

Coronavirus Travel Alert & Screenings in the US & the WHO Erred in its Assessment of Risk

Executive Summary:

The CDC has announced that U.S. Travel Alert Status is now at Level 3 – All non-essential travel to China should be avoided. The CDC has also expanded airport screening to more airports, for a total of 18 and to two border crossing sites. The WHO has repaired a mistake in wording, regarding risk of 2019-nCoV disease to areas. The correct WHO risk assessment is Very High Risk (raised from High) in China, High Risk in the Region & High Risk Globally (raised from Moderate).

Full Report:

1. The CDC announced that it had elevated its Travel Alert Status to Level 3 for all of China; not just for Wuhan, as it had been previously. Level 3 advises Travelers to Avoid All Non-Essential Travel to China. This has been done, in part, since China's attempts to limit travel in and out of the cities and provinces that have many cases of novel coronavirus have not stopped or even slowed down the expansion of the coronavirus throughout Mainland China and into the region, as well as countries around the world away, including the US and Canada.

CDC Media Release of Level 3 Travel Health Notice – No Non-Essential Travel to Anywhere in China:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0128-travelers-avoid-china.html>

2. The CDC also announced that they will be expanding travel screening beyond the original 3 airports, Los Angeles, San Francisco, & JFK in New York and the 2 added with Atlanta & O'Hare in Chicago. It will now include the previous airports and the rest of airports with quarantine stations plus two border crossings at San Diego and El Paso. The additional airports with screening include Alaska, Anchorage, Boston, Dallas, Detroit, Honolulu, Houston, Miami, Minneapolis, Newark, Philadelphia, Seattle, Dulles in Washington D.C. and San Juan, Puerto Rico. This was done to capture those individuals that might have left China and gone through other places before traveling to the U.S.

The Wuhan government has admitted that 5 million left the area before its borders could be sealed but after news spread about sealing the City from travel in and out. **Since the best guess is that the incubation period (the period from exposure to disease) is between 2 and 14 days, these or other travelers may be infected and/or infectious. Enhanced screening will be done by teams of CDC & quarantine station personal, and will include examining for fever as well as other signs or symptoms of the infection. Identified travelers will also be filling out of a questionnaire about how they are feeling, as well as asked definitively about signs & symptoms. The CDC will also use**

the screening time to educate them about the disease, its signs/symptoms, and what to do should they develop even one symptom (isolate themselves, put on a surgical mask and call their physician or health care provider and make sure to disclose their history of travel). It is important to note that there has only been one known case of person-to-person transmission of the 2019-nCoV outside of China. However, within China, person-to-person transmission is responsible for the almost all of the current infections. Chinese authorities and medical personnel are also reporting that they are seeing asymptomatic carriers (those who are infected and can readily spread the virus, but are never ill) and those that are spreading the infection during the incubation period before they have any symptoms.

CDC 2019-nCoV Info for Travelers from China:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-china.html>

ABC News Report on Expanded Screening at US Airports:

<https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/us-beefs-screening-travelers-virus-china-68589211>

3. The WHO organization, via Director-General Dr Tedros, has admitted to a mistake by the miswording of the risk assessment they gave in interviews & in 3 written Situation Reports (1/23-1/25). What was originally written/stated was that the risk to China was high, regional risk was high, and global risk was moderate. **On Sunday night, Dr. Tedros stated that the risk in China is very high, it's high at the regional level and also high at the global level.** He added that while there is a health emergency in China, there is not a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), although that can be changed at any time. Many public health, epidemiology, and infectious disease experts have suggested that the Emergency Committee should have already made a PHEIC determination, but the Emergency Committee has refused to use that designation at this time. Click here for the most recent WHO Situation Report:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200129-sitrep-9-ncov.pdf?sfvrsn=9e51db96_2

WHO Director-General Tedros & China Discuss Next Steps for 2019-nCoV:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/28-01-2020-who-china-leaders-discuss-next-steps-in-battle-against-coronavirus-outbreak>

Other Links & Resources:

Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy on WHO Report on Local Spread of Coronavirus Outside of China:

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/who-seeks-answer-ncov-unknowns-more-local-spread-noted-outside-china>

OSHA Coronavirus 2019-CoV Home Page:
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/

OSHA Standards Application for Coronavirus 2019-nCoV:
https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/standards.html

Tools to Monitor Spread of Novel Coronavirus 2019-nCoV:

Johns Hopkins Virus Tracker:
<https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

DXY Chinese Medical Community 2019-nCoV Tracking Website with Realtime Broadcast Information, Rumors & Treatment Tabs. (information will have to be translated but can be set to happen automatically from simplified Chinese):
<http://3g.dxy.cn/newh5/view/pneumonia>