

Updated guidelines respecting the mobility of asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19-carrying* seafarers in the marine sector during the COVID-19 pandemic - SSB No.: 16/2021

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This bulletin has been replaced by Ship Safety Bulletin No. 19/2021

This bulletin replaces Ship Safety Bulletin No. 11/2021

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 plan requirement for asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers - both Canadian and foreign nationals.

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.

The following Orders in Council, and any Order that replaces them, apply to seafarers on vessels arriving in Canada:

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),

Subject to meeting certain conditions as outlined in the above-referenced Orders in Council and in any Orders that replace them, seafarers who travel to Canada to perform their duties are allowed to enter Canada, and board an international flight destined to Canada. Seafarers providing an essential service do not need to be considered a fully vaccinated traveller to enter 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 (Please consult the Government of Canada webpage entitled, Covid-19: Travel, testing quarantine and borders). 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,

- must not have COVID-19.

Refer to the “Exemption from quarantine plan requirement 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 permitted to transit to an available airport for the purpose of crew change-over to the extent allowed as outlined under applicable Government of Canada Orders in Council.

As of October 29, 2021, an Order made under the *Aeronautics Act* entitled *Interim Order Respecting Certain Requirements for Civil Aviation Due to COVID-19*, requires individuals, including seafarers, when departing outbound from Canada to

- be a fully vaccinated ¹ traveller; or
- provide a pre-departure COVID-19 molecular test result,
 - If the test result is **negative**, it must be dated within 72 hours of the traveller’s scheduled departure time from Canada.
 - If the test result is **positive**, it must be dated **at least** 14 days before but **not more** than 180 days prior to the traveller’s scheduled departure time from Canada (e.g., the traveller would be eligible to travel on day 15 after their test was administered, since 14 days have passed). This accounts for those that had contracted COVID-19, have recovered, but may still be testing positive due to lingering amounts of the virus in their system.

Note: Although a seafarer's entry into Canada may be permitted, there are also certain travel restrictions and exemptions, which may vary from time to time, when moving between or within certain provinces and territories.

Domestic crew change

Canadian vessels operating domestically should follow the advice of their employer, and direction from provincial and territorial health measures and authorities.

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 one mild symptom;
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus prior to developing symptoms or at the earliest stage of illness;
- **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** by practicing physical distancing in your home;
- **monitor yourself for symptoms**, such as:
 - new or worsening cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - temperature equal to or over 38°C
 - feeling feverish
 - chills
 - fatigue or weakness
 - muscle or body aches

- new loss of smell or taste
- headache
- gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
- feeling very unwell
- **take and record your temperature daily** (or as directed by your public health authority);
- **avoid using fever-reducing medications** (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) as much as possible, as these medications could mask an early symptom of COVID-19.

Additional details on quarantine can be found at the Public Health Agency of Canada's website. Moreover, the crew of a vessel should be aware there are travel restrictions and exemptions, which may vary from time to time, when moving between or within certain provinces and territories.

The following advice is also provided:

- Keeping you safe at work: Marine sector health and COVID-19 (PDF, 89.97 KB)
- Keeping you safe at work: Canada's ports are open to international trade (PDF, 551.97 KB)

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

Shore leave should only be extended to asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying crew members and should not exceed six hours in length per interval; and the seafarer should follow the advice of their employer, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and local health officials.

During this six hour 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 COVID-19 contact tracing.
- who meet the Government of Canada requirements for a fully vaccinated ¹ traveller may extend shore leave beyond six hours in length, per interval.

Shore leave for seafarers onboard Canadian vessels making domestic voyages

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 plan requirement for asymptomatic, presumed non-COVID-19 carrying seafarers - both Canadian and foreign nationals

As of September 15, 2021, asymptomatic seafarers are exempt from the requirement to have a quarantine plan on arrival in Canada; however, they still must provide relevant information, including travel and contact information through the ArriveCAN mobile app (iOS or Android) – this declaration has been mandatory since November 21st 2020 and must be done 72 hours prior arriving in Canada.

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

The following persons arriving on commercial vessels are exempted from mandatory quarantine provisions for COVID-19 pursuant to the *Quarantine Act* orders on the condition that they 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:

- a member of a crew as defined in subsection 3(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* or a person who enters Canada only to become such a member of a crew;
- 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; and
- 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 plan 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 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 two [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 are 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 just one mild symptom;
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus prior to developing symptoms or at the earliest stage of illness;
- **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** by practicing physical distancing in your home;
- **monitor yourself for symptoms**, such as:
 - new or worsening cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - temperature equal to or over 38°C
 - feeling feverish
 - chills
 - fatigue or weakness
 - muscle or body aches
 - new loss of smell or taste
 - headache
 - gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting)
 - feeling very unwell

- **take and record your temperature daily** (or as directed by your public health authority); and
- **avoid using fever-reducing medications** (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen) as much as possible as these medications could mask an early symptom of COVID-19.

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.

Footnotes

- 1 **Definition of fully vaccinated:** to be considered fully vaccinated, a traveller must have received the full series of a vaccine or combination of vaccines accepted by the Government of Canada at least 14 days prior to entering Canada. Currently, those vaccines are manufactured by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD, and Janssen (Johnson & Johnson). Travellers can receive their vaccine in any country, and must provide documentation supporting their vaccination in English, French or with a certified translation. For more information on coming to Canada as a fully vaccinated traveller please visit: [COVID-19 vaccinated travellers entering Canada - Travel restrictions in Canada – Travel.gc.ca](#).
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Keywords

1. Coronavirus
2. Essential services
3. Mobility

Questions concerning this Bulletin should be addressed to:

AMSP

Transport Canada

Marine Safety and Security

Tower C, Place de Ville

330 Sparks Street, 11th Floor

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N8

Contact us at: ✉ marinesafety-securitemaritime@tc.gc.ca or ☎ 1-855-859-3123 (Toll Free).



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(PDF, 266 KB)

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i Transport Canada is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation. In response, we have issued some **transportation-related measures and guidance**. Please check if any of these measures apply to you.

You may experience longer than usual wait times or partial service interruptions. If you cannot get through, please **contact us by email**.

For information on COVID-19 updates, please visit **Canada.ca/coronavirus**.

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