

**AOPA AUSTRALIA**  
**GENERAL AVIATION**  
**&**  
**FLIGHT TRAINING**

**COVID-19**

**BEST PRACTICES GUIDE**

# Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in 7 STEPS

- 01** Wash your hands frequently
- 02** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- 03** Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue
- 04** Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough
- 05** Stay at home if you feel unwell
- 06** If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first
- 07** Get information from trusted sources



## **BEST PRACTICES GUIDE CHARTER & FLIGHT TRAINING OPERATIONS**

Due to many areas of confusion surrounding the COVID-19 restrictions for General & Recreational aviation operators, the AOPA has reached out to industry to gain feedback and input to help create a Best Practices Guide for reference across these sectors.

The AOPA would like to sincerely thank all of those who have contributed to putting together this guide. The Federal Government Health directive orders regarding COVID-19 are the base governance for all Australians, in addition to this each state and territories also have their own individual regulations in place.

Due to the ever changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, regulatory changes are common and occurring regularly so we cannot stress enough how important it will be for individuals to validate all legal directives within your relevant state or territory.

### **DISCLAIMER**

This information has been collated to provide guidance around General and Recreational aviation best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is a tool for reference and assistance with regard to providing a safe environment for both operators and passengers or students undertaking aviation activities and has been based on the current health directives from the Federal Government as of 20th April 2020.

The Best Practices Guide is provided on the basis that the information is given as guidance material only. The AOPA and the author of this material take no responsibility for the accuracy or legal ramifications that may be associated with operations during the COVID-19 restrictions.

It is the sole responsibility of the individual/s to obtaining the relevant state and territory legal information with regard to the Public Health Orders for their state and complying with those orders and directives.

## **NON- ESSENTIAL TRAVEL**

It is an offence under the Federal Public Health Act 2010 to leave your home for NON ESSENTIAL TRAVEL. Please refer to your state health directive order for additional COVID-19 recommendations.

The general state orders direct that a person must not, without reasonable excuse, leave the person's place of residence. Examples of a reasonable excuse include leaving for reasons involving:

- (a) obtaining food or other goods and services, or
- (b) travelling for the purposes of work or education if the person cannot do it at home, or
- (c) exercise, or
- (d) medical or caring reasons.

In addition, a person must not participate in a gathering in a public place of more than 2 persons.

Exceptions include-

- (a) gatherings of members of the same household, and
- (b) gatherings essential for work or education.

## **CLASSIFICATIONS OF NON ESSENTIAL FLYING**

Although it appears that conducting the flights listed below is not illegal if conducted by the aviation business, the flights do seem to fall under the 'Stay at Home' orders for non-essential travel under state regulations.

It would be advisable to seek clarification from your state or territory prior to conducting any of these flights.

- Scenic flights
- Private flights
- Joy flights
- Adventure flights
- Trial Introductory Flights (TIF) \*\* NOTE these could be viewed as educational flights – check with your local authorities to confirm.

## **CHARTER FLIGHTS**

It is entirely up to each business to determine what best suits their operations with limitations on flights. Please be sure to contact your state or territory to gain accurate legal information and ramifications.

**Charter flights** are not illegal to operate, they provide an essential service to and from work locations for passengers, & provide freight or medical services.

However, if the flight is for pleasure then the passengers may be at risk of breaking the NON-ESSENTIAL Travel order. If the flight is for a business purpose, it would seem to fall under the right to go to work and passengers may not be at risk of a fine.

There are also many restrictions in place for border controls across various states, so it is imperative for the operator to confirm that the flight can go ahead and as to what limitations/restrictions could be placed on the passengers or crews if they were to travel interstate as an example they may be required to self-isolate for up to 14 days.

## **Recommendations for Charter Flights**

In addition to general hygienic practices and the mass gathering limitations, it is recommended that;

### **The Aircraft**

- A sterile aircraft– cleaned thoroughly before and after each flight with hospital grade disinfectants.
- A limited number of passengers on the flight to ensure good social distancing practices and if possible arrange the seating in the aircraft to comply with social distancing measures.
- Disposable seat covers – these can be purchased and placed over the seats and removed between flights
- Each aircraft should have its own equipment left in the airplane, not removed and possibly contaminate other aircraft or facilities. Equipment can include cushions/ seat covers etc.
- Ensure that rubbish is emptied regularly off the aircraft, encourage passengers to take their own rubbish with them if possible.  
Use gloves to remove any rubbish

