

Govt relaxes Covid restrictions for air travel. Check new rules to be followed on flights

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The Ministry of Civil Aviation has relaxed Covid-19-related regulations stating that cabin crew members need not wear PPE kit, airlines need not keep three seats vacant on international flights for medical emergencies and security personnel at airports can resume pat-down search of passengers Scheme, the minister said.

The relaxation has been given to facilitate "smooth conduct of air operations", the ministry's order, dated March 21, stated.

The aviation market in India is currently recovering after the Omicron variant suppressed the demand in January. Around 76.96 lakh domestic passengers travelled by air in February, approximately 20 per cent more than in January.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), in its order, said that the restriction of keeping three seats vacant on international flights for handling medical emergencies related to Covid-19 stands removed.

"Airlines may carry a few additional PPE protective gears, sanitiser and N-95 masks, to handle any respiratory infections related to cases on air, for passengers as well as the crew," the MoCA noted.

It said it had allowed full domestic flight operations from October 18, 2021, and has now decided to recommence scheduled international flight operations from March 27, 2022, "in view of the declining Covid-19 cases, high level of vaccinations and prevailing Covid-19 situation".

The requirement of complete PPE kit for crew member stands removed, the MoCA stated.

"However, use of face mask and maintenance of hand hygiene/sanitiser continue to be mandatory," it added.

The pat-down search by security personnel at airports is reintroduced, wherever needed, as per directions of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, the MoCA noted.

"During the process, the security personnel must wear N-95 mask and sanitise hands after each pat-down search, besides following regular Covid-19 protocols," it mentioned.

India reported a single-day rise of 1,581 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 4,30,10,971, while the active cases further declined to 23,913, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

The death toll has climbed to 5,16,543, with 33 daily fatalities, the ministry data updated at 8 am stated.

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