

Zika Virus: Disinsection

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Dr. Paulo Alves, leading aviation medical specialist, and Global Medical Director for MedAire, provides an update and recommended best practices on disinsection in light of the evolving Zika situation:

- Disinsection procedures for aircrafts and airports are a well-established practice recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted by many countries.
- They aim to prevent the international dissemination of mosquito vectors responsible for the transmission of diseases like malaria, dengue and others.
- The topic has gained recent attention due to the outbreak of Zika Virus Disease which is a mosquito-borne disease.
- The WHO Emergency Committee on Zika met on February 1st and advised as a 'precautionary measure that standard recommendations regarding disinsection of aircraft and airports should be implemented.
- At the time of this communication the WHO along with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is focusing on reducing the populations of the Aedes mosquito that transmit the virus at airports (vector control.)
- Nevertheless, in recent days a few countries (UK, Italy, China, e.g.) are implementing different requirements for aircraft operators. Those will entail various disinsection procedures. Italy, for example is requiring the use of residual disinsection for every aircraft coming from any area, not only Zika affected ones. Other countries like Russia and Costa Rica are implementing passenger surveillance measures.
- The scenario may change quickly as countries do have authority to put in place such measures related to public health matters, and as new evidence on the risks associated with the Zika infection arises.
- If the carrier decides to proceed and implement disinsection of their aircraft they should follow the recommended practices set forth by the WHO.
- WHO recommends four types of disinsection procedures: residual, pre-flight, 'blocks-away' and 'top of descent.'

- The first two methods can be performed without the presence of passengers and are therefore less inconvenient at this stage, although the pre-flight is usually followed by a ‘top of descent’ application of insecticide anyway.
- The recommended substances were widely tested and considered safe for utilization in this environment being well-tolerated.

Dr. Paulo Magalhães Alves, MD, MSc.
Global Medical Director, Aviation Health
MedAire, an International SOS company

For more information, visit the [MedAire Zika website](#)