



December 2017

SUSPECTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Guidelines for Maintenance Crew

The following are guidelines for maintenance crew who carry out maintenance on an arriving aircraft with a suspected case of communicable disease.

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

High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters

About 50% of the air in most modern aircraft is re-circulated. However, air is only reused after having gone through HEPA filters. Microorganisms suspended in air, including bacteria and viruses, are captured by HEPA filters inserted in aircraft air circulation systems. As used filters may contain microorganisms trapped in their meshes after hours of filtering activity, it is good routine practice to apply reasonable precautions when handling them, e.g. during their exchange.

There is no need to change HEPA filters on an arriving aircraft that has carried a suspected case of communicable disease. HEPA filters should rather be changed at the intervals recommended by the filter manufacturer.

When replacing HEPA filters:

1. Wear disposable gloves.
2. Avoid hitting, dropping or shaking the filter. If that cannot be achieved, wear a face mask.
3. Do not use compressed air to try and clean a filter (it may create an aerosol).
4. The used HEPA filter should be disposed of in a sealed plastic bag. A specific biohazard bag is not required. Put the used disposable gloves in the same plastic bag.
5. Wash hands with soap and water when the task is finished.

Vacuum waste tank

Since the external venting system of vacuum waste tanks is not equipped with filtering devices capable of preventing the spread of viral or bacterial contamination, it is not recommended to vent the vacuum waste tanks inside a hangar. If venting of the vacuum waste tanks has to be done inside a hangar, it is recommended to use a technique that exhausts the air outside the hangar.

Bird Strike*

The issue of a potential health risk to personnel involved in maintenance tasks following a bird strike has been discussed with bio-safety specialists at the World Health Organization and, while the risk is remote, the following general measures are recommended:

- Wear disposable gloves
- If body contact is unavoidable while cleaning the engine, wear a disposable coverall and a face mask.
- Do not use air or water under pressure to clean the part of the aircraft that was hit by the bird.
- Remove the bird remains and put them in a plastic bag.
- Do not touch face, eyes, nose, etc. with your gloves.
- Remove the gloves, the disposable coverall and mask (if used) and put them in the same plastic bag as the remains and seal the bag.
- Dispose of the bag as for normal garbage.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides detailed guidelines for bird strike in “**affected areas**”. These guidelines can be reviewed on the following CDC website:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentAvianFluBirdCollisions.aspx>

* There is also a direct electronic link for this specific guideline
http://www.iata.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/Documents/Guidelines_bird_strike_042008.pdf