

Guidance on Crew Management During the COVID-19 Outbreak

This update further collates shared good practice guidance and feedback from our members on practical ways to address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to encourage our members to share their solutions for the greater good of all in our industry.

The measures taken by our members in response to the outbreak are covered here in five main headings. Of course, the situation is rapidly evolving, and we will provide further updates as appropriate.

The prevention and treatment of suspected COVID-19 cases should be a significant focus for all vessel operators.

Notwithstanding this focus, vessel personnel remain engaged in tasks that may present a risk of injury and illness. Members should consider how to prevent injury and illness, particularly from high risk activities. Promoting the equivalent of 'Life Saving Rules' and good vessel management remains essential to a safe operation.

1 Planning and Communication

- ◆ Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) are adapted and flexible enough to cover:
 - cases of COVID-19 being discovered on-board the vessels
 - restricted or extended crew changes
 - port restrictions or quarantine orders being placed on the vessel;
- ◆ **Communication is key:**
 - keep your personnel fully informed of all relevant information from trusted sources
 - keep in regular communication with port authorities and emergency response providers to ensure they are ready to respond in an emergency or if there is a need for medevac.

2 Travel to (and from) the Vessel

- ◆ Be prepared for quarantine or self-isolation 14 days before offshore crew change;
- ◆ Make use of a pre-travel medical checklist or questionnaire (to be held confidentially) which should include:
 - current health status
 - any underlying health conditions
 - recent travel details;
- ◆ Any individuals with conditions that present higher risk should be asked not to join the crew;
- ◆ Transport personnel to the vessel by as direct a route as possible. This may involve different travel arrangements or transit locations depending on circumstances;
- ◆ Follow government and regional advice for all countries through which travel is being booked;
- ◆ Arrange travel to limit exposure, using private car hire and higher capacity coaches to allow social distancing;
- ◆ Consider issuing company letters to travelling crew identifying them as an "Essential Worker";
- ◆ Advice for travellers:
 - maintain social distancing, for example, in airports, hotels and restaurants
 - follow the personal hygiene guidance, including washing hands, limiting contact with hard surfaces, such as door handles, luggage trays, plane seat trays, wiping them clean where possible
 - keep your distance from others in airports and travel hubs. Avoid people who may be showing symptoms of illness, such as sneezing

- be patient: understand that there may be screening and monitoring at airports, ports, borders or other transfer facilities.

3 Before Going On-board – Pre-embarkation

- ◆ Depending on the size of the crew change/mobilisation, it may be worthwhile to stagger arrivals and provide additional support for the medic;
- ◆ Oncoming crew should complete a pre-embarkation check sheet or appropriate Medical Declaration Form;
- ◆ Provide arrangements at the point of boarding, for hand wash and sanitizers;
- ◆ Check the temperature of all personnel at the point of boarding. Consider refusing permission to board to persons, if:
 - they show any symptoms, even mild flu-like symptoms
 - core body temperature is 38°C or above; or
 - there is a history of previous contact with a person with COVID-19;
- ◆ Oncoming crew should be instructed on the rules regarding social distancing, hand hygiene, health monitoring and the reporting of symptoms;
- ◆ Coordinate with third parties:
 - designate one room for ship/shore interface with agent, authorities etc. Do not allow access to other parts of vessel if possible. Clean the room at regular intervals
 - in the case of persons joining by crew boat or helicopter, vessel management should liaise with the charterer, agents and carriers to ensure all personnel are screened before boarding transport to the vessel;
- ◆ Ensure only business critical visitors have access to the vessel when alongside.

4 Offshore Operations – What You Can Do Whilst On-board

- ◆ Whilst on-board, personnel should be kept informed of your plans and any contingencies, including:
 - communicate personal hygiene precautions, symptoms and what to do, what to expect on-board if others become symptomatic
 - it should be made clear to all crew and personnel boarding the vessel that if they develop any symptoms, or should they feel in any way unwell, they should tell the Master or medic immediately
 - conduct ship to shore safety meetings to engage with crews;
- ◆ Conduct daily checks of the temperature and health of oncoming crew once they are on-board, and keep a log for the next 14 days;
- ◆ Personal hygiene – ensure personal hygiene routines. This includes regularly washing of hands, use of hand sanitiser, and wiping down of personal workstations;
- ◆ Welfare issues to consider in light of crew remaining offshore longer or extended rotation:
 - applying flexibility with hours worked e.g. alternate days off – consider fatigue, mental health, resilience
 - ensure communications to home are readily available
 - arrange increased internet bandwidth on vessels and provide phonecards/credits
 - raising the standard of catering and holding special events such as BBQs etc
 - reviewing remuneration of crew both at home and on the vessel
 - appropriate increased moral support for the stewards and cooks whose workload may increase;
- ◆ Social and physical distancing – all as far as is reasonably practical:
 - separate tables in the mess; different messing hours to allow crew to eat while socially distanced
 - on-signers segregated from existing crew for first seven days

- smaller toolbox talks (TBT); limit face to face cross-department interaction, whilst maintaining co-operation and co-ordination through other communication means
- social distancing when accessing the TV room and gym
- single occupancy cabins where possible
- cancelling or deferring discretionary work
- arrange for adequate supplies where available, such as food, personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitiser;
- ◆ Cleaning, disinfection and waste disposal:
 - cleaning and disinfection offshore is of particularly high importance at this time. Consider a more rigorous cleaning regime, particularly in accommodation and cabins
 - disinfection by fogging creates a 5-week sterile environment but there can be difficulties in obtaining resources/chemicals offshore quickly due to the growing demand onshore;
- ◆ Ensure availability of PPE and appropriate disposal of waste;
- ◆ Consider running a COVID-19 emergency drill to check the vessel's capability to respond to a suspected COVID-19 case. Outcomes from the drill can be used to refine plans and communications.

5 What to do in Case of Suspected Infection On-board

- ◆ Initiate your Business Continuity Plan, make appropriate notifications, seek medical guidance. Your priorities on identification of a case should be:
 - isolating the suspected case in a room with closed circuit air systems
 - the wellbeing of the affected person/persons
 - the isolation of those displaying symptoms to minimise the spread to other crew members
 - the safe continued operation of the vessel
 - ensuring that the vessel quarantines itself from others, particularly during port calls
 - treat all suspected individuals with respect and care;
- ◆ Plan how to safely deliver food and drink, laundry, Wi-Fi access and virtual social interaction to the quarantined person;
- ◆ Cleaning routines may need to be increased around areas of high risk of contamination;
- ◆ The authorities may wish to trace close contacts of the quarantined person;
- ◆ The Medic should continue frequent (more than daily) monitoring of the patients during the isolation;
- ◆ Persons caring for the patient should wear appropriate PPE including disposable gloves, disposable respiratory protection, and disposable coveralls and follow distancing protocols as much as possible;
- ◆ Plan for medivac in cases of high priority.