



COVID-19 HANDLING & IMPACT

Show: Aircraft Interiors and MRO Middle East
Venue: Dubai World Trade Centre
Dates: 25-26 February 2020
Organiser: Tarsus Group

The first case of coronavirus in the UAE was confirmed on 29 January, by 22 February (prior to show open) the confirmed number of cases in the UAE was 13.

Exhibitors

Of the 330 exhibitors at AIME & MRO 2020 just 4 were from China, plus one stand-sharer from Hong Kong. All 4 Chinese customers went on to cancel their participation in the 2020 event due to being unable to travel; the show team maintained contact with them and rolled their participation over to the 2021 edition. The HK based stand sharer was present at the show.

Additionally, 3 other exhibitors cancelled their participation due to unease regarding the Covid-19 situation; they were advised that normal cancellation procedures would apply in this case.

All cancelled exhibitors were shell scheme customers so there were no issues with regards to service charges from the venue or contractors.

Communication

The show team first observed a small number of queries from exhibitors from late January; in line with the first case being confirmed in the UAE. The team prepared a statement regarding the show status, in that it was going ahead as usual and that additional measures were being put in place by the venue, the statement was used to respond to individual enquiries and also by our customer support team. The statement was not published online; as the number of queries were deemed to be low and there was no activity noted on social media.

The show team worked with the venue, DWTC, to ensure that stringent health and safety practices were in place at the venue; which included installation of thermal cameras at the venue entrances.

Visitors

Whilst pre-registration had been trending significantly ahead throughout January, the growth began to stall in February – it is impossible to know how much that owes to the Covid-19 situation; we had also been fielding a number of queries regarding political unrest vis-à-vis Iran before coronavirus began to dominate the media.

- Overall, there was a 5% decline in unique visitors YoY, however, numbers were up by 24% on 2018 (there is a noted biennial trend in visitor numbers for this show, owing to its proximity to the Dubai Airshow every second year)
- Local visitors had a higher no-show rate than International – 41% vs 35%

2021 outlook

Overall feedback from exhibitors on this year's show was very positive, no real perceived impact from Coronavirus and attendees appreciated how well health and safety practices were implemented at the show. Rebook rates were at almost 70%.