



SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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Subject: **MOBILITY OF ASYMPTOMATIC WORKERS IN THE MARINE SECTOR DURING COVID-19**

This bulletin replaces Ship Safety Bulletin No. [09/2020](#)

Purpose

To provide guidance regarding the mobility of asymptomatic marine sector workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scope

This bulletin provides guidance related to:

1. International crew change
2. Domestic crew change
3. Shore leave for seafarers onboard foreign vessels
4. Shore leave for seafarers onboard domestic vessels
5. Exemption from self-isolation requirements for asymptomatic marine sector workers - both Canadian and foreign nationals

Background

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

Keywords:

1. Coronavirus
2. Essential services
3. Exemptions

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).

International crew change

Crew changes are regular occurrences in the marine sector. Once seafarers finish their required sea service, they fly home to their families 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 \(Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States\)](#) (applicable section 3(1)(d)); and
- 2) [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Prohibition of Entry into Canada from the United States\)](#),

an exemption has been issued that allows Marine Sector Workers (see Annex 1 for examples) who have to travel to Canada to perform their duties, to board an international flight destined to Canada.

Note that no traveller can board a flight/enter Canada if they are symptomatic with a fever and cough or a fever and breathing difficulties. (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 be asymptomatic.

Refer to the “Exemption from self-isolation requirements for asymptomatic marine sector workers - both Canadian and foreign nationals” section of this bulletin for information on self-isolation measures.

Asymptomatic crew 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 and local health officials.

Anyone who has close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days. Self-isolation means you must:

- **stay at home** and monitor yourself for symptoms, even if mild; and
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus at the earliest stage.

Operators should arrange local transport for crew members that avoids large groups, crowded areas, and public transit.

Additional details on self-isolation 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

“Controlled shore leave” shall be permitted to asymptomatic crew members for a period of four hours at a shore-based welfare facility located either on port grounds or in a nearby location, or in a “designated area on port grounds” if such an area has been identified for that purpose.

During this four hour period of shore leave, crew members would be expected to:

- follow port specific COVID-19 protocols;
- follow [PHAC recommendations regarding COVID-19 prevention](#), including proper hand hygiene, physical distancing, and cough/sneeze etiquette;
- minimize contact with local workers at a destination;
- closely [self-monitor](#); and
- self-isolate and contact the local public health authority should they exhibit any symptoms.

If crew members are to access local stores (e.g. for pharmaceuticals, urgent personal care products, etc.) or interact with health support services, they must follow PHAC advice as per above and any advice of local health officials.

Shore leave for seafarers onboard Canadian domestic vessels

Crew onboard Canadian domestic vessels should follow the advice of their employer and local health officials.

Shore leave for seafarers in the Arctic

A complete ban on shore leave in the Canadian Arctic is in effect until December 31, 2020. Crews that are residents of Arctic and northern communities could be exempt, subject to any advice from local public health officials

Exemption from self-isolation requirements for asymptomatic marine sector workers - 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 self-

isolate for 14 days upon entry into Canada when coming from a foreign country. The Order came into force on March 25, 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 isolation provisions for COVID-19 pursuant to the *Quarantine Act* orders include:

- Healthy workers (must not have a fever and a cough, a fever and difficulty breathing, or have reasonable grounds to suspect they have these symptoms) in the trade and transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods and people. This includes truck drivers and crew on any plane, train or marine vessel that cross the Canadian border for the purpose of performing their duties.
- Healthy people who have to cross the border to go to work, including health care providers and critical infrastructure workers.

In addition to the federal prohibitions on entry at Canadian international borders, provinces have established or continue to adapt their own list of exempted sector workers for domestic movements.

Workers in the trade and transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods and people in the marine sector can include those listed in Annex 1.

The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that these workers should:

- take required preventive measures, including practising physical (social) distancing (maintain 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 symptoms.

Employers should have open lines of communication at all times with their employees in order to be informed of any symptoms, and to follow actions required by the local public health authority for the workplace. Be aware that local public health authorities at the workers' point of destination in Canada may have specific requirements.

Exempted employees who do not have symptoms should self-isolate if they have had close contact with someone who has or is suspected to have COVID-19.

Self-isolate means that, **for 14 days** you need to:

- **stay at home** and [monitor](#) yourself for symptoms, even if mild
- **avoid contact with other people** to help prevent transmission of the virus at the earliest stage of illness
- **do your part to prevent the spread of disease** in your home and in your community, in case you develop symptoms

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 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 support confirmation of the purpose of the travel.

Annex 1

Examples of workers in the marine transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods by vessel and who seek to enter Canada for the purpose of performing their duties in that sector can include:

- Marine crew operating a vessel (including seafarers conducting a crew change)
- Persons involved in the provision of ship and port services and supplies (including those providing administration and management support)
- Equipment operators
- Workers supporting the loading/offloading
- Maintenance services
- Security officers and those providing security support functions
- Inspectors
- Marine surveyors
- Marine pilots
- Vessel traffic management staff
- Representatives of seafarers' welfare and labour organizations
- Search and rescue workers (also deemed essential workers as emergency responders)
- Divers
- Response and clean-up crew for a maritime spill
- Other emergency response persons
- Essential workers from other sectors who work on board a vessel