



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Subject: MOBILITY OF ASYMPTOMATIC, PRESUMED NON-COVID-19-CARRYING* SEAFARERS IN THE MARINE SECTOR DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This bulletin replaces Ship Safety Bulletin No. [18/2020](#)

Purpose

To provide guidance regarding the mobility of asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying* refers to a seafarer who has not tested positive for COVID-19; is not exhibiting any COVID-19 signs or symptoms; has not been in close contact in the past 14 days with anyone suspected of/confirmed as having COVID-19; nor is awaiting test results themselves from having been tested for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Scope

This bulletin provides guidance related to:

1. International crew changes
2. Domestic crew changes
3. Shore leave for seafarers onboard foreign vessels
4. Shore leave for seafarers onboard domestic vessels
5. Exemption from quarantine requirements for asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers - both Canadian and foreign nationals.

Keywords:

1. Coronavirus
2. Essential services
3. Exemptions

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Background

The marine transportation sector provides a vital service to all Canadians in ensuring that goods (e.g., food, medicine, supplies to the health care sector, and other essential products) arrive safely in our ports. This applies to domestic and international trade.

International crew changes

Crew changes are regular occurrences in the marine sector. Once seafarers finish their required sea service, they travel home and a relief crew must replace them. These exchanges are critical to ensure the flow of marine trade.

Pursuant to the:

- 1) [*Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States\)*](#); and
- 2) [*Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Prohibition of Entry into Canada from the United States\)*](#),

Seafarers who have to travel to Canada to perform their duties, are allowed to enter Canada and board an international flight destined to Canada.

Note that **no traveller can board a flight/enter Canada** if they have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever and cough or a fever and difficulty breathing, or if they know they have COVID-19, or if they have reasonable grounds to suspect they have COVID-19 (Further details can be found at the Public Health Agency of Canada's [website](#)). This information has been disseminated to all airline carriers. Similarly, crews on foreign vessels in Canada, who must disembark to return home, must not have reasonable grounds to suspect they have COVID-19, must not have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever and cough or a fever and difficulty breathing, nor have COVID-19.

Refer to the "Exemption from quarantine requirements for asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers - both Canadian and foreign nationals" section of this bulletin for information on quarantine measures.

Crew that do not have reasonable grounds to suspect they have COVID-19, that do not have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever and cough or a fever and difficulty breathing, nor have COVID-19, are also permitted to transit to the nearest airport for the purpose of crew change-over as permitted under Public Health Agency of Canada orders.

Domestic crew change

Domestic crew should follow the advice of their employer, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and local health officials.

Anyone who has close contact with someone who has, or is suspected to have, COVID-19 should quarantine for 14 days. Quarantine means you must:

- **stay at home** and monitor yourself for signs and symptoms, even if mild;
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus at the earliest stage;
- **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** by practicing physical distancing in your home;
- **take and record your temperature daily**; and
- **avoid using fever-reducing medications.**

Local private transport should be arranged for crew members, that avoids large groups, crowded areas, and public transit.

Additional details on quarantine can be found at the Public Health Agency of Canada's [website](#).

The following advice is also provided:

- [Keeping you safe at work: Marine sector health and COVID-19](#)
- [Keeping you safe at work: Canada's ports are open to international trade](#)

Shore leave for seafarers onboard foreign vessels, at Canadian ports, terminals and marine facilities

Pursuant to the Public Health Agency of Canada orders, foreign nationals are prohibited from entering Canada for optional or discretionary purposes, such as tourism, recreation or entertainment. “Controlled shore leave” should only be permitted to asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying crew members and should not exceed four hours in length.

“Controlled shore leave” should be restricted to the following locations **only**:

- A shore-based welfare facility located either on marine facility grounds or in a nearby location;
- A designated area on marine facility grounds if such an area has been identified for that purpose;
- A medical facility, a pharmacy or a store containing a pharmacy.

During this four hour “controlled shore leave” period, crew members are expected to:

- Follow marine facility-specific COVID-19 protocols;
- Follow [PHAC recommendations regarding COVID-19 prevention](#), including wearing a mask, maintaining proper hand hygiene, physical distancing, and cough/sneeze etiquette;

- Follow applicable public health restrictions from local health authorities;
- Minimize contact with local workers at a destination;
- Closely self-monitor; and
- Quarantine and contact the local public health authority should they exhibit any COVID-19 signs or symptoms.

Important to note: Crew members are expected to inform the Master of the vessel of their whereabouts in order to support possible contact tracing.

Shore leave for seafarers onboard Canadian domestic vessels

Crew onboard Canadian domestic vessels should follow the advice of their employer, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and local health officials.

Exemption from quarantine requirements for asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers - both Canadian and foreign nationals

There is a mandatory requirement related to COVID-19, under [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Mandatory Isolation\)](#), for anyone to quarantine for 14 days upon entry into Canada when coming from a foreign country. The updated Order came into force on November 29, 2020.

Exchanges in personnel and movement of marine sector employees are critical to the flow of marine trade, community resupply and marine safety and security.

Persons exempted from mandatory quarantine provisions for COVID-19 pursuant to the *Quarantine Act* orders include persons that do not have reasonable grounds to suspect they have COVID-19, that do not have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including a fever and cough or a fever and difficulty breathing, nor have COVID-19:

- in the trade or transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods or people, including truck drivers and crew members on any aircraft, shipping vessel or train, and that cross the border while performing their duties or for the purpose of performing their duties;
- who must cross the border regularly to go to their normal place of employment, including critical infrastructure workers (Energy and Utilities, Information and Communication Technologies, Finance, Health, Food, Water, Transportation, Safety, Government and Manufacturing), provided they do not directly care for persons 65 years of age or older within the first 14 days after their entry to Canada.

In addition to the federal prohibitions on entry and quarantine requirements at Canadian international borders, provinces and territories have established their own respective

restrictions or continue to adapt their own respective lists of exempted workers for domestic movements.

Pursuant to the Public Health Agency of Canada orders, a person not subject to quarantine must, if they are in public settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, wear a non-medical mask or face covering that a screening officer or quarantine officer considers suitable to minimize the risk of introducing or spreading COVID-19.

In addition, the Public Health Agency of Canada advises that these workers should:

- take required preventive measures, including practising physical (social) distancing (maintaining a distance of 2 metres from others whenever possible);
- closely [self-monitor](#); and
- self-isolate and contact their local public health authority should they exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms.

Employers should have open lines of communication at all times with their employees in order to be informed of any signs or symptoms, or any close contact with presumptive/confirmed COVID-19-carrying persons, or any recent COVID-19 testing by any of their employees, and to follow actions required by the local public health authority for the workplace. Employers should be aware that local public health authorities at an employee's place of work in Canada may have specific requirements.

Exempted employees who do not have signs or symptoms should quarantine if they have had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19, or if they remain awaiting results from themselves having been tested for COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Quarantine means that, **for 14 days** a person needs to:

- **stay at home** and monitor for sign and symptoms, even if mild;
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus at the earliest stage;
- **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** by practicing physical distancing in your home;
- **take and record your temperature daily;** and
- **avoid using fever-reducing medications.**

For more information, please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's [website](#).

Documentation

Marine transportation workers should carry with them documentation for identification purposes. For marine crew, it can include the Seafarer Identity Document, issued in

accordance with either the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (ILO Convention No. 108) or the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 2003 (ILO Convention No. 185), a Certificate of Competency, a letter from a shipping agent, or a discharge book. For other marine workers, proof of employment, such as work orders, should be carried to demonstrate the purpose of the travel is essential for the operation of a vessel.