

**This guidance has been adapted from the PHE guidance for shipping and seaports on coronavirus (COVID-19) - 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

### **What you need to know**

- before boarding the ship, crew and passengers should be asked if they have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature
- if someone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they should be sent home or to their cabin
- everyone should be reminded to wash their hands for 20 seconds more frequently than normal
- crew and passengers should be given clear instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms and how and to whom they should report this
- the Master of the Ship should notify the Port Health Authority about any suspected cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) as soon as possible, who will then inform the local Health Protection Team (HPT)
- appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning of surfaces that a person with symptoms has come into contact with are key measures to stop the spread of the virus

### **Background**

This guidance will assist ships (including cargo vessels, ferries and cruise ships) and sea ports in providing advice to staff on addressing coronavirus (COVID-19), on ships and in sea ports.

Ships and sea ports will collectively be referred to as a 'marine setting' in this guidance.

This guidance may be updated in line with the changing situation.

### **Symptoms**

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are a new, continuous cough or a high temperature.

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild infection.

### **What to do if you have had a person with confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) in a marine setting**

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature in a marine setting, they should be sent home, or to their cabin and advised to follow the [stay at home guidance](#).

If they need clinical advice in England or Northern Ireland, they [visit NHS 111](#) (or call 111 if they don't have internet access). If docked in Scotland, use NHS 24 and NHS Direct in Wales. In an emergency, call 999 if they are seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Do not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

If a member of staff or passenger has helped someone who was taken unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, they do not need to go home unless they develop symptoms themselves. They should wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds after any contact with someone who is unwell.

The HPT or equivalent local arrangements in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, will also advise on the process to follow for disembarkation where this is relevant.

For a vessel, the Master should be informed and should report to the Port Health Authority. In England, the Port Health Authority will liaise with the local Public Health England (PHE) HPT who can advise on assessment, testing and infection control. In NI, the Port Health Authority will contact the Public Health Agency (PHA) Health Protection Service.

If anyone is severely unwell then contact should be made with the nearest Port Health Authority immediately in order to arrange disembarkation and transfer to an appropriate facility. The Port Health Authority must be informed of possible coronavirus (COVID-19) infection if this is suspected.

### **Specific action for ships and shipping companies**

#### **Preparation**

Pre-travel information to crew and customers should cover:

- the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- health risks and considerations on health services in other countries for vulnerable groups, such as elderly people or those with underlying medical conditions
- importance of preventive measures
- any pre-boarding assessment

Ships should ensure adequate medical supplies, equipment and PPE are available onboard. Further details of supplies specific to coronavirus (COVID-19) are available in the [disease commodity package](#).

#### **Pre-embarkation**

Crew and passengers with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature should be denied embarkation or cabin isolated.

All crew and passengers should be reminded of the need to report a new, continuous cough or a high temperature as soon as possible with clear instructions on what they should do and the designated person that they must report to.

#### **During the voyage**

Ships are required to notify the port of arrival of any illness on board by submitting a Maritime Declaration of Health (MDH).

### **Limiting spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in marine settings**

Marine settings can help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) by reminding staff and passengers of the public health advice. Posters, leaflets and other [materials are available](#).

Staff and visitors should be reminded to wash their hands more frequently than normal.

Frequently clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that are touched regularly, using your standard cleaning products.

In addition:

- healthcare workers in close contact with a suspected case of coronavirus (COVID-19) should wear the correct PPE
- staff should only go into the cabin if essential, and no-one should be allowed in the cabin unless wearing appropriate PPE consisting of a fluid-repellent surgical face-mask, gloves and a disposable apron. Meals should be left outside the door and normal housekeeping duties suspended
- staff should wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds immediately after removing PPE, or alcohol hand sanitiser can be used
- advice about disposing of PPE is available as part of the guidance on cleaning and waste disposal below

### **Cleaning and waste**

Guidance on [cleaning and waste disposal](#) is available.

### **Disembarkation**

The Health Protection Team will advise on:

- arrangements for disembarkation for possible cases
- how close contacts will be managed
- who may 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

### **Useful links**

Healthy Gateways: [Advice for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19](#) document provides further information.