



COVID-19 information for the marine industry

There is currently an outbreak of COVID-19 in mainland China.

This fact sheet applies to:

- **vessels which have been in mainland China in the 14 days before arrival in Australia**
- **vessels with people on board who have been in mainland China in the 14 days before arrival in Australia**
- **Vessels with people on board who have been in contact with a confirmed case of novel COVID-19 in the past 14 days.**

Vessels that are not subject to the COVID-19 requirements will follow the standard reporting and arrival procedures for Australia including reporting of ill or deceased persons.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and difficulty breathing. Difficulty breathing is a sign of possible pneumonia that requires immediate medical attention.

What is Australia doing?

Australia has put in place extra border measures and isolation recommendations for people and vessels travelling to Australia from mainland China.

The Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment is in contact with international vessels to ensure they understand the requirements and comply with pre-arrival reporting of ill travellers.

Information is being provided to travellers at international ports explaining the symptoms of COVID-19 and encouraging them to report to biosecurity officers if they have symptoms while in the port.

On 1 February 2020, Australia introduced isolation and additional border recommendations for people arriving in Australia who have left or transited through mainland China in the 14 days before arrival in Australia.

For the marine industry, these new requirements only apply to vessels which meet the additional COVID-19 requirements listed below.

Does a vessel need to do any additional pre-arrival reporting?

All vessels entering Australian territory may be asked additional questions about:

- whether the vessel left, or transited through, mainland China on or after 1 February 2020 and less than 14 days prior to arriving in Australia.
- whether any crew or passengers left, or transited through, mainland China on or after 1 February 2020 and less than 14 days prior to Arriving in Australia.

- whether any crew or passengers have been in contact with confirmed cases of novel COVID-19 in the 14 days prior to arriving in Australia.

What should commercial vessels do if a crew member is ill?

As per the normal pre-arrival reporting process, it is a legal requirement to report all crew who have been ill in the past 14 days on the pre-arrival report through the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System (MARS).

A biosecurity officer will then meet the vessel to screen for COVID-19 and other serious infectious diseases. Biosecurity officers do this by administering the Traveller with Illness Checklist (TIC) to the ill crew member, or by discussing case diagnoses with the vessel's doctor.

Depending on the outcome of the TIC, a state and territory human biosecurity officer will provide advice to the biosecurity officer. The biosecurity officer will then tell the person what they need to do next. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer may also issue directions for the management of a suspected case of COVID-19 and contacts of that person.

What if a crew member requires medical attention?

If a person is very ill and needs further medical attention, notifying a biosecurity officer will not interfere with the vessel being met by medical or ambulance services. The operator of the vessel is responsible for requesting medical or ambulance services. The operator should inform medical or ambulance services if anyone on board has travelled to mainland China or been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or if the vessel has been in, or transited through, mainland China.

What is self-isolation?

If any crew are entering Australia and are required to self-isolate, they must self-isolate in their intended residence or accommodation. Self-isolation means they should not attend public places, in particular work, school, childcare or university. Also, they should not have visitors to their residence or accommodation. Detailed information can be found at www.health.gov.au

Can disembarking crew who are required to self-isolate fly home within Australia or take public transport?

Yes. Providing they have no signs or symptoms of COVID-19, people can fly domestically in Australia to reach their home, and can take public transport or taxis. However, they must wear a surgical mask until they reach their home.

Is COVID-19 information available for crew and marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores)?

The Department of Health is providing additional communication material for travellers (including passengers and crew) at Australian international airports and seaports. This material informs travellers about COVID-19 and what to do if they have come from a risk area and are ill. The information sheets are updated regularly and are available at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-coronavirus#resources>

How can the marine industry reduce the risk to the crew of commercial vessels?

Crew should be advised to continue to follow existing employer infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when recommended by employer work instructions.

Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 can occur, but it is not yet understood how easily this happens. The following measures will help reduce the risk of illness on board commercial vessels:

- Crew should be encouraged to practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet; and
 - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or a clean tissue, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol based hand rub.
- Crew should be encouraged to avoid touching the face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Crew should use appropriate PPE if close contact with an ill person is required.
- If PPE is used, it should be fitted and worn properly.
- Vessel should ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection activities are undertaken.

What cleaning and disinfection activities are appropriate for commercial vessels?

Commercial vessels should follow existing protocols for cleaning and disinfection.

Environmental cleaning and disinfection guidelines are being developed by an expert group and will be published in future updates of this factsheet when available. The following are general recommendations for cleaning and disinfection practices:

Routine Sanitation

Routine cleaning and disinfection practices are essential in minimising the spread of infection. Increasing the frequency of routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces is an important measure in controlling the spread of infection. It is recommended that all vessels arriving from areas affected by COVID-19 thoroughly clean and disinfect frequently touched areas.

Response to an ill crew member

Following identification of a crew member with COVID-19, the local public health unit should be contacted for specific guidance on areas to be disinfected and disinfection procedures.

Other considerations

Baggage and Packages:

- No additional precautions are recommended for baggage and packages that accompany ill crew members. Routine precautions are recommended.

Waste Management:

- No additional precautions are recommended for the handling of standard waste. All personnel handling waste should use standard precautions and perform hand hygiene after removing personal protective equipment.
- Waste disposal and destruction should be conducted according to standard protocols, legislation and regulations.

How can the marine industry reduce the risk to marine industry staff (e.g. stevedores)?

Persons should be advised to continue to follow existing employer infection prevention work instructions when in contact with anyone who is unwell, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when recommended by employer work instructions.

