

# **CARPHA INTERIM GUIDANCE ABOUT EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE FOR POINTS OF ENTRY IN THE CARIBBEAN**

## **August 21, 2019**

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This document provides information on Ebola virus disease (EVD) prevention and preparedness for points of entry in the Caribbean.

This information is based on currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion and is subject to change as relevant new information becomes available. It should be read in conjunction with relevant national legislation, regulations and policies. This document has been adapted and prepared for the Caribbean situation, and therefore may differ from guidance available from other agencies.

### **Background**

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the current Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). The declaration followed a meeting of the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee for EVD in the DRC. The Committee cited recent developments in the outbreak in making its recommendation, including the first confirmed case in Goma, a city of almost two million people on the border with Rwanda, and the gateway to the rest of DRC and the world.

Currently, the risk remains very high at national and regional levels but still low at global level. Since the beginning of the outbreak, and as of 19 August 2019, there have been 2 909 Ebola virus disease cases (2 804 confirmed, 105 probable), including 1 953 deaths (1 859 confirmed, 94 probable), according to the WHO and the Ministry of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This includes at least 154 healthcare workers.<sup>1</sup>

Up to date case counts and further information on the ongoing outbreaks can be found on the World Health Organization (WHO) website: <https://www.who.int/ebola/situation-reports/drc-2018/en/>

### **What is Ebola Virus Disease (EVD)?**

EVD is a severe acute viral illness. Symptoms of EVD can appear 2 to 21 days after exposure to the virus, but the average is 8-10 days.<sup>2</sup> Symptoms usually begin suddenly with fever, sore throat, chills, headache and muscle pain and weakness. Following the initial symptoms, additional symptoms may include rash, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and internal and external bleeding.<sup>2</sup> Based on past outbreaks, an average of 50% of people infected with EVD die, but this has ranged from 25 to 90%.<sup>3</sup>

EVD can be transmitted through direct contact with:<sup>4</sup>

- Blood or body fluids (e.g., urine, saliva, sweat, faeces, vomit, breast milk, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- Objects (e.g., needles and syringes) that have been contaminated with the virus.
- Infected animals (e.g., bats, primates) in the affected countries

Ebola is NOT spread through the air or by water, mosquitoes or consumption of properly cooked food. However, in Africa, Ebola may be spread by handling bush meat.<sup>4</sup>

**Only individuals infected with Ebola virus who are symptomatic can transmit the disease. Conversely, persons who are infected with Ebola virus, but not yet symptomatic, are not infectious and do not transmit the disease.**

## **Guidance for Points of Entry**

To date, there have been NO reported cases of EVD in the Caribbean region.

There are no animal carriers of the Ebola virus in the Caribbean.

The likelihood of a case being imported to the Caribbean remains low.

There are no cruise ships that come directly from the affected country to the Caribbean so passengers would need to use commercial airlines to fly to a port of departure for the Caribbean. There are also no direct flights into the Caribbean from the affected country.

Although the likelihood is low that a case will be identified at a point of entry in the Caribbean, the following information provides guidance for points of entry in the Caribbean. Refer to Appendix A for key resources that provide further information and guidance for points of entry in the Caribbean.

### Travel Restrictions

As per the WHO recommendations<sup>6</sup>, **CARPHA does NOT recommend travel bans for individuals coming from affected countries to the Caribbean.**

### Exit Screening for EVD in the Caribbean

Exit screening is recommended by the WHO only for countries with intense Ebola transmission (DRC). Screening of travelers for unexplained febrile illness consistent with potential Ebola infection is recommended for all persons at international airports, seaport, and major land crossings. Exit screening has been successfully implemented, which includes:

1. All travellers have their temperature taken, answer questions about their health and exposure history and are visually assessed for signs of potential illness
2. Travellers with symptoms or possible exposures to Ebola are separated and assessed further.
3. Ill travellers are not permitted to travel on commercial vessels, and are referred to public health authorities for further evaluation.

