

## COVID-19 Vaccine Transport Considerations for Airport Operators December 11, 2020

Dear Airport Directors,

In the weeks and months ahead, the aviation industry and the United States Government will play important roles in the transportation of COVID-19 vaccines. The FAA and its government partners recognize that airport operators have a unique role in the transportation of vaccines to the American public and that each airport has its own unique operating environment. To provide support to the Nation's airports, the FAA offers the following planning considerations to assist airports in preparing to facilitate the safe and efficient transportation of COVID-19 vaccines. These planning considerations are not directive in nature; rather, they represent considerations that airport operators may find useful to prepare for aircraft carrying COVID-19 vaccines transiting their airport. Airports that may serve as alternate/divert airports should consider the points provided below, even if they will not be a primary destination for aircraft carrying COVID-19 vaccines. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and airport operators should take into account any other relevant considerations that they may identify.

### Planning Considerations

- Aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) coverage. Part 139 certificated airports will generally have adequate ARFF personnel and equipment for aircraft transporting COVID-19 vaccines. However, some aircraft used for vaccine shipment may be larger than the aircraft used for passenger-carrying flights that typically serve that airport. Therefore, an airport operator may opt to have extra ARFF coverage available for such flights.
- If applicable, adequate snow removal equipment and procedures to clear runway(s)/taxiway(s) for aircraft transporting vaccines. The airport operator may choose to have additional equipment and personnel available to assist with timely snow removal operations.
- Adequate aircraft parking areas to support the type(s) and numbers of aircraft involved (e.g., parking areas with sufficient pavement strength, clearance areas, etc.). Airport operators may want to coordinate with other users on the airport so that appropriate parking locations are available for vaccine transport aircraft when needed.
- Coordination with local air traffic control (ATC) facilities. Airport operators should work with their local ATC facilities before and during any vaccine transport flight's movement on the airfield.
- Coordination with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and/or local law enforcement, as necessary, for:
  - Awareness of any credible threats to the shipments;
  - Extra security needs, including at vehicle and pedestrian gates;
  - Minimizing customs clearance delays for shipments crossing international borders;

- Vehicular traffic control measures; and
- Facilitating the timely completion of any TSA or Customs and Border Protection, hazardous cargo, or security inspections that may be required.
- Priority access to the airfield for freight vehicles to safely move shipments of COVID-19 vaccines off-airport. Airport operators may want to consider landside vehicle control and a possible staging area for freight vehicles awaiting their cargo.
- Media response. An airport operator may want to provide a media meeting area where updates regarding COVID-19 vaccine shipments can be provided to news personnel.
- Assessment of Airport Operations staffing needs to handle the shipments. (e.g., “Follow-Me” vehicles, etc.)
- Contingency plans in case the shipment cannot proceed according to the anticipated schedule. An airport operator may want to consider back-up vaccine storage locations, as well as aircraft parking and freight vehicle parking areas.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Thomas Littleton, Senior Advisor, Office of Airports (Thomas.Littleton@FAA.gov), or Ms. Patricia Hiatt, Deputy Director, Airport Safety & Standards Directorate (Patricia.Hiatt@FAA.gov).

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