



Fact Sheet: Reporting an illness or death

Important biosecurity information for crew of international vessels and aircraft.

Reporting ill travellers or deaths

If you or any of your passengers show symptoms of infectious disease or there has been a death on board, the *Biosecurity Act 2015* requires that the operator of the aircraft or vessel report this to a Biosecurity Officer from the Department of Agriculture before arrival in Australia. You are not required to ask passengers if they are suffering from an infectious disease, but if you notice someone is ill you may need to report it – see ‘What to look for?’

If there is any doubt whether an ill person needs to be reported, contact a Biosecurity Officer.

Why report ill travellers or death on board?

Specific health risks are posed by international travellers arriving in Australia. With the speed of air travel, an outbreak of an infectious disease may occur on the other side of the world and an infected traveller may bring that disease into Australia within hours.

Informing a Biosecurity Officer of any ill or deceased travellers on board a vessel or aircraft can reduce the spread of disease, as the Biosecurity Officer can assess and manage the situation before anyone leaves the aircraft or vessel. Effective human biosecurity activities are an essential part of protecting Australia from infectious disease outbreaks.

What will happen if we report ill travellers or deaths on board?

Once an illness has been reported, a Biosecurity Officer may board your aircraft or vessel to assess ill or deceased travellers. In the case of vessels, Biosecurity Officers may request some additional information on the ill traveller’s condition and travel history.

This process is carried out in a timely manner, however delays may occur if ill travellers or deaths are not reported to Biosecurity Officers before arrival in Australia.

What to look for?

You should inform a Biosecurity Officer of travellers who have any of the following:

- Fever or suspected fever
- jaundice
- a new rash
- unusual bleeding



- a new coughing illness
- any illness that requires prompt medical assistance

What should you do if a traveller is ill or dies on board?

If a traveller needs medical attention (see 'What to look for'); or dies on board a vessel or aircraft you should:

- For vessels - report in writing (including electronically) to a Biosecurity Officer or Border Force between 12 and 96 hours before arrival.
- For aircraft - notify a Biosecurity Officer either orally or in writing (including electronically) at top of descent or at least 30 minutes before arrival.

You do not need to report travellers whose illness is a result is of:

- drug or alcohol use
- an injury or a pre-existing medical condition
- motion sickness

You are not required to report a traveller who has a pre-arranged medical transfer prior to boarding the flight.

If a person is very ill, notifying a Biosecurity Officer will not interfere with having a vessel or an aircraft met by medical or ambulance services. The operator of the vessel or aircraft is responsible for requesting medical or ambulance services.

Your responsibility

The Australian Government takes the reporting of ill or deceased travellers very seriously. The operator of an aircraft or vessel is legally responsible for ensuring the Department of Agriculture is notified. Failure to report ill travellers or death on board a vessel or aircraft is an offence under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* and can lead to the application of additional reporting requirements, revoking positive pratique, fines or possible imprisonment.

For more information

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