

Marine Safety Information Bulletin 20-005



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. Coast Guard
Sector Honolulu
Sand Island Parkway
Honolulu, Hawaii 96819



COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES FOR VESSEL OPERATORS

April 3, 2020

This MSIB compiles a list of recent CDC and state health recommendations, as well as vessel operator best practices, to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. This information may be useful to vessel operators as they develop their own company or vessel-specific COVID-19 risk management measures. The information in this document is neither official Coast Guard guidance nor policy, but rather a compilation of published reference material and observed best practices that the maritime industry may find useful during this unprecedented national crisis. As a reminder, all vessel operators are strongly encouraged to review and implement the latest guidelines and recommendations from the CDC at (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) and all state and local officials at (<https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/>).

For questions or comments regarding this bulletin please email: HonoInspections@uscg.mil

Emergency Contact Information:

- Sector Honolulu Command Center (to report a hazardous condition onboard a vessel):
(808) 842-2600
- Sector Honolulu Port Safety and Security Duty Officer (to coordinate vessel arrivals):
(808) 563-9906
- Sector Honolulu Vessel Inspections Email: HonoInspections@uscg.mil
- CDC Emergency Operations Center (for consultation on managing crew after exposure):
Phone: (770) 488-7100
Email: eocreport@cdc.gov
- CDC Quarantine Stations to report a sick crewmember:
<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/quarantinestationcontactlistfull.html>
- State of Hawaii Novel Coronavirus Hotline:
Call Aloha United Way at 2-1-1. Local, trained operators are available to answer your COVID-19 questions

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Precautions for Vessel Crews:

- When off duty:
 - Practice social distancing. Avoid public spaces to the maximum extent possible
 - Wash hands frequently.
- While onboard vessels:
 - Limit time spent in public spaces (crew lounges, mess rooms, gyms, and the navigation bridge if not on watch).
 - Sanitize commonly used surfaces prior to getting underway, intermittently during transit, and upon return to port. This includes but is not limited to:
 - Door handles, public toilets, all tables in mess rooms, handrails, navigational equipment.
 - Limit personnel who are permitted to prepare food or enter ship's galley, kitchen, and food stores.
 - Consider twice a day temperature checks of crew.
 - Limit crew interaction.
 - Establish navigational and engine room watch teams.
 - Teams should stand watch as a unit (i.e. an engineering officer and wiper/oiler team) and should not be reassigned to other teams.
 - When not on watch, limit time spent with other teams.
 - If possible, stagger meal times and sanitize tables/chairs/utensils between meals.
 - Take steps to limit interactions between crews during crew change-overs.
 - Limit visitors onboard. Personnel allowed onboard vessels should be limited to Pilots, Government Authorities, surveyors critical to the safe operation of your vessel, and the required number of longshoremen necessary for the safe offloading of cargo. Vessel Officer should supervise cargo operations from the opposite side of the hatch.

**please note that any precautionary measures you take should not impede operations of Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, or other government officials conducting safety and security operations on the vessel.*

Embarking Visitors:

- Ask visitors to wash hands or provide hand sanitizer at the embarkation station.
- Do not shake hands with any visitors.
- Screen visitors prior to embarking.
 - Ask if they have any symptoms including:
 - Dry cough
 - Fever
 - Headaches
 - Shortness of breath
 - Runny nose
 - Tiredness
 - Sore throat
 - Other symptoms

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- Have the visitors come in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
- If possible, have crewmembers take visitors' temperatures before allowing them inside the vessel.
- Do not allow any symptomatic persons to board.
 - Coordinate all visitors with the Facility Security Officer ahead of time.
 - May require coordination with CBP as well depending on ship clearance status.
 - Immediately contact the Facility Security Officer in the event a visitor is being denied boarding to the vessel.
 - Direct the visitor to remain on the pier near the vessel to await further direction to be coordinated by the Facility Security Officer in order to ensure safe transit that does not put facility personnel at risk.
 - Ensure social distance safety zone for all crew and facility personnel.
- Conduct meetings outside when possible, while maintaining social distance. Avoid conducting meetings inside the ship.
- Limit visitors as much as possible.
 - Persons permitted onboard should be limited to those necessary for continued safe operations and may include Government Authorities, surveyors, technicians, and medical personnel.
 - Limit movements through vessel and minimize crew interaction to the extent required for their purpose onboard.
 - Maximize technology for remote survey (i.e. email, video, photo, skype, electronic signatures) whenever practical.