### **The Waiting Area**

- Provide hand sanitizer for passengers
- When checking in passengers, ensure that good social distancing is followed, if possible you could set out spacing of 1.5mtrs in your waiting area.
- Provide clear signage around the waiting area to ensure good social distancing of passengers, be sure to discourage any group congregations.
- Remove all unnecessary seating, to minimize the number of people in one area
- As per the direction of the Government concerning the number of persons allowed on a premises, please refer to your state health directive order for COVID-19 recommendations.
- Current recommendations are:
  - Outdoor Space is limited to 500 persons
  - Indoor Space is limited to 100 persons
  - 4 Square meters of space for each person on the premises must be provided.

### **The Passengers**

- Passengers must disclose if they have been feeling unwell, been overseas in the last 14 days or been around anyone that has been diagnosed with the virus. This information should be provided to the prior to the arrival at the location, preferably by email as the business then has received a written record of the response.
- Possibility of a waiver for passengers to sign to cover the business if the passenger does become infected, this should be verified by a legal professional
- Provide access to hand sanitizer for passengers prior to entering and exiting the aircraft
- Provide written guidance to passengers as part of your brief to include the need for social distancing practices and the need for hand washing and sanitizing of hands, this can be sent out prior by email.
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## The Crew

- Non – essential staff /Non flying staff work from home where practicable
- PPE for crews- Face masks /Gloves & the use of sterilizing wipes and hand sanitizer by both crew and passengers
- Headsets- crews not to share headsets and provide their own if possible or allocate each pilot with one.
- No sharing of pens, papers or items in the cockpit
- The use of rubber gloves when refueling the aircraft by crew
- Use of gloves by crew for handling passenger luggage
- Roster 1 aircraft to 1 crew for each flight – reduce crews operating multiple aircraft
- Crew to use airside bathroom facilities rather than public facilities if possible and if breaks are required, crews to take short breaks in an airside location to limit exposure to public areas if eating or resting.
- If crew require sleeping accommodation for rest, the company should request that the rooms are specifically cleaned and if possible the crew provided with a room that has been empty for 24 hours prior.
- When entering the room the crew should wipe down door handles, light switches, fridge and bathroom areas with disinfectant wipes.
- Crews should be encouraged to take their own linen and towel
- If crews are using public transport such as taxi/Uber to get to accommodation they should be mindful of touching areas and use disinfectant wipes regularly
- Crews should order food in and not leave the accommodation unnecessarily
- Payment of items that are work related should be done by credit card or pay wave, avoid handling money where possible.

## **FLIGHT TRAINING**

Flight training falls under traveling for the purpose of work or education only if the person cannot undertake this training or work at home (which you cannot undertake practical flight training at home but may undertake theory training at home if this platform is available).

It is entirely up to each business as to what options best suit their situation with regards to flight training.

Each state and territory has different legislation regarding COVID-19 limitations, therefore each person/business is responsible to ensure that they are meeting the regulations pertaining to their operations.

In addition, each business/operator also has a duty of care to provide a safe environment for their staff and the students attending the facility.

### **Theory Training Class Room Environment Recommendations**

As per the direction of the Government concerning the number of persons allowed on a premises, please refer to your state health directive order for COVID-19 recommendations.

- Outdoor Space is limited to 500 persons
- Indoor Space is limited to 100 persons
- 4 Square meters of space for each person on the premises must be provided

### **Recommendations for Aviation Theory Training**

In addition to general hygienic practices and the requirements for the gathering of persons for education, it is recommended that;

### **The Theory Room & Company Offices**

- Hand sanitizer upon entry and exit of the building
- Signage at reception detailing social distancing measures
- Signage in classrooms limiting the number of people allowed in the room at one time
- Signage in lunch rooms/communal areas to limit the number of people at one time
- Remove chairs in rooms to ensure that there is only enough seating for the number of people allowed in the room, this will vary due size of the room as per the guidelines per state and territory.
- Hand sanitizer available on entry & exit to the school with signs to encourage use of the sanitizer. Also if there are a lot of rooms, sanitizers can be placed in each room.
- Student numbers should be limited to ensure good social distancing
- Student and instructors desks should be spaced far enough apart to ensure the 4 square meter rule
- Desks and Chairs should be designated to the same person for use throughout the lessons if possible
- Desk, chairs and equipment must be cleaned thoroughly at the end of the lessons
- All briefing areas to be cleaned after each use and rubbish bins emptied frequently

