

Practices of China Customs on Containing COVID-19

26 March 2020

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC) has set up ad hoc working structure and mechanisms, taken science-based border health and quarantine measures to safeguard public health security, and adjusted clearance formalities to promote trade security and facilitation.

I. Ad hoc working structure and mechanisms of GACC against COVID-19

Following the outbreak of the disease, China Customs has put in place a Command Center, with GACC Minister as Commander-in-Chief and all Vice Ministers as Deputy Commanders-in-Chief, and a Working Group. .

Led by the Vice Minister in charge of border health and quarantine, the Working Group guides Customs offices across the country to fight the epidemic in line with policies made by the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism led by the State Council. The specific functions of the Working Group include launching anti-epidemic plans and measures, coordinating border efforts made by all relevant government agencies, supervising the implementation of anti-epidemic measures, and providing solutions to emergency issues.

Under the Working Group are 9 Sub-groups led by one department and participated by other relevant departments of GACC.

II. Measures to contain COVID-19

1. Around-the-clock tracking and analysis of the epidemic situations. China Customs has been following closely the spread of the disease both at home and abroad, and collecting information through multiple sources. As the disease evolves, experts in a wide range of fields and from various departments are gathered to assess risks and provide guidance for targeted measures at border crossings across the country.

2. Compulsory health declaration. All cross-border passengers are required to declare to the Customs their health conditions, especially pneumonia-like symptoms and travel and exposure history in the past 14 days. The health declaration form (which can be found in the annex) has been translated into over 10 languages. E-declaration is also available on mobile phone—passengers can declare through an applet developed by China Customs, and scan the generated QR code when passing Customs.

3. Strict entry/exit health and quarantine measures. All cross-border passengers are subject to a three-step screening approach at border crossings. 1) Passengers are required to declare their health conditions, have their temperature

taken, and accept initial health assessment. 2) Those who are found in step one with COVID-19 related symptoms, or from most affected countries or regions, or have been exposed to confirmed cases, will be further screened through epidemiological investigation, medical examination and laboratory testing. 3) Those who are identified in step two as confirmed cases, suspected cases or close contacts, or showing relevant symptoms, will be transferred or quarantined for further treatment or medical observation, in line with the requirements of the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism. The three-step approach enables early detection, early report, early quarantine and early treatment. Other major infectious diseases such as Ebola and Lassa fever have also been carefully watched among incoming passengers to prevent other outbreaks.

4. Collaboration among multiple agencies. China Customs works closely with other border agencies to share information and coordinate the procedures for screening, quarantine and referral of passengers. A comprehensive prevention and control network was put in place to contain the spread of the disease.

5. Application of big data for transmission prevention. Since it is difficult to identify the passengers travelling on flights that have departed from most affected countries (regions) and transited in a third country (region) before arriving in China, China Customs has been using big data to conduct correlation analysis on global flight routes and schedules, thus taking more precise border quarantine measures.

6. International Cooperation. China Customs has been strengthening cooperation on border health and quarantine with its counterparts in other countries and regions. Contact points were designated for communication and coordination of anti-epidemic efforts. Exchanges have been made on border health and quarantine policies, laws and regulations, and on experience and practices of prevention and control of COVID-19.

III. Trade facilitation measures

1. Facilitated clearance for anti-epidemic supplies. A Sub-group has been set up under the ad hoc Working Group to ensure fast clearance of anti-epidemic supplies.

For imported supplies, all local Customs are required to open exclusive counters and green lanes 24/7 to ensure fast clearance; imported pharmaceuticals, disinfection supplies, protective suits, treatment equipment and other supplies will be released without delay. For exported supplies, green lanes are provided 24/7 to minimize the clearance time.

2. Supporting foreign trade and economic development. To promote social and economic development amid current anti-epidemic efforts, the GACC has rolled out policies and measures on faster clearance, minimum-interference customs control, certification services, acceleration of market access process for imported

agricultural products, among other, to help businesses resume operations and boost foreign trade growth.

3. Information availability. China Customs has made information available on news media, GACC official website, Customs official Weibo and WeChat accounts and journals.

Link to GACC official website:

<http://english.customs.gov.cn>.

Link to GACC news:

<http://english.customs.gov.cn/newsroom/news>.

Link to GACC Announcements:

<http://english.customs.gov.cn/Legislation/Announcement>.

IV. Suggestions

We suggest that WCO play a more vigorous role in enhancing coordination and cooperation among Member Customs in the following respects: 1) encourage Members to share information of cross-border passengers who have been identified as confirmed cases, suspected cases or close contacts of COVID-19, and conduct health screening on outbound passengers, so as to jointly contain the spread of COVID-19 at borders; 2) encourage Members to facilitate and expedite the clearance of imported, exported and transit anti-epidemic supplies; 3) strengthen international customs cooperation, and refrain from taking excessive measures against the movement of cross-border goods and transport conveyances, to ensure the security of global supply chain and trading network, and promote the development of international trade at the special time.



EXIT/ENTRY HEALTH DECLARATION FORM OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA



QR Code for e-Declaration

EXIT ENTRY (Please tick one of the boxes with “√”)

Name: _____ Gender : Male Female.

Date of birth: _____ Year _____ Month _____ Day Occupation: _____

Nationality (region): _____ City of residence: _____

1. Passport No.: _____ Other identity document (please specify) No.: _____

Flight (ship/train) No.: _____ Seat No.: _____

Port of exit/entry: _____ Destination: _____

2. Chinese mobile number and other contact information: _____

Overseas mobile number and other contact information: _____

Contact persons in China and their phone numbers: _____

What's your address in the next 14 days? (Please provide detailed address. For address in China, please specify the street, community, building/house/apartment number, or the address of the hotel) _____

If you come (return) to China on (from) a business trip, please specify the inviting person (organization) _____ and the host person (organization) _____

3. Where have you visited in China during the past 14 days? (Please specify the provinces/autonomous regions/municipalities and **cities**, including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions)

If you have visited other countries and regions during the past 14 days, please specify: _____

4. Have you had direct contact with confirmed/suspected/symptomless cases of COVID-19 during the past 14 days? Yes No

Have you had direct contact with people having fever and/or symptoms of respiratory infection during the past 14 days? Yes No

Has your community reported any COVID-19 cases during the past 14 days? Yes No

Have there been two or more members in your office/family having fever and/or symptoms of respiratory infection during the past 14 days? Yes No

5. Do you have now, or have you had in the past 14 days, the following symptoms? Yes No

If yes, please tick your symptoms with “√” Fever Chills Dry cough Expectoration

Stuffy nose Running nose Sore throat Headache Fatigue Dizziness Muscle pain

Arthralgia Shortness of breath Difficulty breathing Chest tightness Chest pain

Conjunctival congestion Nausea Vomiting Diarrhea Stomachache Others _____

Have you taken any medications for fever, cold or cough during the past 14 days? Yes No

6. If you have tested for COVID-19 during the past 14 days, is the result positive? Yes No

Dear Passengers, according to relevant laws and regulations, for your health and that of others, please fill out this *Exit/Entry Health Declaration Form* truthfully. If you conceal or falsely declare the information, you will be held accountable according to the *Frontier Health and Quarantine Law of the People's Republic of China*, and if the spread of quarantinable communicable diseases or a serious danger of spreading them is thereby caused, you shall be sentenced to not more than three years of fixed-term imprisonment or criminal detention, and may in addition or exclusively be sentenced to a fine, according to Article 332 of the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China*.

I hereby certify that all the above information is true and correct. I will take the legal responsibility in case of false declaration.

Signature :

Date:

