

## **Interim Guidance for Aircraft Cleaning Staff on Suspected Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)**

### ***Introduction***

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a severe form of pneumonia, or infection of the lungs that was first recognised in Asia in mid-February 2003 and has now been reported on three continents. It is thought that, in some cases, passengers travelling from affected areas have carried the illness on board aircraft to other countries.

As your job involves cleaning aircraft in which someone suspected of having SARS might have flown, this advice sheet has been produced to describe the disease and steps you can take to protect yourself.

### ***What are the Symptoms of SARS?***

The first sign of SARS is generally quite a high fever (greater than 38°C or 100°F). Other symptoms may include headache, aches and pains, chills and generally feeling “unwell” or “poorly”. There may be shortness of breath. After 3 to 7 days, a cough may develop and the patient may have difficulty breathing.

### ***How is SARS spread?***

It is likely that it is spread by direct contact with an ill person or by an ill person sneezing or coughing. Up until now, the majority of cases have occurred in people who have had very close contact with other cases such as family members or healthcare workers looking after patients with SARS. There is no evidence to date that the disease spreads through casual contact. It may take between 3 and 5 days ranging from 2 to 7 days to show symptoms of illness after having been

### ***What should you do to protect yourself?***

If your work involves cleaning aircraft, practice normal safety measures:

- Wash your hands often and
- Wear gloves when you clean the toilets/wash areas.

As with all contagious illnesses, the best way to not get sick is to wash your hands often with soap and water. If you don't have soap and water, you can use alcohol-based hand rubs. Cleaning staff do not need to wear masks and gowns.

If you clean up after a flight that had a passenger who may have SARS, wear disposable gloves as you are cleaning the plane. Wash your hands carefully afterwards.