



December 2017

## **SUSPECTED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**

### **Guidelines for Cargo and Baggage Handlers**

The following are guidelines for cargo and baggage handlers that have to handle cargo or baggage transported by an aircraft arriving from an affected area or carrying 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.

During the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, the WHO reviewed the situation as it related to cargo handling and declared that there was no evidence that the infection had been or could be transmitted by cargo or baggage handling.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) made the following statement regarding avian influenza:

“There is no evidence that avian influenza is spread through contact with baggage, packages, or other objects, including items arriving from areas where influenza cases have been reported. Special handling of cargo arriving from areas where avian influenza cases have been reported is, therefore, not necessary.”

The US CDC also made the following statement regarding Ebola:

Packages or luggage should not pose a risk. Ebola virus is spread through direct contact with blood or body fluids (like feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen) from an infected person.

- Don't handle packages visibly dirty from blood or body fluids.
- [Wash your hands](#) often to prevent other infectious diseases.

The above recommendation also applied to hand carried cabin baggage of a passenger suspected of carrying a communicable disease.

Therefore, unless stated otherwise by WHO or a National Public Health Authority in the case of a new communicable disease, special handling of cargo and baggage is not necessary.

Notwithstanding the above, cargo and baggage handlers should use proper hand hygiene and wash their hands frequently, as recommended to all workers.