

# The Eastern Iowa Airport to start mandatory health screenings Jan. 25

## Airport implements program after revised guidance from FAA

CEDAR RAPIDS — Starting Jan. 25, every passenger flying out of The Eastern Iowa Airport will be required to undergo a temperature check and answer a few health questions under a pandemic mitigation program initially unveiled last summer.

Installation of the primary health screening area began Monday and is expected to be complete Tuesday. A secondary screening area is already set up.

Airport Director Marty Lenss said the program is a step “to make sure our guests and travelers throughout Eastern Iowa feel good about flying” from the airport during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The airport and Mercy Medical Center [initially announced the program in July](#) with hopes of it being ready in early September. But the [Federal Aviation Administration in August barred airports around the nation from using federal CARES Act funding or airport revenue for health screenings](#).

“This is a first-of-its-kind program,” Lenss said. “So the FAA, understandably, needed to do a thorough review of the program to make sure that it is compliant with federal revenue use policies.”

After the FAA updated its Runway to Recovery guidance in December, Lenss said the airport and Mercy proceeded at “full speed” to implement the program.

The screening uses a two-step approach. Each passenger will undergo a temperature check and a couple of health

questions, which Lenss anticipates taking 10 seconds per passenger.

A passenger without a fever will proceed directly to the security checkpoint. If a passenger registers a fever of at least 100.4 degrees, he or she will go through a secondary screening to determine if there's another cause for the fever, like an ear infection.

If there is not another cause for a fever, the person cannot travel. Rebooking policies will vary between airlines, airport spokeswoman Pam Hinman said.

Any airport employee who works beyond the security checkpoint also will be required to go through the health screening process.

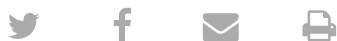
FAA rules prohibit incoming passengers from being screened.

The FAA's Runway to Recovery guidance says passenger health screenings "[should only be part of a broader set of measures](#)" used to prevent the spread of coronavirus in air travel.

"Certainly, we recognize it's not a silver bullet," Lenss said. "We've never viewed it that way. But we view it as one more layer in a multilayered approach to trying to slow the spread of COVID-19."

The Eastern Iowa Airport has been using electrostatic sprayers and was the first Iowa airport to require masks.

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