

BEFA COVID-19 Update No. 3

March 22, 2021



Dr. Martin Makela

Continued COVID thoughts from the BEFA Flight Surgeon

We may be on final approach, but we do not yet have the runway made. It's been a long flight, with some inflight delays and course corrections, but we have safely piloted our craft to Lake Youngs for the arrival. Remember the goal is a safe landing and taxi.

We have been able to continue flying through the pandemic and have had no COVID cases within BEFA. Our benefits of continued flying have easily outweighed the increase in effort we have had to endure to do so. In time, we will be able to return to normal operations, have an in-person crab feed and sit around the hangar and tell lies about our last flights. I look forward to that day and will stay safe and protected, and wait patiently until it occurs. The Board, Wes and I are in close communication and reevaluate our processes monthly. We will liberalize the restrictions as soon as it is safe to do so. We are always interested in your thoughts and recommendations. Remember, we would all suffer if the club had to close due to an exposure.

With the movement to Phase III of the State opening, many have asked me about changes to the BEFA COVID policies. My recommendations to the Board are as follows:

- 1) No changes to masking and sanitation policies within the building. Wear a mask at all times when in the building, sanitize anything you touch before and after using it, minimize the number of people in the facility and no hangar flying. Call out those members who may have forgotten.
- 2) Vaccines should not change point one yet. There are not enough members vaccinated to make a change.
- 3) Face-to-face briefs/teaching and high touch aircraft surfaces remain our highest risk activities; therefore, brief outside or at a distance and wipe

down surfaces in the plane. Gloves for preflight are a great choice.

- 4) When in the aircraft, if all occupants are vaccinated, it is reasonable to consider this to be a safe environment and no masks need be utilized. Positive airflow, e.g., vents on, further decreases risk. All occupants should be involved in the discussion of risk.

Considerations for above:

- ❖ Prevalence of the disease is markedly decreased in Seattle metro area, but the highest rates are in SOUTH KING COUNTY.
- ❖ With increased community activity, such as sporting events, there will be increased disease and increased likelihood of a community exposure to a BEFA member.
- ❖ Seventy-five percent of disease is transmitted by people under 50 years old, often before they know they are sick. Most severe disease occurs in patients over 75 and with co-morbidities, but deaths have occurred in all age groups.
- ❖ Vaccines will continue to decrease the amount of disease and increase safety; however, the information on new variants is still evolving, so we do not yet know what the effect will be. Some are more contagious, more lethal and may become resistant.
- ❖ Only about 10% of the population has received the vaccine at this point.
- ❖ There is always the possibility of another surge. We have consistently underestimated this virus.

Safe Flying! Doc Makela