

INSECTICIDE SPRAYING PRACTICES AT SOME US AIRLINES

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This is a partial list of insecticide spraying practices at a sample of US airlines, per information provided by crewmember union safety and health representatives. We have made every effort to keep it current, but **spraying information is difficult to obtain and spraying practices can change over time, so we encourage you to confirm with the airline in question.** Unless otherwise stated, airlines apply a 2% solution of d-phenothrin for in-flight or upon-arrival spraying (typically in an occupied cabin) and a 2% solution of permethrin for residual spraying (prior to boarding). The active insecticide ingredient is mixed with a complex mixture of solvents and in-flight/upon arrival sprays also contain propellants. Some products may also contain piperonyl butoxide. Exposure to these insecticide spray products has been associated with various adverse health effects, including respiratory, dermal, and neurological symptoms.

As of this writing, the following 49 countries require pesticide spraying, either upon or prior to arrival, and either on selected or all flights: Australia; Bahrain; Barbados; Belarus; Belgium; Brazil; Cape Verde; China; Cook Islands; Cuba; Czech Republic; Ecuador; El Salvador; Fiji; France; Greece; Grenada; India; Indonesia; Jamaica; Kenya; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Madagascar; Maldives; Malta; Mauritius; Mexico; New Zealand; Oman; Pakistan; Panama; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Moldova; Saudi Arabia; Senegal; Seychelles; Slovakia; South Africa; Switzerland; Tahiti; Tajikistan; Thailand; Trinidad and Tobago; United Kingdom; Uruguay; Uzbekistan and Vanuatu

It is important to understand, however, that airlines may residually spray its aircraft in a country that does not require spraying because it is cheaper or because of an extended scheduled ground time. Also, airlines route sprayed aircraft on both international and domestic routes that do not require spraying. So, you may fly to one of these 49 countries and not get sprayed inflight; alternatively, you may fly to a country not on the list and board a freshly-sprayed aircraft. Check with the airline prior to ticket purchase.

American Airlines

As of July 2008, American Airlines' flights arriving in Barbados and Jamaica are residually sprayed. Flights arriving in China may be residually sprayed or sprayed in-flight. American Airlines is currently exempt from spraying on flights arriving in India. Flights arriving in Trinidad/Tobago and Uruguay are sprayed while passengers and crew are still on board, and flights arriving in Panama are sprayed after people have left the plane. American Airlines serves destinations in South Africa that stop en route in Dakar (DKR) so they must be sprayed inflight prior to arrival.

American Eagle

American Eagle sprays the aft cargo hold of its ATR72 aircraft upon arrival in Santa Domingo, Puerto Rico (SDQ) on flights arriving from San Juan, PR (SJU).

The spraying takes place once crew and passengers have deplaned. The aft cargo hold is on the same level as the cabin. The two spaces are separated by a partition, but it is not airtight and crews report smelling pesticides (although they do not report symptoms to my knowledge). Strangely, the forward cargo bin is not sprayed and nor is the cabin/flight deck. They apparently don't spray any of their other aircraft, at least not to comply with foreign quarantine regulations.

If you are aware of different or additional spraying practices, please contact AFA-CWA at 206-932-6237 or Judith@AFaseattle.org so that the list can be updated.

Delta Airlines

“Victor Poison-Free Flying Insect Killer” (a mint oil based product that does not require EPA registration) is sprayed in the cabin prior to boarding passengers in Atlanta (ATL) on flights bound for Shanghai (PVG) and prior to boarding passengers in AMS bound for Mumbai, India (BOM).

Flight attendants are provided with cans of a permethrin-containing product (manufactured by PSA, Permethrin #216) to spray on some flights to east Africa that stop in Dakar (DKR) en route for refueling if there are flying insects onboard. The Atlanta (ATL) – Johannesburg (JNB) route no longer stops in DKR, so spraying is no longer necessary on those aircraft. Pesticide applicators spray Permethrin #216 after passengers and crew leave the aircraft in Montego Bay (MBJ). Flight attendants are required to apply the same spray on Narita (NRT) – Beijing (PEK) flights if insects are sighted in the cabin en route.

