

# NACA

## Washington Wire



3 February 2021

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### **International Flight Testing for COVID-19**

NACA was extensively involved in the recent discussions regarding implementation of the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) mandate requiring passengers and crew to have negative COVID-19 tests prior to boarding any flight entering the United States. NACA successfully pushed for an exemption for DOD commercially chartered flights and additional facilitation from CDC on ICE deportation flights. As implementation proceeds, NACA continues to participate in operations and policy calls with FAA and CDC to help shape future guidance.

### **Domestic Preflight COVID Testing Reports**

On Thursday, January 28, 2021, NACA issued a statement expressing concern over media reports that CDC is actively considering domestic pre-flight COVID-19 tests along the lines of their COVID-19 testing requirement for international passengers. The next day, NACA signed an industry coalition letter to White House COVID-19 Response Coordinator Jeff Zients expressing the same concerns. We also have alerted congressional authorizers, Transportation Department staff and other government partners to the adverse impacts such a requirement would have on the U.S. airline industry.

### **Federal Mask Requirement**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) was given the task of implementing President Biden's recent Executive Order mandating masks for interstate travel, including rail, bus, and aviation. TSA shared drafts of a Security Directive covering airlines and airports, permitting exemptions for medical reasons. Since airline policies mandating masks haven't permitted a medical exemption, industry requested TSA remove the exemption. There is still a narrow exemption for people who meet a certain disability definition.

### **Payroll Support Program**

On December 21, 2020, a fifth COVID-19 relief bill was enacted that includes \$15 billion to extend the CARES Act airline payroll assistance program (PSP2) for U.S. passenger airlines. We understand that the Treasury Department is processing PSP2 applications based on carrier size and have asked congressional staff to make application status inquiries where appropriate. We are not expecting additional legislative measures to help the airline industry in coming weeks, given that Treasury will still be processing PSP2 applications.

### **Aviation Excise Tax Holiday**

One of our top legislative priorities this year will be extension through 2021 of the aviation federal excise tax holiday which expired on Dec. 31, 2020. Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) plans to reintroduce a free-standing bill to extend the holiday in the weeks ahead. We will continue our joint advocacy efforts with A4A and RAA to ensure that the Blunt language is included in a future COVID relief or tax reform bill.

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## FAA Technical Matters

Comments on the draft **Advisory Circular on Safety Risk Assessments** for the carriage of cargo are due March 12. NACA and CAA are pooling their resources and are holding weekly conference calls starting Wednesday, February 3, 2021, until the comments are ready to submit. **The FST-PaCE ARC 222b sub-group** presented their draft report to the steering committee a few weeks ago. The recommendations we made were received very positively by the NACA safety committee.

The **Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST)** has a virtual meeting Thursday, February 4, 2021, to discuss a revision to the current charter. NACA is requesting a clear process for selection to the CAST executive committee that includes organizations which represent a large portion of the commercial airlines (ie.: NACA). **FAA Exemption 12555** for the ADS-B out requirement expires 2025. NACA is on a task force tasked with informing the FAA if exemption holders will need an extension to equip with ADS-B out by 2025. So far, NACA members have not communicated the need for an extension.

The FAA is working on a plan to hold a limited **Infoshare** in April. George Paul will be requesting input later, because even if Infoshare is cancelled due to COVID, the planning will apply to future 119 Leadership calls.

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