

To: Interested Parties
From: Joshua Ulibarri and Geoff Puryear
Re: Polling Among Airport Worker Regarding Ebola Protections ⁱ
Date: November 5, 2014

Survey Research Shows Airports Lagging in Protecting Workers from Ebola

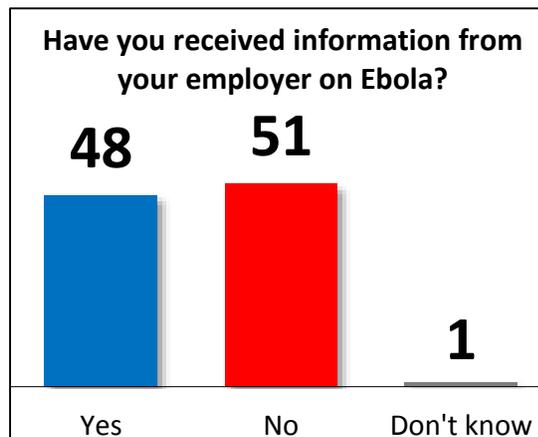
A recent Lake Research Partners survey shows that employers at America’s busiest airports are largely failing to protect their employees from exposure to the Ebola virus. Surveyed airport workers say they are concerned they may come into contact with the virus and that only half have received information about plans to protect them, and even fewer have been trained on the latest CDC recommended protocols for airport workers. Further, focus group research among airport workers shows that many feel as if they have been left on their own to protect themselves despite federal law requiring employers to protect employees from dangerous environments.

The major findings are as follows:

1. Airport workers are concerned they may come into contact with the Ebola virusⁱⁱ. Overall, 68% of surveyed workers said they were concerned that they may come into contact with the virus while at work. Four-in-ten (40%) are very concerned; in polling 40% is generally held as a threshold measurement for intense responses, representing a deeply held belief.

2. Only half of surveyed airport workers say they have received information from their employers about the virusⁱⁱⁱ.

Notably, in the survey, “information” was not defined; workers could have considered almost any statement as information. Still, only half (48%) said they have received such information, while the other half (51%) said they have received no information. Indeed, in the focus group research, workers reported seeing some information on a corkboard in the break room or on a loading screen for their handheld computer devices, hardly ideal areas to provide such important safety information. When pushed on whether they know their employers’ plan to protect them if there is a belief that a passenger had been exposed to the virus,



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respondents said “NO.” The CDC has recommended that employers create a plan and communicate it to their staff.

When asked in the focus groups, airport workers were unaware of any plans to address potential infected passengers.

Moderator: If you suspected that somebody was coming through the airport with Ebola, is there a plan? Do you know, has a plan been passed on to you, do you know what you would do?

Respondent: If there is a plan, I’m definitely not aware of it.

Respondent: I’m not aware of it either.

Respondent: There is no plan.

Respondent: There’s no plan.

Respondent: There could possibly be no plan.

Respondent: There is no plan.

Respondent: ...we don’t have anything in place for the situation as far as I know.

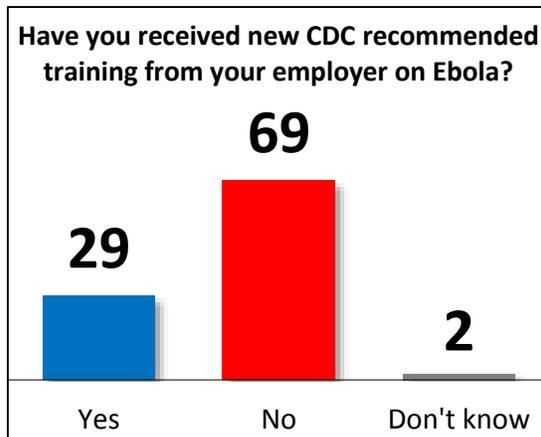
Respondent: ...I would say as far as I know there is no plan. It could be a plan, but they haven’t told us a plan.

3. Less than a third of surveyed airport

workers say they have received new CDC training regarding the Ebola virus^{iv}. Only 29% of workers say their employer has provided them with any new training about how to protect themselves from Ebola. In the focus group, no respondent could describe what the training was like because they each said they had not been trained recently on CDC recommendations.

The workers appreciate the training and give it high marks if they were trained (a mean of 7.7 on a 10-point scale).

However, the issue is not the quality of the training, rather it is that only three-in-ten airport workers have been given the training at all.



Moderator: And they’ve [the CDC] asked employers at airports to provide new training, new information and new equipment from the employer and give it to the employee. Has that happened at your work? So new equipment, new information from the CDC in the last couple of weeks about Ebola?

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No

Moderator: So let me ask you; have any of you been told that the new CDC recommendation is to wear two gloves on each hand?

Respondent: No, but I do it anyway.

Respondent: ...No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: No.

Respondent: It kind of makes me feel like your employer kind of doesn't care about you. I know that I mentioned that my employers (coughing) did tell everyone to refer back to the training that they've had before. But if the CDC is recommending new training, then I feel like my employers took the easy way out, which was just to tell us to refer back to what we've learned before.

- 4. Very few airport workers have received or have access to all of the CDC recommended safety equipment^v.** Half (51%) of airport workers say they have received none of the recommended equipment, including facemasks, shoe covers, and protective gloves (15% have received all of these items and 32% have received some). **Notably, some focus group participants said they had either themselves been discouraged or had heard another employee being discouraged from wearing protective gear** because the employer did not want to worry or offend passengers. These workers felt that they were being placed in greater danger and made to feel less safe in order to make passengers feel more comfortable.

"[The airport] puts us more at risk when they're asking us not to wear gloves because of a way a passenger may feel about the sight of your gloves or them taking it personal and not thinking of what's actually going on in the world."

