

## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

### **AIRPORTS COMPANY SOUTH AFRICA STATEMENT ON MITIGATION RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

***BEDFORDVIEW, 16 March 2020*** - In support of President Ramaphosa's declaration of Covid-19 as a national disaster and to safeguard all South Africans, Airports Company South Africa has intensified its coordinated response to help mitigate the spread of the virus at all its airports.

The intensified precautionary measures are aligned to the standards and protocols provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA).

#### **Flight scheduling and travel bans on foreign nationals from high risk countries**

Following President Ramaphosa's announcement of a travel ban on foreign nationals from high- risk countries, including Italy, South Korea, Spain, Germany, the United States, United Kingdom, China and Iran from 18 March 2020. We urge passengers to check on the status of incoming and outbound flights with their respective airlines or on our live flight information website, <https://www.airports.co.za/utilities/live-flight-info>.

The President also advised all South African citizens to refrain from all forms of travel to or through the European Union, United States, United Kingdom and other identified high-risk countries such as China, Iran and South Korea.

#### **Strengthening screening and testing measures at international airports**

Since the outbreak started in China earlier this year, the South African government has put in place measures to screen visitors entering the country.

The Department of Health and its entity Port Health are responsible for implementing a variety of detection and management procedures to identify potentially infected passengers at the country's three main international airports: OR Tambo International, Cape Town International and King Shaka International Airports.

Officials continue to use thermal screening on all passengers entering South Africa, with those passengers identified as potentially infected at the airport then channeled to the National Institute of Communicable Diseases for further testing. All passengers are also asked to complete a questionnaire before landing to assist with detection and tracing of potential infections from high-risk areas.

Questions regarding the management and direction of activities related to Covid-19 at airports should be directed to the Department of Health or the National Institute for Communicable Diseases.

#### **Hygiene control in airport facilities**

Airports Company South Africa has implemented strict disinfection and hygiene control procedures at its airports, particularly at arrival gates, buses and all passenger facilitation areas.

The number of hand sanitising stations has been increased and the cleaning schedules of high contact surfaces updated for more frequent sterilisation with ammonia and chlorine-based cleaning compounds in line with NICD recommendations.

All Airports Company South Africa front-line staff have been supplied with protective respiratory masks and gloves to minimise the risk of infection.

### **Education and Awareness**

In support of government's efforts to educate the general public about prevention of Covid-19, Airports Company South Africa has implemented a digital and social media communications campaign including terminal building announcements to create awareness around prevention measures. These include regular handwashing and use of sanitiser stations, keeping a social distance of at least 2m between other people as well as avoiding touching surfaces and handshaking.

Airports Company South Africa urges travelers to follow the advice of global authorities and to avoid false or deceptive information. The global authority on detecting, managing and preventing Covid-19 is the World Health Organisation and authority lies with the National Institute for Communicable Diseases at country level. We advise travelers and members of the public seeking further information to treat the organisation's web site as the authoritative source of information about Covid-19.

### **Useful resources:**

World Health Organisation (WHO) website has a section that outlines every aspect of the virus and may be found on: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

National Department of Health: <http://www.health.gov.za/index.php/outbreaks/145-coronavirus-outbreak/465-corona-virus-outbreak>

National Institute of Communicable Diseases (NICD) ([www.nicd.ac.za](http://www.nicd.ac.za))

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