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Thermometers for On-Board Medical or First-Aid Kits

During the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, the leading Public Health Authorities (World Health Organization, US Center for Disease Control and Prevention) identified a list of symptoms that were compatible with the illness. Fever was one of the most important symptoms. In fact, fever would be one of the most important symptoms in many communicable diseases. The only adequate way of evaluating if fever is present or not is by using a thermometer.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) Medical Advisory Group (MAG) decided to make a survey of the thermometers in airlines that already use them. The survey indicated that the most commonly used thermometers were: forehead thermometers, digital oral thermometers and paper-like disposable oral thermometers. They are all acceptable.

Of these three types, paper-like disposable thermometers have a number of advantages that fit well with the airline-operation environment. They combine ease of use (same procedure of a regular home thermometer), accuracy (compared to a mercury thermometer), the convenience and passenger-friendly feature of one time usage (disposable), economy and do not have the disadvantages of battery operated equipment.