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Commercial and Business Aviation Advisory Circulars

Advisory Circulars

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COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS AVIATION ADVISORY CIRCULAR

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Disinsection On Board Aircraft

INTRODUCTION

This *Commercial and Business Aviation Advisory Circular* (CBAAC) recommends that all air operators, who operate aircraft bound for countries where disinsection is required, develop a policy for the benefit of their employees working on board aircraft and an information system for the travelling public.

BACKGROUND

Transport Canada does not require the disinsection of aircraft arriving in or departing from Canada. However, Canadian registered aircraft must comply with the disinsection requirements of other countries.

Disinsection involves the spraying of insecticide in various areas of the aircraft, including the flight deck and the passenger cabin. This procedure, which is intended to prevent the transmission of disease by insects, has been in place for a number of years in various parts of the world and has been considered to be a necessary public health measure in many International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Contracting States.

There are three methods of disinsection that have been found to be effective. The first method, known as "blocks away" disinsection, takes place after passengers have boarded and the doors have been closed, prior to take-off. The aircraft is treated by crew members walking through the cabins discharging approved single shot aerosols in the prescribed dosage. Cargo holds are sprayed prior to departure and the flight deck is sprayed prior to boarding by the crew.

The second method consists of pre-flight and "top-of-descent" spraying. It is similar to "blocks away" except that the aircraft cabin is sprayed on the ground prior to passengers boarding, using an aerosol containing a residual insecticide. At the time this method is used, lockers can be opened and there is no inconvenience to passengers. Pre flight spraying is followed by a further in-flight space spraying of the cabin carried out at "top of descent" as the aircraft starts its descent to the arrival airport.

The third method consists of residual treatment. The internal surfaces of the aircraft, excluding food preparation areas, are regularly sprayed with a residual insecticide to ensure that if an insect gains access to the aircraft and lands on a surface, it will receive an effective dose of insecticide. Insofar as efficiency, convenience and safety of passengers with predisposition to adverse health reactions are concerned, the residual disinsection method provides the most assurance. It remains effective for eight weeks and does not expose crews or passengers to aerosol sprays.

Although existing methods, procedures and substances used in aircraft disinsection have been thoroughly studied and found safe by the World Health Organization (WHO), in some countries routine spraying has been discontinued because of the belief that it has not played a significant role in disease control. In view of this, ICAO requested that the WHO undertake a complete review of the International Health Regulations and make recommendations on the disinsection of aircraft.

ISSUE

Transport Canada receives from time to time complaints on disinsection that originate from air operator employees and passengers, especially in the fall-winter season. These complaints are not based on the disinsection process itself but on the fact that when passengers and air operator employees seek information, e.g. flights where disinsection will be conducted, products used, etc., they are either unable to obtain it or have great difficulty obtaining it. Consequently, some passengers have been very reluctant to fly for fear of being exposed to a product they know very little or nothing about.

It was also noted that air operator employees who are responsible for spraying insecticides on board aircraft are ill-informed of the air operator's policy, when such a policy exists, prior to the flight. They are consequently unprepared to respond to concerns or questions from passengers during spraying.

It is to be noted that under Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*, it is the duty of employers to make sure that both employees and passengers are made aware that they may be exposed to a known or foreseeable hazard, such as insecticides in this case, and that they have taken all the necessary precautionary measures to minimize the hazards by using the spraying method that least exposes employees and passengers to insecticides.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above, Transport Canada recommends that all air operators, who fly to countries where disinsection is required, develop a policy, in consultation with the policy health and safety committee or the work place committee where no policy committee exists, for the benefit of their employees and an information system for the travelling public, and establish a focal point for handling questions by a knowledgeable person, either through customer service or an alternatively appropriate service.

It is further recommended that as part of the above mentioned information system, air operators advise their ticket purchasing customers, at the point of sale, that the destination they are traveling to requires the disinsection of their aircraft. In doing so, customers will be forewarned and better positioned to decide beforehand whether or not to expose themselves to the operator's disinsection procedure.

Transport Canada recommends that when air operators develop a policy on disinsection, the following information should be included:

- routes where disinsection is conducted;
- product used;
- method of spraying;
- time of year when disinsection is conducted;
- how passenger complaints are handled;
- who handles questions from the public;
- what kind of information is provided;
- when passengers are notified of procedure.

This information was used to develop a Transport Canada Web page on disinsection of Canadian aircraft flying to countries where the procedure is required. The Web page is available to the public and will be updated on a regular basis. It may be viewed at the following address:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/CivilAviation/commerce/ohs/disinsection/menu.htm>

Another source of information that could be of interest is the U.S. Department of Transportation disinsection Web page found at the following address:

<http://ostpxweb.dot.gov/policy/Safety%20Energy%20Env/disinsection.htm>

CONCLUSION

The recommendations described above may reduce complaints over time, thus restoring the client's confidence and improving the employer/employee relationship by keeping the communication channels open.

In order to maintain an up-to-date Web page on disinsection, air operators who will be developing an information system on disinsection and those who already have a system are asked to forward their data to:

Transport Canada
AOH&S Program (AARXG)
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N8

or by e-mail to servanj@tc.gc.ca.

FUTURE DISPOSITION

This CBAAC will remain in effect until further notice.

Michel Gaudreau
Director
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