

Istanbul Airport sets standards in COVID-19 safety

By **Hibah Noor** on June, 9 2020 | Airlines & Airports



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Istanbul Airport has announced a raft of safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic in all areas of its operations, from airport access to boarding gates, for a healthy and safe travel experience.

The Turkish hub, which was forced to suspend its services apart from repatriation and cargo flights during the pandemic, resumed domestic flights at ever-increasing frequency from June 1. In addition, Turkey plans a gradual resumption of international flights to 40 countries from June 10.

“The safety of our passengers has always been the primary concern of Istanbul Airport. That is why we are going further than anyone in the fight against coronavirus,” airport operator iGA said in a newsletter.

Istanbul Airport has implemented strict social distancing measures, while retaining comfort for passengers. Only passengers with a valid ticket are allowed into the airport, to reduce the number of people inside the terminal.

The necessary distance between passengers is ensured at all times, from the public transport to the airport through entrances, check-in, elevators, security, food courts, duty free areas and boarding gates, iGA said. Thermal screening cameras are used to monitor body temperatures and identify cases of fever.

Dedicated Hygiene Team

Istanbul Airport has marked all areas according to social distancing guidelines, and a dedicated iGA Hygiene Team formed for COVID-19 ensures passengers comply. Passengers are reminded not to sit too close to each other and keep distance in queues, aided by demarcation on seats, walkways and around the gates.

A new high-tech smart screening helmet has thermo-scan sensors which provide information about the temperature of passengers and staff in the terminal.

The Hygiene Team wears smart screening helmets to scan people as they enter the airport or wait in line. Social distancing footprint stickers are applied to the floors of all areas.

Additionally, Istanbul Airport requires all passengers to wear masks all the time. Passengers who don't wear masks cannot enter the terminal. Carry-on luggage will not be allowed (only limited with laptops, handbags, briefcases and baby items) onboard the aircraft.

To lower the risk of droplet infection, Istanbul Airport uses its ventilation system to increase the circulation of fresh air, with filters being disinfected regularly. Hand sanitizer is provided throughout the airport at more than 500 locations with additional vending machines for hygienic products.

Upon entering the terminal, sanitization mats disinfect passengers' shoes, and luggage is disinfected. Common areas like toilets, escalators, seating areas and food courts, as well as shared items such as baggage carts, self-check-in machines and information screens, are disinfected regularly. Passenger bridges are disinfected after each flight. All goods that enter Istanbul Airport will be disinfected upon arrival.

Technology and innovation

Ultraviolet-based tunnels to disinfect airport security trays and baggage will be used to kill viruses on the surface of baggage.

Istanbul Airport staff will wear masks throughout their shifts and ensure they only get in contact with passengers when procedures make it necessary, for instance in security, where patting-down searches will be reduced to a minimum. Special teams regularly disinfect surfaces and appliances, as well as baggage carts.

Istanbul Airport places great emphasis on occupational health. Personnel have received social distancing and hygiene training online and are provided necessary protective equipment relative to their position's risk level. Transportation of employees has been rearranged to meet social distancing guidelines.

Precautionary measures

Passengers will have to complete passenger information forms and provide their destination address to the airlines to trace possible infection cases and notify anyone they might have come into contact with.

Incoming flights from regions with higher case numbers will be routed to designated areas. All incoming international passengers will be submitted to a PCR test before being allowed to enter Turkey. Currently, the testing capacity is approximately 20,000 tests per day.

Quarantine rooms, equipped with state-of-the-art medical appliances, will be available in case of

emergencies. Istanbul Airport will continuously inform the public about safety measures on all channels, ranging from PA-systems in the airport to social media and the iGA app.

“Istanbul Airport is certain that aviation can coexist with measures against the spread of the coronavirus and will do everything possible to ensure both seamless operation and maintain the health and safety of our customers and staff,” the airport operator said.

A YouTube video about Istanbul Airport’s safety measures can be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hulEcYZntwg>