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Virgin Australia announces social distancing on domestic flights [2]



Passengers travelling on scheduled Virgin Australia domestic flights will have the seat next to them blocked as part of a new social distancing policy announced by the airline amid COVID-19.

The seating arrangements will be applied through the airline's reservation system which has the capability to cap flights and block seats between travelling parties.

Guests who hold existing bookings on flights which have been identified as exceeding the new social distancing measures will be offered alternative options, which includes the ability to be moved to the next available service. Guests who are travelling as part of a family group or those who require special assistance may continue to be seated together.

The policy also includes a simplified onboard menu offering to reduce contact between passengers and the airline's crew. Complimentary water and a snack will be served to all guests, irrespective of cabin, and food and beverages will no longer be available for purchase onboard.

Virgin Australia General Manager Customer Service Delivery, Paul Woosnam, said the airline is pleased to formalise a social distancing policy for the comfort of guests and crew.

?While the risk of contracting coronavirus on an aircraft is deemed low we have put in place social distancing measures on our flights for the health and safety of our passengers and crew who are always our number one priority,? said Mr Woosnam.

?We hope this new policy, along with the flexible booking options we are already giving travellers, instils confidence in people who are required to travel for essential reasons,? he said.

Virgin Australia continues to practice rigorous cleaning standards on their flights, including the use of a microbotic cleaning agent sprayed on all surfaces. Hand sanitiser and face masks are also available on all flights, and crew are highly trained to deal with guests who may be symptomatic.

Following a request by the Australian Government, Virgin Australia will operate 64 return domestic services each week for a period of eight weeks.

The minimal domestic schedule will help Australians get home safely, enable essential travel, and keep important freight corridors open during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as allow the airline to stand back up some of its stood down team members.

Virgin Australia will continue to operate international repatriation flights to Los Angeles and Hong Kong at the request of the Australian Government.

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