

Guidance for the shipping community: COVID-19

Updated 02 April 2020

Purpose

This document provides guidance for those individuals on port working in handling shipping vessels, and guidance for vessels with recent history of travel to COVID-19 affected countries.

Situation summary

An outbreak of respiratory illness caused by COVID-19 was first detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. Now, it is spreading all over the world and declared as a pandemic by World Health Organizations (WHO). Symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. These symptoms also can occur with many other common respiratory infections, such as flu.

General recommendations for individuals who work on port and shipping vessels masters and crew members

- Before boarding the vessels, crew, passengers and other personnel should be asked if they have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, master of the vessel may wish to implement temperature monitoring and respiratory symptoms screening.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals (such as uncooked meat).
- Ensure that they have been vaccinated for the seasonal influenza vaccine.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Individuals who are likely to be at close contact with other crew members or personnel from other ports are recommended to wear gloves and a surgical face mask to reduce exposure to respiratory secretions. Individuals should select a regular surgical mask that covers the mouth, nose, and chin with the thin metal wire pressed gently against the bridge of the nose.
- Ships should ensure adequate equipment, PPE and medical supplies are available onboard

These individuals should monitor their health for 14 days from the date of exposure with the vessel or from leaving the last port of call. If they feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, they should:

- Seek medical care right away. Wear a surgical mask. Once you arrive at the Health Centre or Emergency Department, you should inform the reception staff about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

Instructions for vessels travelling to or coming from COVID -19 affected countries within the last 14 days

(1) Locally registered shipping vessels must:

- Not allow shore leave at an international port
- Not allow crew changes at an international port
- Crews to remain onboard at international port unless to do critical or essential task
- Monitor crew temperatures twice a day.
- Isolate crew member who became sick in a designated isolation area.
- Wear mask and gloves when meeting shore personnel at an international port
- Keep a distance of at least 2 meters when dealing with other personnel, preferably in an open space and minimize contact time

These vessels will be allowed to berth in Brunei upon arrival and crew members allowed to disembark and self-monitor for 14 days upon arriving in Brunei Darussalam, if no crew members are found to be ill on board.

(2) For foreign vessels or local vessel that has crew joining from an international port, crew members are required to self-isolate themselves on board for 14 days since their last departure from last port of call, before being allowed to disembark. However, cargo operations can still operate.

For ships with clearance to berth, ship crew who feel unwell, experience respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath), or fever should inform the Master of the ship immediately. The Master of the ship should then contact his ship's agent and make the necessary arrangements to seek medical attention.

All vessels are required to submit to port health authority the following documents at least 48 hours prior to arrival:

- Maritime declaration of health
- Valid SSC/SSCEC
- Updated Crew/Passengers list
- Updated list of last 10 port of call

All shipping agents are obliged to report to MOH and the port authority all individual crew with:

- fever (gives a history of feeling feverish, or has an actual measured temperature of 38° C or higher), **or**
- persistent cough or difficulty breathing, **or**
- Appears obviously unwell

Report, as soon as possible before arrival to port. These individuals should be isolated from the other crew members in the meantime. Where it is needed to provide care to the sick individual, care providers should:

- Practice routine handwashing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after assisting sick travelers or touching potentially contaminated body fluids or surfaces.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) if soap and water are not available.
- Identify sick travelers who meet the above description.
- Minimize contact between passengers and cabin crew and the sick person. If possible, separate the sick person from others (2 meters is ideal) and designate one crew member to serve the ill person to avoid additional exposure.
- Offer a facemask, if available and if the sick person can tolerate it. If a facemask is not available or cannot be tolerated, ask the sick person to cover their mouth and nose with tissues when coughing or sneezing.
- Treat all body fluids (such as respiratory secretions, diarrhea, vomit, or blood) as if they are infectious.
- Wear disposable gloves when tending to a sick traveler or touching body fluids or potentially contaminated surfaces. Remove gloves carefully to avoid contaminating yourself, then wash hands.
- Properly dispose of gloves and other disposable items that came in contact with the sick person or body fluids in biohazard bag or a secured plastic bag labeled as 'biohazard.'
- Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces according to international maritime guidelines or refer to the Ministry of health disinfection guidelines, available at www.moh.gov.bn.

Disembarkation

Refer to **Annex 1** on the flowchart for handling suspected COVID-19 patient on board.

The Ministry of health will advise on:

- arrangements for disembarkation for suspected cases
- how close contacts will be managed
- who may disembark and who to remain on the vessel
- any recommended measures in terms of enhanced surveillance, reporting, cleaning and respiratory hygiene
- any follow-up monitoring required and where necessary limitations to further travel

The Ministry of Health will continue to monitor the current COVID-19 outbreak situation closely, and will continue to take proportionate and risk-based approach in determining the appropriate precautions and measures for Brunei Darussalam. As such, the current measures may be subjected to change depending on the rapidly evolving situation.

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Annex 1 : FLOWCHART FOR MANAGEMENT OF SUSPECTED COVID-19 PATIENT ONBOARD LOCAL SHIP / VESSEL

