

Northern and Remote Communities Call with Industry

March 23 2020

Nick Robinson, DG Civil Aviation:

- Opportunity to provide you some info on the work to try to address this COVID-19 situation and the impact it is having on the industry.
- We will be providing info on some of the exemptions we are doing. TC has been communicating with associations often and trying to address where we can exempt certain areas that would need flexibility

Exemption work:

- There are areas of opportunity where exemptions can be provided to address the burden and time restraints faced by operators. An extension to medical validity was issued last week. TC will be issuing today an exemption to the donning of particular equipment in firefighting training. We are trying to find ways to issue global exceptions where possible, or issue policy statements, or extensions that would allow flexibility to the industry. But the primary goal is always safety. Exemptions were issued on training and medicals last week.
- TC has received requests from operators, and we are amalgamating the list and finding out what can be exempted. We will have a better idea in the coming days on the possible exemptions and they will be prioritized. TC is identifying in the CARS where we could do exemptions as well. If the operators have requirements, they should let their associations know in order to advise TC.
- For fatigue, operators should go look at the new rules and assess if the new rules will permit what they seek. If so, they should submit an application for an exemption through their regional POI to apply the new rules right away

Work undertaken with provinces and territories

- TC issued a circular that clarified that air crew are exempt from self-isolation if they show no sign of the virus. Operators were provided with clarification on the definition of air crew. Civil Aviation Safety Alert (CASA 2020-03)
- We have seen some instances where provinces and territories are issuing restrictions on the number of people in a workplace. TC has sent letters of assurance to operators that need to have more people in the workplace. But it is still the responsibility of the employer to make sure everyone is safe.
- We are working with a Deputy Minister committee to clarify what is considered essential for transportation in all modes and to communicate to provincial and territorial counterparts that these types of services are indeed essential.

TC Air policy's work on operational financial impacts:

- TC is working with Finance Canada and Global Affairs Canada to put in place a financial help package through Business Development Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC) to help with the repatriation of Canadians stranded abroad as well as financial help to air operators.

Roundtable by province. East to west

- The fatigue rules were discussed briefly, will be the long term implementation of the rule be delayed to longer than the end of this year as originally planned?
 - TC is looking right now at the short term implication of the fatigue rules. The more medium to long term will be looked at later. Some of the existing rules are not as flexible as the new rules are.
- There was a Quebec announcement that companies should close unless they are deemed an essential service. Can we address the fact that air transportation is an essential service?
 - TC will send a letter by the end of the day to say that air transportation is an essential service. It will be shared broadly to the group.
- Need to ensure that PHAC local personnel understands the air crew exemption.
 - If you have any concerns, funnel them through your industry association. There is still a lot of coordination required to do.
- How to deal with flight crew conducting simulator training in US? As long as the activity is part of their duties, they remain exempted from self-isolation.
 - There are more and more restrictions between provinces, and the rotations might become a problem. Last week we were looking at international boarder, this week is cross provincial and territorial boarders. And it is definitely on our radar. There needs to get consistency between internationals, interprovincial and Territorial borders
- Are there any conversation going on in finding ways on maintaining emergency services in remote community?
 - There is work being done on chartering flights for that purpose and will be recognized as an essential service in the province. There are agreements and plans being put in place to continue operations. Because the regulation is in done in such a way there might be a need to get dispensations of the CARs to lay off certain categories of employees. This will be looked at by TC and be addressed at the next call.
- How will the aid package be structured to help small air operators especially non debt aid?
 - As part of the overall package there are specific mechanism to provide liquidity support. The mechanism for the delivery of the money will be BDC and EDC.

Business Credit Availability Program. BDC and EDC will have all the information to ensure that companies have access to capital and effective support through the crisis. TC is looking on possibilities and focusing on essential connectivity primarily in the north.

- Operators will need minimum 6 months extensions on many different regulatory pieces.
 - TC is reviewing the CARs to assess exemptions/extensions that may be needed. Industry should communicate specific needs/concerns to TC.
- The trade association have all been asking to get some of the taxes that have been paid reimbursed as well as relief from taxes.
- Passenger loads are going down rapidly, but cargo and other services will need to be maintained as well as the movement of essential workers It would be helpful if TC could share with the NWT government what is the definition of essential workers, and the Territorial government is looking to develop something similar right now.
 - The letter mentioned earlier will be shared with the group
- Financial aid is critical. Loans will not be the answer. Expecting to have direction on the boarder closer soon, but there will be a need to have an exemption for air travel there, as it is essential.
- Will there be national standards to offer protection to crew members?
 - TC has been following advice from PHAC. In the absence of specific advice, operators should follow what is out there already for Canadians, but TC is continuing to discuss with PHAC as the social distancing recommendation is not feasible in the context of airplanes.
- EDC and BDC for the funding?
 - TC to send link out to the distribution list
- Is there any special directive for flight crew in regards to wearing personal protection? If none are already available, maybe there should be some developed specifically for that group of workers.
- Clarification needs to reach front line CBSA on the air crew status.
 - If there are any difficulty in regards to the transiting of crew let TC know and we can address and disseminate the information.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Include the attachments of the 2 letters mentioned in regards to essential workers definition and the number of people allowed in a workplace.
 - See attachments to this email.
- Send links to BDC and EDC financial aid packages
 - EN: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/financial-sector-policy/business-credit-availability-program.html>
 - FR: <https://www.canada.ca/fr/ministere-finances/programmes/politique-secteur-financier/programme-credit-entreprises.html>
- Key contacts will be shared
 - To be confirmed.
- Planning on another call in 48h to update again, Wednesday. Invite to follow.