



Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston Marine Safety Information Bulletin 10-20

Date: March 10, 2020
Time: 1300

Sector Houston-Galveston Port State Control Screening Measures for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

This MSIB supersedes Sector Houston-Galveston's MSIB 09-20 "Screening Measures for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

The U. S. Coast Guard continues to respond to an outbreak of a respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and which has now been reported in dozens of regions worldwide, including the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19"). Global efforts at this time are focused on both containing the spread and mitigating the impact of this virus. The United States Coast Guard is working closely with its federal, state, and local maritime partners, as well as public health officials, to respond to this public health threat. The public health response is multi-layered, with the goal of detecting and minimizing introductions of this virus in the United States so as to reduce the spread and the impact of this virus.

The U.S. Coast Guard's Inspections and Compliance Directorate has published a Marine Safety Information Bulletin [MSIB Series Number 02-20 w/update(s)] detailing key maritime issues associated with this outbreak, including hazardous condition reporting requirements. Mariners are urged to familiarize themselves with this MSIB series, which may be found at this link: <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Featured-Content/Mariners/Marine-Safety-Information-Bulletins-MSIB/>.

For confirmed COVID-19 infections, reported illnesses have ranged from people exhibiting little-to-no symptoms, to people falling severely ill and dying. Symptoms can include fever, a cough or shortness of breath. Additionally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Accordingly, for vessels arriving Sector Houston-Galveston, any person on board your vessel should be considered symptomatic for COVID-19 if they exhibit the following:

- Fever AND symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND in the last 14 days before symptom onset, a history of travel from a country or countries that the CDC has listed as a Travel Health Notice Warning Level 3 area (i.e. Avoid Nonessential Travel) OR close contact with a person who is under investigation for COVID-19 while that person was ill. Please note that fever may not be present in some patients, such as those who are very young, elderly, immunosuppressed, or taking certain medications;
OR
- Fever OR symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and in the last 14 days before symptom onset, close contact with a laboratory-confirmed ill COVID-19 patient.

To further protect the health of the American public during the emergence of this novel coronavirus, Sector Houston-Galveston is screening inbound vessels:

1. For any person on board your vessel that has a history of travel from a country or countries that the CDC has listed as a Travel Health Notice Warning Level 3 area (Avoid Nonessential Travel) in the last 14 days. This list of countries may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>
OR
2. For any person on board your vessel exhibiting any required reportable illness, including symptoms of the COVID-19;

If the situation on board your vessel meets one or both of the above criteria, then you are hereby directed by the Captain of the Port (COTP) Houston-Galveston to immediately contact the Sector Houston-Galveston Command Center at (281) 464-4855 or -4856 (houstonSCC@uscg.mil) for further arrival instructions.



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Additionally, while your vessel is in port, you are required to contact the Sector Houston-Galveston Command Center immediately if any person on board your vessel begins to display symptoms of any required reportable illness, including the COVID-19.

As a general reminder, U.S. regulations in Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subpart 71.21, require the master of a ship destined for a U.S. port to immediately report the onboard occurrence of any ill person among passengers or crew to the Quarantine Station with jurisdiction over the port at which the ship will arrive. An ill person means a person who:

- (A) Has a fever (a measured temperature of 100.4 °F [38 °C] or greater; or feels warm to the touch; or gives a history of feeling feverish) accompanied by one or more of the following: skin rash, difficulty breathing or suspected or confirmed pneumonia, persistent cough or cough with bloody sputum, decreased consciousness or confusion of recent onset, new unexplained bruising or bleeding (without previous injury), persistent vomiting (other than sea sickness), headache with stiff neck; OR
- (B) Has a fever that has persisted for more than 48 hours; OR
- (C) Has acute gastroenteritis, which means either diarrhea, defined as three or more episodes of loose stools in a 24-hour period or what is above normal for the individual, or vomiting accompanied by one or more of the following: One or more episodes of loose stools in a 24-hour period, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, or fever (temperature of 100.4 °F [38 °C] or greater); OR
- (D) Has symptoms or other indications of communicable disease, as the Director may announce through posting of a notice in the Federal Register.

The Quarantine Station with jurisdiction over the Port of Houston/Galveston and the Galveston Lightering Zone is located in Houston, Texas and can be contacted at (281) 230-3874. Directions for mandatory reporting to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention can be found at the following address: <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cargo/reporting-deaths-illness/index.html>.

As a reminder, any ill person(s) should be isolated in a private cabin until they are evaluated by a doctor to prevent transmission to others. Contact with other crew should be minimized. If masks are available, the ill person(s) should wear a mask while not in isolation to prevent further spread. The CDC has published a "COVID-19 Guidance for Ships" which all maritime interests are highly encouraged to read. A link to this important information may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/>.

As noted in the Coast Guard Inspection and Compliance Directorate's MSIB 02-20 series, illness of a person onboard a vessel that may adversely affect the safety of a vessel or port facility is a hazardous condition in accordance with 33 CFR 160.216 and must be immediately reported to the cognizant COTP under 33 CFR 160.206. Cases of persons who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must be reported to the COTP. The Coast Guard considers it a hazardous condition if a crewmember who was in a CDC Travel Health Notice Warning Level 3 country within the past 14 days is brought onboard the vessel during transit. This requires immediate notification to the nearest COTP.

For continuing situational updates, please visit the CDC's 2019 Novel Coronavirus Situation Summary at: <https://go.usa.gov/xDdSW>.

K. D. ODITT
Captain, United States Coast Guard
Captain of the Port