

Interim Guidance for Seaport Partners with Ships Arriving at US Ports of Entry: for Management of Sick Travelers if COVID-19 is Suspected

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This document provides US federal agency seaport partners with CDC's interim guidance for how to manage sick travelers, including passengers and crew, as they come into US ports of entry, if Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is suspected by CDC. The situation is rapidly evolving, and CDC is monitoring it closely. Guidance will be updated as needed.

[Federal regulations](#) require the master of a ship destined for a US port to immediately report to CDC any death or certain illnesses among the ship's passengers or crew. The [CDC Quarantine Station](#) of jurisdiction then follows up to ensure appropriate public health actions are taken, if needed. The majority of illnesses on maritime ships can be controlled at the port level and rarely need federal resources.

Follow Standard Protocols for Required Reporting of Sick Travelers: At present, CDC is requesting maritime partners to please follow standard [required reporting](#) of symptoms for any sick traveler on an international conveyances destined for the U.S. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, which are included in CDC's regulatory definition of "ill person."

Reports of Illness Among Travelers who were in China During the 14 days Before Illness Onset

CDC has provided Interim Guidance for Ships on Managing Suspected Coronavirus Disease 2019 for preventing spread of COVID-19 during and after a voyage, including personal protective measures for crew members. www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html

Cruise ships: CDC will work directly with the ship's lead physician and the cruise line's medical director to obtain the pertinent medical and travel history.

Non-cruise ships: If the signs and symptoms are consistent with CDC's standard [required reporting](#) requirements, please have the following information available before notifying the nearest [CDC Quarantine Station](#):

- List of the sick traveler's signs and symptoms, including onset dates
- The sick traveler's highest recorded temperature
- The sick traveler'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 traveler disembarked during the 14 days before the person got sick

After reviewing the travel history and signs/symptoms, CDC and the state and/or local health department will provide recommendations on a case-by-case basis for the sick traveler(s) and others onboard if there is a concern for COVID-19. If a different disease of public health concern is suspected, CDC will provide recommendations per standard operating protocols.

If a Disease of Public Health Concern is Suspected at a US Port of Entry

CDC will:

- direct the captain of the ship or the ship's physician to have the sick person wear a facemask (if they are able) to prevent any respiratory droplet transmission; and
- direct the paramedic/EMS staff to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment as recommended by CDC during transport.

CBP will:

- assist with expedited disembarkation of the sick person to facilitate rapid transfer to a medical facility.

Personal Protection for Port Partners Responding to Any Sick Traveler:

- If not already done, ask the sick person to wear a face mask, if available and can be tolerated.
- Follow your agency's protocols for use of personal protective equipment.
- Maintain a distance of 6 feet from the sick person while interviewing, escorting, or providing other assistance.
- Keep interactions with sick people as brief as possible.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available and if hands are not visibly soiled, use a hand sanitizer containing 60%-95% alcohol, especially after interacting with a sick traveler or touching potentially contaminated surfaces (e.g., touched by someone who is sick).
- Wash your hands even if you wore gloves.

Background:

From the maritime perspective, please keep in mind the following:

- The US government has limited travel from China into the United States to US citizens and residents and others who are allowed to enter the United States; therefore, the numbers of travelers coming from the Hubei and China are lower. (See www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/proclamation-suspension-entry-immigrants-nonimmigrants-persons-pose-risk-transmitting-2019-novel-coronavirus/)
- Based on what is currently known about COVID-19, the symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.
- The average transit time for vessels between China and most US ports is over 14 days.
- The majority of cruise lines have suspended crew movements from mainland China and will deny boarding to any individual, whether guest or crew, who has travelled from or through mainland China within the 14 days before embarkation.

For More Information

- About CDC's response to COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html
- About COVID-19: www.cdc.gov/nCoV
- CDC's reporting requirements for cargo ships: www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cargo/reporting-deaths-illness/how-to-report-onboard-death-or-illness.html

Additional Maritime Resources

- International Maritime Organization (IMO): www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx
- Handbook for Management of Public Health Events On Board Ships: www.who.int/publications-detail/handbook-for-management-of-public-health-events-on-board-ships
- Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Statement on COVID-19: <https://cruising.org/news-and-research/press-room/2020/february/clia-statement-on-2019-novel-coronavirus-outbreak>