



January 2009

SUSPECTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

General Guidelines for Passenger Agents

The following are general guidelines for passenger agents who may be faced with a suspected case of communicable disease at the airport.

During an outbreak of a specific communicable disease, the World Health Organization (WHO) or member states may modify or add further procedures to these general guidelines.

However, these general guidelines provide a basic framework of response to reassure passenger agents and help them manage such an event.

A communicable disease is suspected when a traveller:

- Has a visible skin rash or,
- Has a severe cough or,
- Is obviously unwell and/or,
- Complains of any of the following:
 - Severe cough
 - Fever
 - Bruising or bleeding without previous injury
 - Persistent diarrhea
 - Skin rash (non visible)
 - Persistent vomiting

Most of these signs and/or symptoms may not be obvious at the counter. However, when in doubt regarding the health of a traveller, especially during an outbreak, refer to the airline procedures.

1. Call your supervisor.
2. If the supervisor agrees with your concerns and if medical support is available (own medical department or outside designated physician or group) contact that support immediately.
3. If the supervisor agrees with your concerns but medical support is not immediately available, deny boarding and ask the traveller to obtain medical clearance in accordance with your airline's policy. For some

countries you may also have to involve the company's Customer Complaint Resolution Official (CCRO).

4. If assistance is required to escort a sick traveller, and if the sick traveller is coughing, ask him/her to wear a surgical mask. If no mask is available or the sick traveller cannot tolerate the mask, e.g. because of breathing difficulties, provide tissues and ask him/her to cover the mouth and nose when coughing.

If masks are available but the sick traveller cannot tolerate a mask and the airline recommends that designated passenger agents should do so under those circumstances, the airline should ensure that their passenger agents have adequate training in its use to ensure they do not increase the risk (for example by more frequent hand-face contact or adjusting and removing the mask).