

DESCARTES™

Air Forwarding COVID-19 Action Guide



With dramatic changes in air cargo schedules and interruptions to the flow of freight as a result of COVID-19 (aka coronavirus), forwarders are finding it harder to manage shipments. The good news is that there is a lot that can be done now to mitigate the impact of disruptions, keep customers informed, and keep staff safe.

Increase Visibility

The impact of COVID-19 on air freight capacity has made managing shipments increasingly challenging and taxing on traditional processes and systems. With fluid availability, continuous carrier re-bookings, and split shipments, manual shipment tracking methods are no longer adequate.

In this chaotic environment, air forwarders need to move from manual to automatic shipment status updates to:

- **Know if shipments are on-track or when they get rebooked or split.** Automated updates provide the real-time insight needed to better manage business and improve the productivity of staff working from home.
- **Better plan and manage first and last mile deliveries.** Shipment status visibility helps to ensure that drivers know exactly when to arrive to pick up and drop off shipments.
- **Offer shipment visibility to customers so they can better manage their businesses.** Knowing when their goods will arrive can help customers plan ongoing operations or address the impact of disruptions.



Better Manage Today's Spot Rate-Driven Market

Air freight rates have dramatically increased and capacity availability is constantly changing. It is important to know current rates when quoting customers to maintain margins. Equally important are solutions that allow customer quotes to be quickly created using the latest rates and availability. Look for solutions that deploy quickly and make it easier to book shipments across a broad range of connected carriers.

Automate Processes

With severe cost pressures and an uncertain air shipping environment, automating shipment management and tracking processes is critical to surviving today and in the future. Automation improves operating efficiency by enabling staff working from home to be more productive. Automating digital communication and status updates is essential to coordinating air shipments and better servicing customers. Forwarders not already doing so should transition to electronic processes wherever possible including simple changes such as using a consolidated air freight portal to book and track air freight instead of via phone calls.

Compliance filing requirements are still in place even during the COVID-19 disruption. In many cases, automatically repurposing booking and shipment information for customs requirements, such as security filings, can improve productivity and accelerate shipments. Forwarders can benefit from technology solutions that simultaneously enable regulatory compliance and streamline shipment management.

One further benefit of automation is the elimination of paper-based processes. With paperless procedures, drivers, employees, and carriers can reduce the risk of virus transmission. Going paperless has also been proven to lower operating costs and shorten payment cycles.



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Enabling Employees to Work from Home

Many forwarders now have their employees working from home. With a newly distributed workforce, it is critical to ensure optimized communication. Cloud-based solutions are a good option to centralize processes, maintain a standardized workflow, and practice social distancing. Make use of technology solutions that improve access for employees working remotely. Best-in-class solutions can also help maintain high levels of productivity through connectivity, automation, workflow management, visibility, and analytics.



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We're Here to Help

Descartes' advanced solutions for air forwarders help standardize and automate air freight management. From forwarding operations to real-time shipment status and customs filings, our solutions streamline processes, improve coordination, and enhance customer service. Descartes' proven track record, expert technical support and understanding of the air cargo industry can help air freight forwarders maintain operations in these unique times. We have the resources available to help you get up and running now and support you in the future.

If you are looking to have a conversation about how Descartes can help your business in these unprecedented times, [contact us to learn more](#).

About Descartes Systems Group

Descartes is the global leader in providing on-demand, software-as-a-service solutions focused on improving the productivity, performance and security of logistics-intensive businesses. Customers use our modular, software-as-a-service solutions to route, schedule, track and measure delivery resources; plan, allocate and execute shipments; rate, audit and pay transportation invoices; access global trade data; file customs and security documents for imports and exports; and complete numerous other logistics processes by participating in the world's largest, collaborative multimodal logistics community. Our headquarters are in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada and we have offices and partners around the world.

Learn more at www.descartes.com and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

Uniting the People & Technology That Move the World.