



Guidelines for the handling of Covid-19 on vessels manned and operated by IMR

The purpose of these guidelines is to give practical guidance for establishing efficient barriers to prevent the Covid-19 from entering vessels manned and operated by IMR, and to prevent the spreading of Covid-19 if the virus is present on board.

Ways to prevent the Covid-19 virus to enter the vessels

- It is first and foremost important that all cruise participants entering the vessel are Covid-19 free. Everyone is therefore expected to limit their social contact with other persons outside their own household as much as possible in the 10 days before embarkation to minimize the probability of bringing the Covid-19 on board. If you have any of the symptoms of Covid-19 infection, inform the cruise leader or the Captain, and stay home!
- It is important to follow the guidelines from the Norwegian Public Health Institute (FHI) for how to avoid spreading the virus such as social distancing (1 m distance to other people), cough and sneeze in your elbow, wash your hands on a regular basis etc., see <https://www.fhi.no/en/> for more details.
- Wear a facemask on public transportation, including air travel to the vessel.
- Anyone entering the vessels must fill in the attached «Coronavirus COVID-19 Self Assessment» form no later than 24 hours before embarkation and send it on email to the Cruise leader if you are a cruise participant. The Cruise leader will then collect and forward all assessment forms for the cruise party to the vessel's Captain.
- For service personnel visiting a vessel, it is important that they do not get access to any other part of the vessel than what is necessary for the work to be performed. They shall not, unless it is absolute necessary, be served any food or drinks on board. They shall not be handed temporary access cards, borrow helmets or other Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) from the vessel, but bring their own PPE.
- Due to the grave consequences of a Covid-19 spread on board it is not allowed to have any visitors on board or visit family or friends ashore during port calls. It is however allowed to go ashore for physical fitness training, e.g. for jogging or walking outdoors, and for necessary shopping if the shops have implemented the necessary Covid-19 protection measures. In any case avoid visiting hairdressers, bars, restaurants etc. to avoid unnecessary potential exposure to Covid-19 infection.
- All deliverables to the vessel shall be left on the pier and be disinfected before taken on board by the vessel's crew. In addition, such deliverables should ideally be kept in "on board quarantine" in 3-4 days, or as long as possible, before unpacking.
- Personal belongings to be disinfected before taken on board.
- When calling on foreign ports, check the local rules and regulations with regards to going ashore and allowing people on board.
- The Covid-19 test capabilities in different parts of Norway is well developed by now, but it can be local limitations/priorities with regards to Covid-19 testing.
Covid-19 symptoms can be:
 - Sore throat, running nose and coughing
 - Sore muscles and general feeling of "sickness"
 - Fever or chills
 - Headache
 - Heavy breathing
 - Stomach pain, nausea or diarrhea
 - Reduced sense of taste and smell

- A negative Covid-19 test is not necessarily a sure sign of not being infected, but a positive test is a certain sign of infection and means that it is not allowed to embark an IMR vessel as crew or cruise participant, and that quarantine is required until declared Covid-19 free.

- For personnel joining an IMR vessel after travelling from another country to embark must follow the Norwegian public Covid-19 regulations in force at the time, even if the vessel is in a port outside Norway. Both Norwegian and local regulations will be applied if they are not exactly the same.

The Captain and the Cruise leader, with support from IMR if necessary, must check the procedure for each individual with regards to requirements for testing in the country of departure, testing in the country of arrival, quarantine requirements in the port of departure etc., and make sure that each individual is given the necessary information in due time in order to be able to join the vessel on a planned date.

Measures to prevent the Covid-19 virus spreading on board

- Single cabins

Since the Covid-19 pandemic can last for a long time it is important that all cruises in 2020 and for the most part or all of 2021 are planned with use of single cabins only. Sharing cabins can be allowed if there are couples going on a cruise together. This means that cruises must be extended in time or have a reduced amount of work compared with a normal situation.