## **The Theory Student**

- Students should disclose to the instructor if they have been feeling unwell, been overseas in the last 14 days or been around anyone that has been diagnosed with the virus. This information should be provided to the school & instructor prior to the student's arrival at the location, preferably by email as the business then has received a written record of the response.
- Possibility of a waiver for student to sign to cover the school if a student does become infected due to an instructor becoming ill, this should be verified by a legal professional

## **The Staff**

- Non Essential staff should work from home
- Staff must report to management if they have any COVID symptoms or have been exposed to anyone who has been diagnosed with the virus.
- All staff should wash hands regularly and use sanitizing solutions
- Hand sanitizer used regularly in combination with good hygiene
- High traffic areas cleaned regularly throughout the day/night
- Washing up of dishes/utensils/cups etc, needs to be thorough, students and staff encouraged to provide their own.
- No sharing of equipment

## **Recommendations for Solo Flight Training Under Supervision**

In addition to general hygienic practices, additional measures during solo flight training could include:

### **The Aircraft**

- A sterile aircraft- cleaned thoroughly before and after each flight with hospital grade disinfectants.
- Disposable seat covers - these can be purchased and placed over the seats and removed between students
- Each aircraft should have its own equipment left in the airplane, not removed and possibly contaminate other aircraft or facilities. Equipment can include cushions/ seat covers etc.

### **The Staff**

- A limited number of students at the flight school throughout the day to ensure good social distancing practices.
- Students limited to one aircraft and one instructor rather than flying multiple aircraft with multiple instructors.
- Roster 1 aircraft to 1 Instructor for each day - reduce instructors operating multiple aircraft
- Non - essential staff /Non flying staff work from home where practicable
- PPE for both instructors & students Face masks /Gloves & the use of sterilizing wipes and hand sanitizer by both instructor and pilot



## **The Solo Flight Student**

- Headsets- students to provide their own
- No sharing of pens, papers or items in the cockpit
- Students should disclose to the instructor if they have been feeling unwell, been overseas in the last 14 days or been around anyone that has been diagnosed with the virus. This information should be provided to the school & instructor prior to the student's arrival at the location, preferably by email as the business then has received a written record of the response.
- Possibility of a waiver for student to sign to cover the school if a student does become infected due to an instructor becoming ill, this should be verified by a legal professional

## **Recommendations for Dual Flight Training**

In addition to general hygienic practices, additional measures during dual flight training could include:

### **The Aircraft**

- A sterile aircraft or simulator – cleaned thoroughly before and after each flight with hospital grade disinfectants.
- Disposable seat covers – these can be purchased and placed over the seats and removed between students
- Each aircraft should have its own equipment left in the airplane, not removed and possibly contaminate other aircraft or facilities. Equipment can include cushions/ seat covers etc.

### **The Company**

- Non- essential staff /Non flying staff work from home where practicable
- A realistic number of training flights through the day. Flight logs will also be able to be presented to prove that this cleaning has been undertaken and a cleaning log should be filed.
- Limit the number of students each day – 1 student can fly multiple lessons per day
- Full time students limited to one aircraft and one instructor rather than flying multiple aircraft with multiple instructors.
- Roster 1 aircraft to 1 Instructor for each day – reduce instructors operating multiple aircraft

### **The Instructor**

- PPE for both instructors and students - Face masks /Gloves & the use of sterilizing wipes and hand sanitizer by both instructor and pilot
- No sharing of pens, papers or items in the cockpit
- Instructors must disclose if they have been feeling unwell, been overseas in the last 14 days or been around anyone that has been diagnosed with the virus.
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## **The Dual Flight Student**

- PPE for both instructors and students - Face masks /Gloves & the use of sterilizing wipes and hand sanitizer by both instructor and pilot
- Headsets- students to provide their own, if not possible then a loan head set must be completely sterilized before and after use.
- No sharing of pens, papers or items in the cockpit
- Students should disclose to the instructor if they have been feeling unwell, been overseas in the last 14 days or been around anyone that has been diagnosed with the virus. This information should be provided to the school & instructor prior to the student's arrival at the location, preferably by email as the business then has received a written record of the response.
- Possibility of a waiver for student to sign to cover the school if a student does become infected due to an instructor becoming ill, this should be verified by a legal professional