

Vaccination facilities to follow Covid Safety Protocols

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Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has issued enabling guidelines to facilitate the vaccination program in a fast and efficient manner to ensure timely vaccination of the aviation community. During the COVID-19 surge, the aviation community has worked tirelessly to ensure unhindered services for the movement of people in need and essential cargo including critical medical cargo like vaccines, medicines, Oxygen Concentrators, etc. Secretary, Civil Aviation sent a letter earlier to all the State Governments with a request to consider the

personnel involved in aviation and related services as a priority group under the vaccination program.

As per the guidelines, all players in Civil Aviation Sector would be advised to cover their personnel under the ongoing vaccination program. Guidelines further state that the organizations which have already made arrangements with Government/Private service providers for the vaccination to their employees may continue to do so.

Further, a dedicated vaccination facility is advised to be established by the Airport Operators in their respective airports to facilitate expeditious vaccination for the personnel involved in aviation or related services (including the contractual, casual, etc.). It is stated that the Airport Operator should immediately contact State Governments/Private Service Providers (Hospitals), who are willing to set up Covid Vaccination Centres at Airports.

The guidelines state that required facilities like setting up of vaccination counters, segregated waiting area (pre as well as post-vaccination) are to be established by the Airport Operators. Basic facilities for the personnel visiting (help desk, drinking water, ventilation fans, washrooms, etc.) to be arranged following COVID safety protocols. The cost per vaccination dose can be decided by the Airport Operator with the service provider. These facilities would be available for all aviation sector stakeholders at the same cost. It further states that all agencies working in the airports eco-system need to sponsor their personnel to avail the facilities as operators/service providers would not be dealing with individual cases. Further, online Payment mechanism to the service provider for vaccine doses administered for their respective personnel has been advised to be devised.

It is stated that for the smaller airports (where the numbers to get vaccinated are less and private players do not find it viable), the Airport Operators can approach the District/local Administration for extending the vaccination program. The facilities created by Airport Operator would be available for all the Civil Aviation Personnel in first phase and can be extended to the family members subsequently.

The guidelines suggest that priority should be made to cover the ATC, crew of airlines (both cockpit and cabin), mission critical and passenger facing staff on priority. All Airport Operators have been advised to designate a nodal officer (an alternative nodal officer may also be kept in readiness) for coordinating the efforts.

The guidelines said that Chairman, AAI will hold regular meetings to review the progress and coordinate with the Ministry and DGCA to address issues and challenges. If there is an issue of vaccine availability Ministry would take up at appropriate level for smooth supply.

The order further mentions that considering any impending local situation, suggested guidelines may be contextualized and improved but all safety protocols and instructions issued by MoHFW, State Government Concerned or MoCA, related to COVID 19 must be followed.

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