- To reduce the risk of infection for catering staff in particular, and everyone on board in general, no other than the cabin occupant shall enter a cabin during the first five days of a cruise.
- Access to common rooms on board such as lounges, library etc. should be limited to 20 persons at the time, given that the 1 m social distancing can be exercised. This to be regulated by the Captain and everyone to be informed about what regulations are in place at any one time.
- Use of the gym to be based on a local risk assessment. When in port, everyone is encouraged to go walking, jogging etc. instead of using the onboard gym. Gym, sauna and solarium can be used by all on board after 10 days at sea without any external personnel contact.
- Access to the bridge to be limited to navigators, cruise leader and instrument technicians.
Access for others to be agreed with the Captain.
- Common restrooms shall not be used by crew or cruise participants, only people visiting the vessel in port. After 10 days at sea without any external personnel contact, the common restrooms can be used by everyone on board.
- During meals, seating shall be arranged such that social distancing of 1 m is kept at all times, e.g. by removing every other chair around the dining tables to reduce the capacity.
Handwashing with soap and water, or disinfection gel/spray, before meals is mandatory.
Use of gloves can give a false sense of safety.
Buffet serving is allowed, but if possible, a catering assistant can put the food on the plates or everyone serve themselves with their own cutlery or use onetime plastic cutlery.
Catering staff shall monitor the serving to avoid any wrongdoing with regards to virus protection efforts.
When people serving themselves at night it is everyone's responsibility to do it in a way that eliminates the risk of virus spread.
Only catering staff have access to the galley area.
Plastic spoons shall be laid out on a serving plate or in a box/can where self-service of coffee, water, juice, milk etc. is available.
Water dispensers without automatic filling should be closed off to avoid spread of the virus via the touch buttons.
If manual refilling of tanks in juice or water dispensers are necessary, make sure that disinfection gel or spray is placed next to the dispenser for cleaning of hands before handling the dispenser fluid.

For coffee makers placed around the vessel, e.g. on the bridge or in the trawl mess, make sure that enough disposable cups are available and ready for use nearby.
Use of ceramic cups should be limited to the mess area.

- Moving around the vessel

It is not necessary to wear gloves when moving around the vessel. All personnel should instead focus on regular hand wash and maintain routines for regular cleaning and intensify cleaning of areas that are often touched, e.g. every 4 hours. Use of soap water should be sufficient. When preventive measures/cleaning are done, make sure to use PPE such as gloves and eye protection as necessary.

- Equipment used by multiple persons

Everyone on board shall to the extent possible use their own personal PC. If common PCs are used the keyboard and mouse must be disinfected after use. An alternative is to put a thin plastic cover ("Glad pack") over and remove it after use.

Equipment that must be used by multiple persons, such as maneuver handles, telephones, alarm panels etc., must have routines for regular cleaning. A simple rule is that at the end of each watch all equipment that have been touched to be cleaned.

At the start of each watch the watch team must agree on who will operate which equipment during the watch to ensure as much "single user" during the watch as possible.

- General comments

- Disinfectants (e.g. Antibac) is available in dispensers, spray bottles, wet cloths etc. and should be easily available to everyone on board and will be resupplied as necessary.
- If gloves are used, make sure to clean the hands with Antibac before touching the gloves.
- Cabins will not be cleaned by the catering staff for the first five days of the cruise.
Catering assistants must change gloves for each cabin they clean.
- Covid-19 also spreads via sewage. Necessary PPE must therefore be worn if working on the vessel's sewage system.
- When in contact with Covid-19 infected persons in isolation a protection suit must be used, and it must be taken on and off correctly to avoid self-contamination. A dedicated trash bag must be available to dispose the suit after use. A video in Hebrew with English subtitles is available on Youtube and shows how to take on and off a protection suit:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsmDRVqAPlk>
(Cannot be downloaded on board due to limited bandwidth).
- Make sure that there are sufficient supplies of PPE on board before commencing a cruise.
Experience says that it can take up to 8 days to get an infected person ashore and this can be used as a guideline for stocking up on protection suits etc.

