certification and oversight of aircraft operators involved in commercial air transport of passengers in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012.

Definitions:

TCOs: Third Country Operators (TCOs), authorised by EASA pursuant to Commission Regulation (EU) No 452/2014 to perform commercial air transport operations into, within or out of the territory subject to the provisions of the Treaty on European Union.

The Council Recommendation 2020/1475: [Council Recommendation 2020/1475](#) “on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” (including latest amendments).

Reason:

The outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), caused by SARS-CoV-2, has been qualified by World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Based on the reports published by the WHO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention (ECDC), EASA issued Safety Information Bulletin (SIB) 2020-02 (later revised, now at Revision 5), providing recommendations to the NCAs and Aircraft and Aerodrome operators to reduce the risk of spreading of the SARS-CoV-2.

Following the issuance of that SIB, and in order to prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 from potentially contaminated surfaces inside aircraft, EASA issued SD 2020-01, determining the safety objectives to be achieved by the NCAs in respect of operators certified in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012, and recommending, as corrective actions to be taken to achieve that objective, cleaning and disinfection of aircraft involved in commercial air transportation of passengers after each flight coming from an airport located in an affected area with high risk of transmission of the COVID-19 infection.

In accordance with Article 76(6)(a) of Regulation (EU) No 2018/1139, EASA issued concurrently the equivalent SD 2020-02, addressed to TCOs.

After those SD were issued, based on newly available evidence and the epidemiological status at the time, EASA issued SD 2020-03, superseding SD 2020-01, and the equivalent SD 2020-04, addressed to TCOs and superseding SD 2020-02.

Since those SDs were issued, the situation concerning COVID-19 across Europe and other regions of the world has evolved, after reaching the peak values, towards a lower number of cases. Additionally, the roll-out of vaccination is further reducing the risk of transmission, hence reducing the incidence rates.

For the reasons described above, this SD supersedes SD 2020-03, and introduces new risk-based recommended corrective actions.

EASA SD 2021-05, applicable to aircraft operators involved in air operations in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012 in respect of which EASA has issued an Air Operator's Certificate (AOC) and acts as the Competent Authority, and to TCOs, is issued concurrently with this SD, superseding EASA SD 2020-04.

Safety Objective(s) to be achieved:

To minimise the risks of transmission of the COVID-19 infection to aircraft passengers, aircrew and other aviation personnel from potentially contaminated aircraft surfaces.

Recommended Corrective Action(s) to be taken:

- (1) NCAs should ensure that aircraft operators under their oversight clean and disinfect the aircraft using substances suitable for aviation use (see Note 1 of this SD) at least once in any 7 days interval, unless the aircraft has not been used for passenger transport since the previous cleaning and disinfection. The frequency of cleaning and disinfection actions should be determined based on the operator's risk assessment which takes into account the incidence rates in accordance with the Council Recommendation 2020/1475, as last updated, and variants of concern (VOCs) circulation in the territories where the aircraft is operated (see Notes 2, 3 and 4 of this SD) and taking into account other mitigation measures in place (e.g. mandatory negative testing before boarding, use of vaccination/recovery certificates in the form of Digital COVID Certificate or equivalent, duration of the disinfecting effects of the substances used, etc.). For example, the interval could be reduced to once in 24 hours when, since last cleaning and disinfection, the aircraft has been operated in an area that is assessed as high risk (red), very high risk (dark red) or unknown risk (grey), or in an area with high circulation of VOCs.

Note 1: Appropriate substances are, e.g., those recommended by the [ECDC](#) or the national public health authorities. Suitability of the substance(s) should be checked against the aircraft manufacturer's documentation. More details regarding the cleaning and disinfection principles can be found in the [EASA-ECDC Aviation Health Safety Protocol](#) and [EASA guidance on aircraft cleaning and disinfection](#).



Note 2: The risk assessment of the EU/European Economic Area (EEA) States should be based on the [latest map published by ECDC](#) in support of the Council Recommendation 2020/.

Note 3: The spread of VOCs in EU/EEA should be assessed based on the [Variants Dashboard of ECDC](#) and the latest [ECDC SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern](#) details.

Note 4: For third country operations the risk assessment criteria of the Council Recommendation 2020/1475 should be used against the official data reported in the respective Country. For the VOCs the assessment should take into consideration the assessment of the EU/EEA States impacted (e.g. for Germany the assessment of the VOCs in 3rd countries should include the list of the countries considered as variant areas provided by the [Robert Koch Institute](#)). Where data is not available or is insufficient to allow a risk assessment, the respective countries/areas should be assessed as grey areas.

- (2) NCAs should ensure, by taking the appropriate national measures, that any aircraft, operated by aircraft operators under their oversight and involved in commercial air transport of passengers in accordance with Commission Regulation (EU) 965/2012, on which a COVID-19 suspect case has been identified on board, shall not be operated for commercial air transport of passengers unless, after that identification, the aircraft is cleaned and disinfected using substances suitable for aviation use (see Note 1 of this SD).
- (3) NCAs should ensure, by taking the appropriate national measures, that any aircraft, operated by aircraft operators under their oversight is cleaned and disinfected using substances suitable for aviation use (see Note 1 of this SD) before next flight, following notification to the aircraft operator that a confirmed case has been transported during a previous flight of that aircraft, unless already accomplished after that previous flight. Where the notification is received by the aircraft operator when the aircraft is in operation (passengers are on board), the cleaning and disinfection should be performed immediately after the next scheduled disembarkation of the passengers.

Information on the actions taken:

NCAs shall take measures to achieve the determined safety objective within 5 days from the effective date of this Safety Directive and inform EASA of those measures. This can be accomplished by reporting to ADs@easa.europa.eu.

Ref. Publications:

EASA SD 2021-05 dated 12 July 2021.

EASA SIB 2020-02R5 dated 30 June 2020.

[EASA-ECDC Aviation Health Safety Protocol](#).

Remarks:

Enquiries regarding this SD and the information on the actions taken to implement it should be referred to the EASA Safety Information Section, E-mail: ADs@easa.europa.eu.