**please note that any precautionary measures you take should not impede operations of Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, or other government officials conducting safety and security operations on the vessel.*

- Designate a common area (such as vessel's office or cargo control room) for meetings when the meeting must be held inside the vessel to serve as the designated meeting space to be disinfected prior to and after all meetings.
- Receive packages in open air, preferably near the gangway.
- Remove all external packaging or disinfect ship's stores immediately upon receipt.

Small crews or towing vessels:

- Use grocery delivery services or arrange for an outside person to do grocery shopping. Time in public spaces such as grocery stores should be minimized. It is important to arrange for a grocery delivery 3-4 days in advance as grocery stores are currently seeing a substantial influx of purchases.
- Separate tug and barge crews as much as possible.

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Response to a symptomatic crewmember assigned onboard the vessel:

- Immediately report to the nearest COTP and CDC quarantine station (see emergency contact list).
 - Every case will be assessed by CDC in coordination with the Coast Guard and Public Health officials to determine the next step for continued vessel operations.
- Isolate infected member from the rest of the crew.
- Designate a COVID-19 caretaker
 - This should be one crewmember (not a cook or someone involved in food preparation).
 - Provides medical assistance, meals, and monitors the sick crewmember.
 - Wear proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when interacting with anyone who is sick.
- All other crew members should remain in their cabin as much as possible.
- While conducting duties:
 - Limit crew interaction
 - Maintain social distance as practical
 - Consider donning PPE while outside cabin.
- Employ an aggressive cleaning and disinfecting schedule.
- Employ a self-monitor plan for entire crew that includes continuing twice a day temperature checks.
- Consider telemedicine health screening and monitoring for entire crew.

Prior to embarking pilot:

- Disinfect the navigation bridge and the path from the embarkation station to the navigation bridge.
- One crewmember should provide the escort, external transit as much as possible, maintaining social distance as practical.
- No crew showing symptoms or confirmed to have COVID-19 should be anywhere near the pilot.

Reporting Requirements:

- Report all suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases of crewmember(s) who are actively employed onboard the vessel in accordance with company policy and to local government authorities including the Captain of the Port.
 - More information regarding reporting requirements can be found on the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/federal-regulations-reporting-illness-death-ships-destined-united-states.html>

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Seek immediate emergency medical attention:

- If you have any of these symptoms:
 - Shortness of breath becomes more severe (person cannot catch their breath after performing a simple task)
 - Sudden change in vital signs (high fever over 100.4 Fahrenheit, increased heart rate, rapid shallow breaths).
- Information to include when making reports to the CDC and local government authorities:
 - Signs and symptoms, including onset dates.
 - Highest recorded temperature.
 - The sick member's embarkation date and port.
 - The ship's ports of call during the 14 days before the person got sick.
 - List of ports of call where the sick person may have disembarked during the 14 days before the person got sick.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- The CDC has provided a set of recommendations for the usage and care of all PPE, including face masks, N95 respirators, and surgical masks (includes Gowns & Gloves). Please see the following websites for detailed guidance from the CDC:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html#respirators>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf>
- As a last resort when surgical masks or N95 respirators are not available, CDC provides guidelines for using homemade masks at the following website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>

Additional Resources:

- World Health Organization guidance for controlling outbreaks onboard ships:
<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/operational-considerations-for-managing-covid-19-cases-outbreak-on-board-ships>
- CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 Guidance for ships:
<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html>
- CDC Guidance: How to protect yourself
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>
- State of Hawaii COVID-19 guidance:
<https://health.hawaii.gov/coronavirusdisease2019/>
- State of Hawaii COVID-19 Joint Information Center Updates:
<https://health.hawaii.gov/news/covid-19-updates/>