The following measures will help reduce the risk of illness on board commercial vessels:

- Marine industry staff should be encouraged to practise good hand hygiene and good sneeze/cough hygiene:
 - Wash hands often with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet; and
 - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or a clean tissue, dispose of the tissue and use alcohol based hand rub.
- Marine industry staff should be encouraged to avoid touching the face (mouth, eyes, and nose) with unwashed or gloved hands.
- Marine industry staff temporarily boarding a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 requirements should wear a surgical mask and change it when it becomes damp or soiled.
- Marine industry staff interacting wharf-side with crew from a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 requirements should stay one metre or more away from crew unless wearing appropriate PPE (surgical mask).
- If PPE is used, it should be fitted and worn properly.

Are Australian marine industry staff subject to health screening and isolation requirements if they board a vessel with additional COVID-19 requirements?

As a precautionary measure, appropriate PPE must be worn when interacting with people while on board a vessel with additional COVID-19 requirements. By complying with this guidance, Australian marine industry staff are exempt from Australia's health screening and isolation recommendations on arrival into Australian ports.

If staff have been in contact with people with symptoms of COVID-19 while on board the vessel, staff should make themselves known to the biosecurity officer when possible.

It is not necessary for marine industry staff to wear PPE if they are not boarding a vessel subject to additional COVID-19 requirements, or not interacting with crew or passengers. Regular hand washing or use of alcohol based hand sanitiser is always recommended.

What should marine industry staff do if they develop symptoms after disembarking the vessel?

With appropriate precautions, it is extremely unlikely that any illness or symptoms marine industry staff develop will be related to this virus. If, however, marine industry staff become ill, they should inform their doctor or clinic when making an appointment that they have had some contact with people who may have had exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

They should also:

- Wash their hands frequently.
- Use good cough and sneeze hygiene – cover their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands afterwards.
- Inform their supervisor of symptoms.

Other information

While COVID-19 is of concern and we remain vigilant, it is currently influenza season in the northern hemisphere. It is more likely that travellers displaying infectious symptoms have a common respiratory infection, rather than COVID-19.

Who should vessels contact if they need further advice?

For human biosecurity questions:

- Contact the Maritime National Co-ordination Centre 1300 004 605 (operating hours 6am-6pm Australian Central Standard Time, for urgent after hours enquiries, call +61 417 666 648)

For general COVID-19 questions:

- Visit www.health.gov.au
- Call the National COVID-19 Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- If you need to communicate with a non-English speaking person, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National). Telephone interpreters are available immediately on 131 450.

Scenarios

For your reference, the following scenarios outline situations when people may be required to undertake self-isolation.

1. Commercial vessels, from any destination, with any passengers or crew who have been ill in the previous 14 days

- The vessel will be put into negative pratique. No people may disembark during this time.
- A biosecurity officer will administer the TIC to all ill people.
- A biosecurity officer or the master of the vessel (via the Maritime National Coordination Centre) may arrange for a fact sheet to be provided to all people on board.

- Depending on the outcome of the TIC, a biosecurity officer will either grant pratique or provide the vessel with further information or direction.

2. Commercial vessels, from any destination, with any passengers or crew who have been in contact with a proven case of COVID-19 in the previous 14 days

- Crew and passengers who are Australian citizens, permanent residents, their immediate family, legal guardians and spouses, will be allowed to disembark the vessel. They may be required to follow self-isolation recommendations.
- Any crew not disembarking in Australia are advised to wear a surgical mask while not on the vessel when performing vessel functions. They must not leave the port or they will be subject to self-isolation requirements.
- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will advise whether a crew change may go ahead at a particular port following application to undertake a crew change via MARS.

3. Commercial vessels that departed, or transited through, mainland China

- AND it has **been less than 14 days** since the vessel departed, or transited through, mainland China
 - Fact sheets will be distributed to every passenger and crew member or provided to the vessel's Master to distribute to passengers and crew.
 - Crew and passengers who are Australian citizens, permanent residents, their immediate family, legal guardians and spouses will be allowed to disembark the vessel. They will be required to self-isolate at their home or accommodation until it has been 14 days since the vessel departed, or transited through, mainland China.
 - Any crew not disembarking in Australia are advised to wear a surgical mask while not on the vessel when performing vessel functions. They must not leave the port or they will be subject self-isolation recommendations.
 - The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will advise whether a crew change may go ahead at a particular port following application to undertake a crew change via MARS.
 - These measures are valid until it has been 14 days since the vessel departed, or transited through, mainland China.
- AND it has **been more than 14 days** since the vessel departed, or transited through, mainland China
 - Providing no people have been ill in the previous 14 days (refer to Scenario 2), no additional requirements apply.
 - Crew and passengers will be able to disembark as per usual processes.

4. Commercial vessels from any destination with crew or passengers on board who were in, or transited through, mainland China

- AND it has **been less than 14 days** since the person was in, or transited through, mainland China

- Crew and passengers who are Australian citizens, permanent residents, their immediate family, legal guardians and spouses, will be allowed to disembark the vessel. They may be required to follow self-isolation recommendations.
- Any crew or passengers not disembarking in Australia are advised to wear a surgical mask while not on the vessel when performing vessel functions. They must not leave the port or they will be subject self-isolation requirements.
- The Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment will advise whether a crew change may go ahead at a particular port following application to undertake a crew change via MARS.
- These measures are valid until it has been 14 days since any person was in mainland China.
- AND it has **been more than 14 days** since any person was in, or transited through, mainland China
 - Providing no people have been ill in the previous 14 days (refer to Scenario 2), no additional requirements apply.
 - Crew and passengers will be able to disembark as per usual processes.