

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



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**COAST GUARD ADVISORY NOTICE (CGAN 2020-04)**

To: Distribution

Date: March 27, 2020

From: U. S. Coast Guard Sector New York

Revision No: 0

**Re: COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES FOR VESSEL OPERATORS**

1. Enclosed is a compilation of recent CDC and state health recommendations, as well as vessel operator best practices, to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. The enclosed document 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://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>).
2. For questions or comments regarding this advisory notice please email: [secnyvts@uscg.mil](mailto:secnyvts@uscg.mil)

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Encl: (1) COVID-19 Recommendations and Best Practices for Vessel Operators

## **COVID-19 Recommendations & Best Practices for Vessel Operators**

In response to queries from the maritime industry, USCG Sector New York has compiled the below summary of recent CDC and state health recommendations, as well as vessel operator best practices, to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. This document 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 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>) and all state and local officials (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>).

### **Precautions for Vessel Crews**

- When off duty:
  - Practice social distancing. Avoid public spaces to the maximum extent possible, and 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, hand rails, 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
    - Head aches
    - Shortness of breath
    - Runny nose
    - Tiredness
    - Sore throat
    - Other symptoms
  - Have the visitors come in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
  - Some crews have taken 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 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.
- When receiving packages, do so 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.

### **Response to a symptomatic crewmember assigned onboard the vessel:**

- Immediately report to the nearest COTP and CDC quarantine station (see pg 8). Tugs and ferries expected to report to the local health department.
  - Every case will be assessed by CDC in coordination with CG and Public Health 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).
  - Who provides any medical assistance, meals, and monitors the sick crewmember.
  - Should wear PPE when interacting with anyone who is sick.
- All other crewmembers 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>

### **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°F, 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 recommends the following;

- Face mask, i.e. disposable surgical mask or N95 respirator.
  - As a last resort when surgical masks or N95 respirators are not available, CDC provides guidelines for using homemade masks.
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>
  - Regardless of face mask used, this is a reminder to always maintain social distance as much as possible.
- Disposable gloves.
- Eye protection, such as standard shipboard safety eye protection, provided it is tight fitting.
- Face shields, usually worn by medical personnel for extra precaution when treating patients.
- Medical gowns/Tyvek suits usually worn by medical personnel when treating a patient.

- Thermometer.

Appropriate disinfectants:

- Hand soap
- Hand sanitizer
- Bleach (mix 1 cup bleach per gallon of water to disinfect contaminated surfaces such as a used hospital space)

Reuse of PPE:

- Nitrile or latex gloves should never be re-worn.
- Masks should be discarded when:
  - Working with aerosol generating procedures.
  - Contaminated with blood, respiratory, or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- N95 respirators may be reused:
  - CDC Guidance regarding the reuse of respirators:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>
  - Care for respirators:
    - Hang used respirators in a designated area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses.
    - To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified.
    - Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
    - Clean hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator.
    - Avoid touching the inside of the respirator.
    - Use a pair of clean gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user fitness check. Discard gloves after the respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably with a good seal.
- Surgical face mask versus N95 respirator:
  - For detailed information, visit the CDC website:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>
- Surgical masks provide the wearer with protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily fluids. They also protect others from the wearer's respiratory emissions. Surgical masks are more loose fitting and do not provide the wearer with a reliable level of protection from inhaling smaller airborne particles and are not considered respiratory protection. Unlike an N95 respirator, no fit testing is required to properly wear a surgical face mask.
- Not all surgical masks may be reused. Masks with ear hooks may be more suitable for reuse compared to face masks that fasten via ties that may not be undone without tearing.
- Surgical face masks are approved and tested by the FDA.
- CDC developed an infographic comparing masks:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf>

**Important Phone Numbers: Sector New York Area:**

Sector New York Command Center to report a hazardous condition: 718-354-4353

Sector New York Vetting Duty Officer to coordinate ship arrivals: 718-354-4348

Email: SectorNewYorkVDO@uscg.mil

CDC Emergency Operations Center for consultation on managing crew after exposure: 770-488-7100

Email: [eocreport@cdc.gov](mailto:eocreport@cdc.gov)

CDC Quarantine Stations to report a sick crewmember:

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/quarantinestationcontactlistfull.html>

NY State Novel Coronavirus Hotline: 1-800-364-3065

NJ Department of Health Hotline: 1-800-962-1253

**Resources:**

WHO 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>

NYC COVID-19 Guidance:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-main.page>

New York State Information on Novel Coronavirus:

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>