Measures to be taken if Covid-19 infection is suspected

The following measures are recommended if Covid-19 infection is suspected:

- Immediately isolate the infected person(s) in their cabin(s).
It is not recommended to use the vessel's hospital as an isolation unit.
- Inform IMR/Research Vessel Department that a Covid-19 outbreak is suspected.
- Monitor the isolated person(s) over a few days to see if Covid-19 symptoms are developing.
- If it is decided to send one or more persons ashore:
 - Inform IMR/Research vessel department.
 - Inform the local harbor master and the local health authorities.
 - Check the possibilities for isolation of the patient(s) in the port of arrival.
 - Check the possibilities for transportation of the patient(s) to their home(s) or to an isolation site near their home.
- Inform the patient(s) local GP.



Tracking of Covid-19 spreading on board:

All IMR operated vessels have remote body temperature measurement equipment, in addition to oxygen uptake measurement equipment.

Both devices can give an indication of Covid-19 infection.

Measures to reduce the consequences of a Covid-19 outbreak

- Grave Covid-19 illness can develop quickly and it is therefore decided that IMR operated vessels must operate near land and no more than 24 hours transit time to shore for the first 10 days of a cruise, before moving to more remote locations.
- If there are suspected or confirmed Covid-19 infection on board a vessel when entering a port, all potential visitors must be informed about it in addition to which measures that are implemented in order to give the potential visitor the opportunity to decide if a visit should take place or not.

Personnel who are in a Covid-19 high-risk group

Personnel who are in a Covid-19 high-risk group as defined by the Norwegian Public Health Institute (FHI) should consult with their local GP or a seafarer's doctor if it is advisable to go on a cruise.

If not the Captain and/or the Cruise leader should be informed immediately.

If any questions, contact:

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CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) SELF ASSESSMENT REV. 2.5 – 2020.06.04

The new coronavirus disease COVID-19 is a newly emerging strain of coronavirus. The Institute of Marine Research (IMR) is monitoring the development of COVID-19 closely.

Symptoms may include (but are not limited to): Fever, cough, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, and difficulty breathing. It can take up to 10 days for symptoms to show after a person has been infected.

To maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone, we ask you to complete the below self-assessment. This assessment should be sent to the master onboard by e-mail, not later than 24hrs prior to attending the vessel. Cruise personnel send this assessment to Cruise Leader, who collects these and send to the Captain.

Name:		
Company:		
Signature:		
Date:		
1. Is it less than 10 days since you had contact with anyone suspected or confirmed to have Coronavirus (COVID-19)?	YES / NO	
2. Is it less than 10 days since you had a Fever and any of these symptoms: Cough, sore throat, nausea, vomiting or difficulty breathing?	YES / NO	

- If you answered YES to question 1 you cannot attend our vessel until 10 days have elapsed.
- If you have answered YES to question 2, you cannot attend our vessel until you have been assessed by a Medic and found not to have Coronavirus.
- If you answer NO to all the above you are welcome onboard, and no further action is required from you. Please make sure you follow all the advices from Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) to avoid spread of the COVID-19 <https://www.fhi.no/en/id/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/>

If you answered YES to any of the above, please inform your supervisor or company representative. Do not send the form if you answered YES to any of the above.

We would like to encourage all personnel and subcontractors to monitor your health conditions closely and seek medical attention promptly if you are feeling unwell.

The above precautionary measures are subject to ongoing review as new information comes to hand. Any change to the above will be communicated as required. Please also keep yourself updated on the situation at the NIPH website.

For information on general novel coronavirus preventative measures, please see the attached poster developed by International SOS.

Novel Coronavirus preventive measures

DO



Wash hands frequently



Maintain good personal hygiene



Ensure food, including eggs, is thoroughly cooked

AVOID



AVOID close contact with sick people



AVOID touching your face



AVOID direct contact with animals (live or dead) and their environment

AVOID touching surfaces that may be contaminated with droppings

DO NOT travel if you are sick



This poster has been developed for educational purposes and is correct at the time of publication. It is not a substitute for professional medical advice. Should you have any questions or concerns about any topic in the poster, please consult your medical professional.

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