**CARPHA does not recommend exit screening at any air or sea departure points in the Caribbean.**

### General Recommendations for Points of Entry in the Caribbean

The following recommendations are a guide to strengthen the ability of points of entry to identify, isolate, notify, evaluate and give support to suspected and probable cases of EVD. They are adapted from WHO recommendations for all points of entry 6:

- In accordance with international best practices, and the revised International Health Regulations (2005), ensure a public health emergency contingency plan and standard operating procedures are in place at each designated point of entry.
- For international airports, the aerodrome emergency plan should include a public health component, in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization Health related requirements.
- Identify an area at points of entry for interviews and health assessments, in the event of suspected illness detected in a traveller. The area identified should have access to toilet facilities. Interpreters may also be required to interview those who cannot communicate in the main local languages.
- Establish standard operating procedures to move ill travellers to designated hospitals, including the identification of routes through the least populated areas of the point of entry to ensure that ill persons are isolated from others, and that adequate provision for ambulance services is in place.
- Ensure a sufficient number of trained staff at points of entry, with available, appropriate and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), disinfectant and access to soap and water.
- Raise awareness among conveyance operators of the need to immediately notify point of entry health authorities **prior to arrival** of any suspected cases. Ensure that passenger locator forms (a standard form used for any infectious disease suspected during transit - see Appendix B) are on board all flights and at the airport, and that airport ground staff and flight crew are trained in managing EVD and environmental contaminants.
- Maintain effective and rapid communication between point of entry health and security authorities and the national public health authorities.
- Promptly establish lines of communication between public health and transport sector officials, e.g. representatives of the national civil aviation authority, airport operators and aircraft operators.
- Raise awareness of EVD and disseminate information among all relevant stakeholders at point of entry.

In addition to these WHO recommendations, countries should also post visible notices at points of entry with the signs and symptoms of EVD, and instructions for what to do if a traveller experiences symptoms, or witnesses another traveller with symptoms (see Appendix C for useful illustrations that describes key points for Ebola identification and prevention in ports/terminals).

### Entry Screening at Points of Entry in the Caribbean

The WHO does not recommend entry screening at points of entry, as it may have a limited effect in reducing international spread and resource demands are significant.<sup>5</sup>

A report released by the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) states that the use of entry screening for infectious disease has not proven to be effective to prevent or delay

transmission in past epidemics such as SARS.<sup>9</sup> They also note that, when using traveller body temperature as part of entry screening, even the best temperature screening will:<sup>7</sup>

- miss up to 20% of the febrile symptomatic EVD cases;
- miss travellers concealing their fever;
- miss two-thirds of infected cases, still incubating and not presenting with symptoms;
- detect cases of fever related to many, more common, infectious diseases such as malaria or influenza.

The EU has stated that, if exit screening is being conducted effectively, the added value of entry screening is likely to be very small, and the resource implications considerable.<sup>7</sup> Conducting entry screening will result in an increase in the demand for Ebola testing, which countries in the Caribbean may have difficulty fulfilling. In addition, screening measures are expensive and require extensive public health resources, including the development and implementation of protocols to further investigate possibly febrile passengers. Utilizing screening measures at points of entry may reduce staff availability in the Caribbean for other aspects of EVD preparedness and management.<sup>7</sup>

**For these reasons, CARPHA does not recommend entry screening at points of entry in the Caribbean at this time.**

Although entry screening is not recommended by the WHO, some countries have implemented entry screening at airports (see Appendix D for a summary of selected countries entry screening practices).

CARPHA does not recommend entry screening; however, for those countries who wish to implement entry screening, the resource requirements should be carefully balanced against the expected benefits of entry screening, before implementation. **Appendix E** provides an example of a Travel Health Declaration Form that countries may wish to adapt for use at points of entry, if entry screening is implemented. This tool would supplement existing customs and immigration forms, and may be useful in assessing risk and supporting contact tracing, should the need arise.

