



For Immediate Release

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Ford Airport First in the Country to Test UV Autonomous Robot *Airport Explores Comprehensive Suite of UV Cleaning Tools*

Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 12, 2020 – The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is the first airport test site for a new autonomous robot that disinfects using ultraviolet technology.

In addition to the robot, the Ford Airport is testing a comprehensive suite of tools that utilize UV technology, which works on a molecular level to destroy the microbiology of the virus. The suite includes a shoe disinfectant mat for guests, a pod that can be used to clean wheelchairs and luggage trolleys and a chamber for personal items such as phones, keys and tablets.

The robot is the latest in a series of tools the Airport has tested as it explores ways to effectively and efficiently fight COVID-19 as part of its Fly Safe. Fly Ford. education campaign.

“As we researched holistic solutions to combat the spread of COVID-19, it became evident UV technology has been proven in other industries to kill the virus, so we made the decision to test it at the Ford Airport,” said Tim Haizlip, director of maintenance. “As an airport, we’re focused on both innovation and a superior guest experience, so this technology could be a natural fit for us.

“We’re looking forward to seeing the results of this new UV technology as yet another method to ensure our guests feel comfortable and secure during their travel through Ford Airport.”

The Ford Airport partnered with Michigan-based UVC Experts and Florida-based iP Program as it looked at the various solutions available to meet the disinfecting needs of all touchpoints, including floor, open spaces, surfaces and personal items. Leaders at the companies say while they supply hospitals and school systems around the country, airports currently aren’t utilizing UV technology.

“We’re excited to partner with the Ford Airport to demonstrate how UV technology can truly revolutionize disinfecting large public spaces,” said Christine Gallo from iP Program. “The Ford Airport is leading the industry as an early adopter of this technology, which

offers a comprehensive approach to keeping guests safe as they travel to and from their destinations.”

The products the Ford Airport are testing emit a light spectrum of 254 nanometers, which kills COVID-19 and other viruses such as the common cold. Products currently being tested include:

- The **UVD Robot**, which will be used in areas such as baggage claim and the security checkpoint, is the world’s first fully autonomous mobile platform for UV technology. The robot effectively kills 99.99% of bacteria, viruses and fungi or pathogens by emitting concentrated UV-C light onto high-, medium- and low-touch surfaces. Its autonomous nature allows the robot to move without human interaction. It takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to disinfect a room and doesn’t use any chemicals.
- The **UVC Footwear Sanitizing Station**, which is the first and only proactive disinfection solution to use a combination of ozone and UV-C light, will allow guests to sanitize their shoes in just eight seconds.
- A **UCV Pod** for sanitizing wheelchairs and luggage trolleys allows for quick disinfection so the units can be put back in rotation for guests.
- A **UVC Chamber** that will allow guests to disinfect their phones, tablets, keys and other personal items with the help of the airport team.

“UV technology is the most promising disinfection tool to rid surfaces of COVID-19 currently on the market,” said Larry Perez of UVC Experts. “The Ford Airport provides a unique testing space due to the many surfaces, light sources and potential obstruction points, such as benches. As we all work to return back to normal, looking at innovative ways to keep everyone safe is going to be critical.”

The Ford Airport recently introduced its new Fly Safe. Fly Ford. campaign to educate travelers on new precautions for their health and to restore confidence in air travel. The Airport has established a number of new safety measures that travelers will see as they make their way from the parking garage to the jet bridge. Enhanced sanitation protocols, installation of protective guards and increased signage promoting best practices are a few of the more prominent changes.

As part of its exploration of new technology, the Airport recently partnered with Michigan-based engineering firm Pratt Miller to test a Large Area Autonomous Disinfecting Vehicle or LaaD. This first-of-its kind technology dispenses an FDA-approved disinfecting solution on high-contact surfaces, including seating, gates and vending machines.

About the Ford Airport

The Gerald R. Ford International Airport is the second busiest airport in Michigan, serving business and leisure travelers with nonstop and connecting flights on six airlines. The Ford Airport is managed and operated by the Gerald R. Ford International Airport Authority. For more information, visit www.flyford.org or follow the airport on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @FlyGRFord.

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