Delta 777LR aircraft are residually sprayed in Sydney, Australia (SYD) each week, with a Callington Haven product that contains 2% permethrin.

In addition to complying with the disinsection requirements of the countries listed, Delta applies an aerosol product called Gentrol IGR Aerosol to all of its aircraft to control crawling bugs, especially in the galleys, likely at floor level.

Delta Airlines is actively investigating opportunities to use non-chemical means of disinsection such as air blowers and net curtains to prevent flying insects from entering the cabin/flight deck. Delta is a leader among airlines in this regard and should be applauded.

Hawaiian Airlines

Hawaiian Airlines sprays on arrival in Sydney, Australia (SYD). All flights to SYD fly via Honolulu, HI (HNL). Departure points include Las Vegas (LAS), Los Angeles (LAX), Oakland (OAK), Phoenix (PHX), Portland (PDX), Sacramento (SMF), San Diego (SAN), San Francisco (SFO), and Seattle (SEA).

Northwest Airlines

Flight attendants are required to spray Permethrin #216 on Narita (NRT) – Beijing (PEK) flights if insects are sighted in the cabin en route.

Spirit Airlines

Spirit Airlines sprays on flights from Fort Lauderdale (FLL) to Montego Bay, Jamaica (MBJ) and Kingston, Jamaica (KIN). They also spray on flights from FLL to Trinidad and Tobago (POS), and on flights from Orlando (MCO) and FLL to Santa Domingo, PR (SDQ). The cleaners come on board and can spray upon arrival once the passengers have deplaned, but the crew is still on board. The planes are generally turned around in 1-2 hours. In addition, Spirit sprays the cargo bins only on flights to Guatemala City, Guatemala (GUA), Managua, Nicaragua (MGA), Panama City, Panama (PTY), and San Pedro Sula, Honduras (SAP) with a 2% solution of sumithrin.

United Airlines

United Airlines sprays its 747-400 aircraft residually pre-departure on flights from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (SGN) to Chicago (ORD) and Los Angeles (LAX) (via Hong Kong, HKG) and on direct flights from SGN to Francisco (SFO). Ultimately, United routes those 747-400 aircraft from LAX and SFO to Sydney, Australia (SYD). The Australian government considers the residual spray to be effective for 56 days post-spraying. If a residually-sprayed aircraft is operated to Sydney after the spraying has “expired” then the aircraft will be sprayed upon arrival in SYD by flight attendants with cans of insecticides before passengers or crew are allowed to leave the

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aircraft. So, passengers who chose to fly on United to Australia may be sprayed inflight and would not know until boarding the flight. United also routes those residually sprayed aircraft from Chicago (ORD) and San Francisco (SFO) to Shanghai (PVG) and Beijing (PEK), although the Chinese government no longer requires spraying on flights arriving in China from the US.

United provides seasonal service to Montego Bay, Jamaica (MBJ). In the winter of 2007-2008, it had Saturday seasonal service from Chicago (ORD) and the flight attendant was told to spray "half" a 12oz can of a 2% solution of d-phenothrin in the occupied cabin, although Jamaica only requires 4.24 oz on a A320 aircraft.

US Airways

US Airways sprays on flights to the Caribbean (e.g., SJU, MBJ).

AFA has copies of maintenance cards from US Airways that describe pyrethroid spraying procedures for domestic bug control and in response to insect sightings, so it is likely that pyrethroids are present on aircraft that do not fly to destinations with quarantine rules. Since 1996, the Environmental Protection Agency has not registered any aerosolized insecticide products for application in the cabin or flight deck of commercial aircraft (per PR 96-3), although US Airways is unlikely to be the only US airline that applies these products.