This form was modified from the Travel Health Declaration Form used in the United States. Travellers who have been in one of the Ebola affected countries **AND** who have answered “Yes” to any of the symptom or exposure questions should be immediately referred to national public health authorities for further screening. Travellers who have been in the Ebola affected country, but who did not answer “Yes” to any of the symptom or exposure questions should be given an information sheet about Ebola Virus Disease, with local contact information for whom they should contact with any concerns.

## REFERENCES

1. World Health Organization. Ebola Response Roadmap Situation Report – July 23, 2019. Available from: [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326015/SITREP\\_EVD\\_DRC\\_20190721-eng.pdf?ua=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326015/SITREP_EVD_DRC_20190721-eng.pdf?ua=1)
2. Public Health Agency of Canada. Ebola Symptoms. Modified Oct 16, 2014. Available from: <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/ebola/symptoms-symptomes-eng.php>
3. World Health Organization. Ebola virus disease. Modified Sept, 2014. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ebola Transmission. Modified Oct 22, 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/transmission/index.html>
5. World Health Organization. Statement on the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the IHR Emergency Committee regarding the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Modified Oct 23, 2014. Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-3rd-ihc-meeting/en/>
6. World Health Organization. WHO Interim guidance for Ebola event management at points of entry. Modified Sept, 2014. Available from: [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/131827/1/WHO\\_EVD\\_Guidance\\_PoE\\_14.1\\_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/131827/1/WHO_EVD_Guidance_PoE_14.1_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1)
7. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Infection prevention and control measures for Ebola virus disease. Entry and exit screening measures. Modified Oct 12, 2014. Available from: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Ebola-outbreak-technicalreport-exit-entry-screening-13Oct2014.pdf>
8. Public Health Agency of Canada. Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on additional border measures. Modified October 8, 2014. Available from: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpho-acsp/statements-declarations/20141008a-eng.php>
9. Public Health Agency of Canada. Canada's response to Ebola. Modified November 12, 2014. Available from: <http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/ebola/response-reponse/index-eng.php>
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What CDC is Doing. Modified Oct 25, 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/what-cdc-is-doing.html>
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC announces active post-arrival monitoring for travelers from impacted countries. Modified Oct 22, 2014. Available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2014/p1022-post-arrival-monitoring.html>
12. Public Health England. Enhanced Ebola screening process begins. Modified Oct 14, 2014. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-england-enhanced-ebola-screening-process>

## Appendix A

The following are a list of key resources that provide information on EVD that may be useful for points of entry in the Caribbean.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Ebola Outbreak: Airport, Border & Port of Entry Resources for Use by International Partners (Oct 21, 2014). Available from: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/ebola-outbreak-communication-resources>
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - Infection Prevention and control measures for Ebola virus disease Entry and Exit screening measures (Oct 12, 2014). Available from: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications/Publications/Ebola-outbreak-technicalreport-exit-entry-screening-13Oct2014.pdf>
- Public Health Agency of Canada - Environmental Sanitation Practices to Control the Spread of Communicable Disease in Passenger Conveyances and Terminals (Jun 23, 2014). Available from: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/inf-cont-inf/sanitation-hygiene-eng.php>
- Public Health Agency of Canada – Interim Guidance Ebola Virus Disease: infection prevention and control measures for borders, healthcare settings and self-monitoring at home (Sep 12, 2014). Available from: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/vhf-fvh/ebola-ipc-pci-eng.php>
- World Health Organization – WHO Interim Guidance for Ebola Event Management at Points of Entry (Sep, 2014). Available from: [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/131827/1/WHO\\_EVD\\_Guidance\\_PoE\\_14.1\\_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/131827/1/WHO_EVD_Guidance_PoE_14.1_eng.pdf?ua=1&ua=1)
- World Health Organization - Travel and transport risk assessment: Interim guidance for public health authorities and the transport sector (Sep, 2014). Available from: [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/132168/1/WHO\\_EVD\\_Guidance\\_TravelTransportRisk\\_14.1\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/132168/1/WHO_EVD_Guidance_TravelTransportRisk_14.1_eng.pdf?ua=1)

