



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

The U.S. Response to SARS: Role of CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine

CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq) works with federal agencies, state and local health departments, the travel industry, and other organizations to prevent the introduction of communicable diseases into the United States. CDC has eight fully staffed quarantine stations that are part of the United States Public Health Service (USPHS).

Quarantine inspectors serve as important guardians of health at borders and ports of entry into the United States, routinely responding to illnesses in arriving passengers and ensuring that the appropriate medical and/or procedural actions are taken. During the 2003 global outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), CDC's quarantine officials played an important role.

Quarantine officials (or their designees) carried out the following activities during the 2003 response to SARS:

- Provided information to returning air travelers arriving in the United States directly or indirectly from areas with SARS (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel.htm). CDC updated information on its website on the travel status of other areas with SARS as the situation evolved. This same information was provided via the major shipping associations and the International Council of Cruise Lines (ICCL) to persons traveling on cargo ships and cruise ships.
- Distributed health alert notices (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_alert.htm) to air travelers, advising them that they may have been exposed to cases of SARS and that they should monitor their health for at least 10 days and contact their physicians if they become ill with a fever accompanied by a cough or difficulty in breathing. They were also reminded to tell the healthcare provider about the SARS-like symptoms before going to the provider's office so that arrangements could be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the healthcare setting.
- Boarded airplanes with travelers reported to be ill to assess whether their symptoms matched the SARS case definition (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/casedefinition.htm).
- Facilitated transport of ill passengers to hospitals or other medical treatment facilities.
- Provided timely updates to government agencies partnering in these activities, as well as to travel industry organizations.
- Worked with CDC's SARS investigation team and local and state health departments to assist in the investigation of possible cases of SARS.

For a list of CDC's quarantine stations, visit the DQ Quarantine Stations page: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine_stations.htm.

For more information on the Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, visit www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq.

For more information about SARS, visit www.cdc.gov/sars, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)