"It's been several occasions where us, as the employees have went to the higher positions as supervisors and went to corporate and even asked questions as far as you know; safety for ourselves, can't we wear gloves or the little things over the mouth or whatever. And they told us; no, just because somebody might get offended by it."

"We wear gloves cleaning the cabin of the aircraft and since the Ebola situation, my job only gave us face masks one day. They gave us face masks one-day. But we was wearing the face masks, a couple of the passengers, they were feeling like; 'oh, is everything', they was asking us, 'is everything alright?' And we say, 'yes everything is alright, we're just you know just trying to prevent our self from you know any germs or anything'. And some passengers understood it and some passengers was like; 'oh, they got on face masks what is going on?' So my company told/asked us you know, 'You know could you take the face masks off because you're making the passengers feel uncomfortable?' And I said 'no'. Because I was like, 'I'm cleaning the aircraft, I'm cleaning their uh mess.'"

“One of our agents was asking specifically to wear a mask at the at the check-in counter. And they were basically told in so many words just being the first thing that the passenger sees when they walk up; that’s not something that they want to translate over to the passenger so it’s just not something that we’re allowing our employees to do at the time. So it was more of a very politically correct way of telling them; you can’t wear the mask.”

5. Perhaps the most alarming news in this research is **that employees at the 5 airports with new enhanced screening procedures for inbound flights from West Africa^{vi} are NO more likely to have received information or updated CDC training** and are, in fact, less likely to have received any of the newly recommended equipment than other airports. Overall, nearly half of all airport workers (48%) said they had received information, compared to 45% of airport workers at the 5-screening airports. Likewise, 29% of all workers said they had received some CDC recommended training, the same share among workers in the airports undergoing more intense screening procedures. Lastly, half of workers say they have received none of the recommended protective gear, but that share rises to two-thirds among workers at the airports with the more intense screening process (66%). It is surprising to learn that workers at airports deemed at higher risk of coming into contact with Ebola are no more likely than workers at any of the ten-busiest to have been specially trained. **It is not illogical to conclude that these workers should in fact be more likely to have been trained on newly recommended CDC procedures.**

To be sure, some focus group respondents said their airport employers were doing the best they can. The challenge is that this may not be enough to keep airport workers and passengers safe at this time.

“I would say ‘okay’ because one thing I can truly say, because I work the 4 AM shift, they try to keep us abreast of everything that’s going on and to make sure we’re aware of what’s really happening in the terminal, inside the terminal as well as outside the terminal. So I would say, okay. They do, do the best [they can].”

In summary, airport workers are concerned they may come into contact with Ebola while at work; only half have been given any information, less than a third have received the CDC’s updated training, and 15% have been given all of the CDC recommended equipment. **Airport workers want to be kept safe and are trying as hard as they can, but they do not feel as though their employers are reciprocating.**

“It really sucks because you go to work every day, you want to do the job the best way you can and basically your job is not trying to prevent you or help you or stay, you know safe.”

“And my biggest thing, and I would like to push this on a lot of you, is safety is always first. Your lives are more important than anything. We have families and we have children that we need to go back to. So, when you go to your job and

you go with ten toes and ten fingers, do everything that you need to do to leave with ten toes and ten fingers.”

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For questions about this research and analysis, please contact LRP Partner Joshua Ulibarri at his work line (202) 470-4438 or on his cell (703) 201-5079 or via email julibarri@lakeresearch.com.

ⁱ **Survey:** Phones: This sample was constructed based upon two lists consisting of SEIU members working at airports or workers at these airports that SEIU has spoken to in the past for organizing purposes. The airports selected were among the ten busiest in the United States by origin and destination and/or the five airports now screening passengers for the Ebola virus due to heavy flight traffic from West Africa. Those airports are: Atlanta, Boston-Logan, Chicago-Midway, Chicago-O’Hare, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood, Houston-Bush, New York-JFK, Los Angeles, LaGuardia, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Newark, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland, San Francisco, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington-Dulles.

Online: This online sample was used to supplement the phone list, aiming for employees at the top ten busiest airports and/or airports where the CDC has implemented a new screening process. Using Facebook and mobile banner advertising, we targeted ads to people who identified themselves as employees at a named airport, and we also targeted a geographic 25-mile radius surrounding those same airports. Once ads were served to people who *could* have met the criteria, the advertising message itself enabled survey participants to self-identify as airport workers. Those airports are: Atlanta, Chicago-O’Hare, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston-Bush, Miami, San Francisco, and Washington-Dulles.

Combined: This survey interviewed 1,150 airport workers in total, 600 online and 550 via phone. The phone portion of the survey was conducted October 23-November 1 and the online portion October 28-30. The 850 total respondent number above represents the weighted total between the online and phone portions of the survey. This combines the phones and online sample so that phones represent 60% of all respondents.

Focus Group: The focus group was conducted with airport workers from across the country. The groups were moderated by Lake Research Partners, following a guide developed in conjunction with the client. The discussion lasted 90 minutes.

ⁱⁱ How concerned are you that you MAY come into contact with the Ebola virus while at your airport job? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about coming into contact with the virus while at work?

ⁱⁱⁱ Has your airport employer or supervisor given you any information about Ebola and how they plan to protect you?

^{iv} The Centers for Disease Control, or CDC, is a government agency. They have asked airport employers to provide employees new training about the Ebola virus. Has your airport employer or supervisor provided you with any new training about how to protect yourself from Ebola?

^v The CDC has asked airport employers to provide their employees with new equipment including gloves, shoe covers, and face masks to protect employees from exposure to the Ebola virus. Have you received all of the protective gear I mentioned, some of the protective gear, none of the protective gear?

^{vi} Airports with Enhanced Ebola Screenings: New York-JFK, Newark, Chicago-O’Hare, Atlanta, and Washington-Dulles