## Appendix B

This public health passenger locator card was developed by an informal transportation working group convened by the World Health Organization. The card provides a way to rapidly collect passenger contact information and can be used **if disease transmission is suspected on board** an aircraft to assist with contact tracing. This is different than entry screening, which is done for all or targeted passengers upon arrival into a country. The card can be downloaded here:

<http://www.who.int/ihr/PLC.pdf?ua=1>

**Public Health Passenger Locator Form:** To protect your health, public health officers need you to complete this form whenever they suspect a communicable disease onboard a flight. Your information will help public health officers to contact you if you were exposed to a communicable disease. It is important to fill out this form completely and accurately. Your information is intended to be held in accordance with applicable laws and used only for public health purposes. *~Thank you for helping us to protect your health.*

*One form should be completed by an adult member of each family. Print in capital (UPPERCASE) letters. Leave blank boxes for spaces.*

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:** 1. Airline name  2. Flight number  3. Seat number  4. Date of arrival (yyyy/mm/dd)  2  0

**PERSONAL INFORMATION:** 5. Last (Family) Name  6. First (Given) Name  7. Middle Initial  8. Your sex Male  Female

**PHONE NUMBER(S) where you can be reached if needed. Include country code and city code.**

9. Mobile  10. Business

11. Home  12. Other

13. Email address

**PERMANENT ADDRESS:** 14. Number and street (Separate number and street with blank box)  15. Apartment number

16. City  17. State/Province

18. Country  19. ZIP/Postal code

**TEMPORARY ADDRESS: if you are a visitor, write only the first place where you will be staying.**

20. Hotel name (if any)  21. Number and street (Separate number and street with blank box)  22. Apartment number

23. City  24. State/Province

25. Country  26. ZIP/Postal code

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION of someone who can reach you during the next 30 days**

27. Last (Family) Name  28. First (Given) Name  29. City

30. Country  31. Email

32. Mobile phone  33. Other phone

**34. TRAVEL COMPANIONS – FAMILY: Only include age if younger than 18 years**

	Last (Family) Name	First (Given) Name	Seat number	Age <18
(1)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(2)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(3)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(4)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

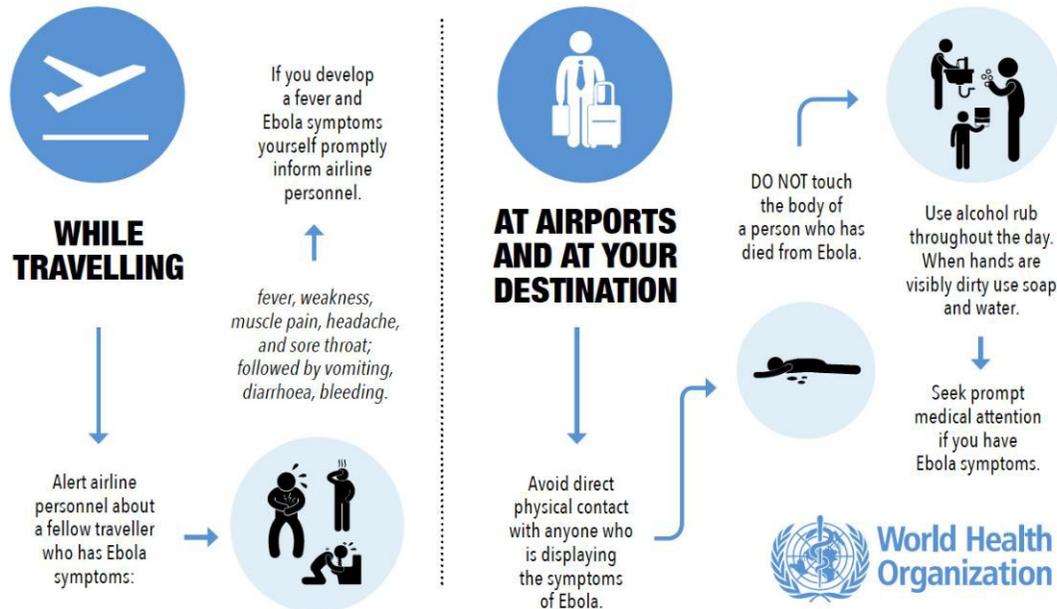
**35. TRAVEL COMPANIONS – NON-FAMILY: Also include name of group (if any)**

	Last (Family) Name	First (Given) Name	Group (tour, team, business, other)
(1)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(2)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

## Appendix C

The following infographics from the WHO and CDC provide examples of illustrated materials for points of entry, to remind travellers what to look for when travelling to and from countries affected by the current Ebola outbreak.

