



Novel Coronavirus Information Sheet

There is currently an outbreak of a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in Wuhan, Hubei Province China.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a type of virus that can affect humans and animals. Some coronaviruses cause illness similar to the common cold while other coronaviruses cause more serious illness, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is primarily affecting people who have recently been in the city of Wuhan, China, or had contact with sick people from Wuhan.

What are the symptoms of 2019-nCoV?

Symptoms of 2019-nCoV include fever, cough, vomiting, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Difficulty breathing is a sign of possible pneumonia that requires immediate medical attention.

What should be done if a passenger or crew member is unwell during the 2019-nCoV outbreak?

All ill passengers and crew presenting with fever, sweats or chills should be referred to the ship's doctor for assessment. The ship's doctor will be informed of the current status of 2019-nCoV and will be able to assess the risk based on travel history and exposure.

There are [interim Australian guidelines](#) for the management of suspected cases of nCoV that may be of assistance.

What is the cruise industry required to report?

All cruise vessels entering Australian territory are legally required to report ill passengers and crew presenting on the pre-arrival report via the Maritime Arrivals Reporting System. A biosecurity officer will then meet the vessel to screen for 2019-nCoV and other serious infectious diseases. Biosecurity officers do this by administering the Traveller with Illness Checklist (TIC) to the ill passenger or crew member, or by discussing case diagnoses with the ship's doctor. A biosecurity officer or human biosecurity officer may then issue directions for the management of a suspected case of nCoV which are legally required to be followed.

Is there information available for passengers and crew?

The Australian Government Department of Health is providing additional communication material for travellers (including passengers and crew) at all Australian international airports and seaports. This material informs travellers about 2019-nCoV and what to do if they have come from a risk area and are unwell. The information sheets are updated as significant developments take place and are also available at <https://www.health.gov.au/information-about-novel-coronavirus>.

How can I reduce the risk to passengers and crew?

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

While the infection does not currently appear to spread easily between people, the following measures will also help reduce the risk of spread:

- Crew and passengers should be encouraged to practise frequent handwashing.
- Where possible, crew should stay 1 metre or more away from passengers who are ill unless wearing appropriate PPE.
- Cruise lines should promote good respiratory (cough) etiquette among crew and passengers.
- Cruise ships should undertake appropriate cleaning and disinfection activities.
- Cruise ships should promote the use of appropriate PPE for crew if close contact with an ill passenger is required (e.g. for medical personnel).
- Follow the [interim Australian guidelines for nCoV](#) where appropriate.

Other information

While 2019-nCoV is of concern, it is important to remember that it is currently influenza season in the northern hemisphere. It is likely that the majority of travellers displaying infectious symptoms have a common respiratory infection, rather than 2019-nCoV. However 2019-nCoV vigilance is important.

The Australian Department of Health is closely monitoring the 2019-nCoV situation in collaboration with the World Health Organization and Australian states and territories. Up to date information on 2019-nCoV is available at www.health.gov.au.

If you require advice for the management of suspected cases of 2019-nCoV, contact the nearest [Australian state or territory health department](#).