

JOINT GUIDELINE

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SUBJECT: Operationalization of the Passenger Locator Card - PLC)

KEY WORDS: Health Authority; Passenger Locator Card; dematerialization; contact tracking; airline

FOR: Airlines; ground service providers (handler); health authorities; passengers

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The Passenger Locator Card (PLC) is a document provided for in international legislation (International Health Regulations, which entered into force on 15 June 2007 and published by Notice nº 12/2008, in the Diário da República, 1st series, nº 16, of 23 January 2008), in the context of safeguarding public health, namely with regard to communicable diseases and it allows the contacts of people who come to present positive infection results to be tracked through data provided by airline passengers. The personal data provided for this purpose is kept only for the period strictly necessary for this purpose and can only be accessed by the competent health authorities.

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to be able to track the contacts of cases of COVID-19 that have travelled by air, in order to promptly interrupt any possible chains of transmission. With the increase in air traffic, the use of the PLC has been increasing significantly and, given the large volume of these physical documents and the difficulties inherent to their circulation, consultation and destruction, it has become useful and opportune to begin to dematerialize them and change the PLC to an electronic format (PLCe), which can be filled out, circulated and data processed based on the legal regime for the protection of personal data.

In order to proceed with this dematerialization, the Directorate-General for Health (DGS), the Nacional Civil Aviation Authority (ANAC), the Shared Services of the Ministry of Health (SPMS) and Portugal Tourism have issued the following joint guideline:

Filling out the PLC

1. The passenger is informed of the obligation to complete the PLC before boarding, on several occasions:
 - a. Through websites and at airline sales and service points and at international airports and aerodromes;

- b. When the Airline confirms the ticket reservation;
- c. When checking in electronically or in person, by the Airline;
- d. At points of arrival at an international airport / aerodrome, by the airport's managing body, by means of airport announcements;
- e. During the flight, by the Airline.

2. After check-in, either electronic or in person, the Airline provides the passenger with a hyperlink to the page where the form is hosted on the portugalcleanandsafe.com platform, under the responsibility of *Turismo de Portugal*, where the PLCe will be available (in Portuguese and English versions).

3. After filling in and submitting the PLC electronic form, the *Turismo de Portugal* page presents a printable version to the passenger, recommending that they print or make a screenprint of it, as proof of completion of the PLCe.

4. Once the PLCe form has been successfully submitted, *Turismo de Portugal* transfers all data on the form to the Directorate-General for Health's database, and sends a confirmation to the passenger, by e-mail, of the respective completion and submission. As such, *Turismo de Portugal* does not keep any data submitted in the PLCe.

5. At the boarding gate, the Airline or the ground handler checks that the PLCe has been completed and submitted by means of the passenger's receipt, either printed or on a mobile device.

6. Passengers who do not present proof of completion of the PLCe at the boarding gate will be asked to complete it.

7. To those passengers who do not present proof of completion of the PLCe and who allege an acceptable reason (server failure, lack of internet access, lack of command of the Portuguese or English language or info-exclusion), the PLC is made available on paper, by the Airline or the ground handler.

8. During the flight, the Airline shall continue to reinforce the necessity of filling out the PLC and shall provide paper forms to passengers who have not presented proof of completion of the PLCe, having alleged one of the acceptable reasons mentioned in the previous point.

9. The paper PLC forms filled in by passengers are collected by the Airline. PLCs are placed in a sealed envelope, indicating the flight number, date and origin on the outside.

10. Upon arrival, the Airline delivers the envelope containing the paper PLCs to the ground handler.

11. During the 14 days following each flight, PLCE data is stored in the Directorate-General for Health's database, which can be consulted by the duly authorised Health Authorities where necessary.

12. Paper PLCs are kept by the ground handler, which has the duty of confidentiality of the data under their responsibility for 14 days following each flight and which shall immediately make such data available to the Competent Local Health Authority, whenever so requested.

13. On the 15th day after the flight, the PLCE data is automatically deleted from the database and the paper PLCs are destroyed by the ground handler, ensuring that any content is unrecognizable.

Role of Health Authorities

14. During the epidemiological investigation into a COVID-19 case, the Health Authority that ascertains that there has been travel by air contacts the Local Health Authority for the international airport or aerodrome where the citizen with COVID-19 has landed and informs the Regional Health Authority so that the procedures necessary for the identification of contacts who travelled on the same flight as COVID-19 case can be implemented.

15. If the international airport or aerodrome belongs to a different health region, the Local Health Authority responsible for epidemiological investigation communicates to the Regional Health Authority that it must interact with the Regional Health Authority of the region of the international airport / aerodrome.

16. The Health Authority of the international airport / aerodrome accesses the PLCE database through the platform created and supported for this purpose by SPMS, and selects the information to be exported, with regard to the contacts of the COVID-19 case, classified according to DGS Standard no. 015/2020.

17. The Health Authority of the international airport / aerodrome contacts the ground handler to verify the existence of a paper PLCs and gain access to them; data is dealt with in a similar way as for the PLCE.

18. The Health Authority of the international airport / aerodrome separates the information by region and sends it to the Regional Health Authority.

19. The Regional Health Authority sends the information to the Local Health Authority with jurisdiction in the municipality of residence or destination of the citizen identified as a contact of a COVID-19 case, complying with the contact surveillance procedures established in DGS Standard No. 015/2020.

20. If the destination of the person identified as a COVID-19 case contact is in a region other than that of the place of arrival, or if the passenger is in transit, the Regional Health Authority coordinates with the Regional Health Authority of the destination, so that it complies with the preceding point.

21. Information on passengers who are no longer on national territory is sent by the Regional Health Authority to the DGS Public Health Emergency Centre, so that communication with health authorities in other countries is made from the national focal point of International Health, in compliance with the International Health Regulations.

Informally translated into English by Safe Communities Portugal

For information only

Original document

DGS: <https://www.dgs.pt/normas-orientacoes-e-informacoes/orientacoes-e-circulares-informativas/orientacao-conjunta-dgsspmsanacturismo-de-portugal-n-0012020-de-02102020-pdf.aspx>