# TRAVEL TO AND FROM EBOLA-AFFECTED COUNTRIES IS LOW-RISK HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Available from: [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/who\\_ebola\\_infographicsforairports\\_180814\\_final.pdf](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/who_ebola_infographicsforairports_180814_final.pdf)

## HEALTH ADVISORY: EBOLA

### Recently in West Africa?

Watch for fever, headaches, and body aches in the next 3 weeks.

**3 WEEKS**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

If you get sick, call a doctor. Tell the doctor where you traveled.

For more information: visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) or call 800-CDC-INFO.

CDC

Available from: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/ebola-inbound-infographic>





## Appendix E

### Example Travel Health Declaration Form

Each traveller should complete this form in conjunction with the national customs and immigration form (parents/guardians should complete the form for those not able to complete it themselves).

This information is being collected as part of the public health response to the outbreaks of Ebola. The information will be used by *[insert country here]* public health authorities and other international, national and local public health agencies for that purpose. *[Countries may wish to cite legal authority for collecting this information].*

Completion of this form is voluntary. However, if an individual refuses to provide the requested information, or is not truthful about the information provided, national public health authorities may quarantine, isolate, or place the individual under surveillance if there is a reasonable belief that the individual is infected with or has been exposed to Ebola.

#### Section 1. Traveller's Information

Please check off any of the following countries you have been in during the past 21 days (please check ALL that apply)

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....

Passport country: ..... Passport number: .....

Birth date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_(DD/MM/YY) Sex:  Male  Female

Arrival date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_(DD/MM/YY) Airline: .....

Flight number: ..... Seat number: .....

Primary e-mail address: .....

Alternate e-mail address: .....

Primary telephone number (include country code or country name): .....

Alternate telephone number (include country code or country name): .....

Home/permanent address:  
.....  
.....

Address for next 21 days:  
.....  
.....

Are you travelling with anyone else on this trip?  Yes  No

**IF YES**, please list the name and a telephone number for each person you are travelling with (*if you are travelling with more than four people, please ask for an additional form*):

1. Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....  
Seat number: .....

2. Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....  
Seat number: .....

3. Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....  
Seat number: .....

4. Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....  
Seat number: .....

**Emergency contact information**

Name of person who can reach you while in (*insert country name*):

Last (family) name: ..... First (given) name: .....

Country:..... Relationship:.....

Their email address: ..... Their phone number: .....

**Section II. Symptom and Exposure Information**

**In the past 48 hours, have you had any of the following symptoms?**

- A. Fever, feeling feverish, or having chills?  Yes  No
- B. Vomiting or diarrhea?  Yes  No

**In the last 21 days, have you done any of the following?**

- C. Lived in the same household or had other contact with a person sick with Ebola or an unknown disease?  Yes  No
- D. Worked in a health care facility or a laboratory in an Ebola affected country?  Yes  No
- E. Attended a funeral or touched the body of someone who died in an Ebola affected country of Ebola or an unknown disease?  Yes  No

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***Thank you for helping us to protect your health and that of others.***

**For Completion by Immigration [*Insert appropriate organization who undertakes screening at your point of entry*]**

**After review of this Traveller Health Declaration Form, the following action was taken:**

- Individual was referred to national Public Health authorities for further screening
- Individual was given an information sheet about Ebola Virus Disease with contact information of who to call in country with any concerns.
- No action required

This form can be found on the CARPHA website: <http://carpha.org/What-We-Do/Public-Health-Activities/Ebola>