



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Inspections and Compliance Directorate
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Ebola Virus Precautions – Update

The purpose of this Bulletin is to provide an update to the maritime industry with respect to assessing Ebola risks and the responsibility of vessel/facility agents, owners, masters, operators, Area Maritime Security Committee members, and persons to immediately report potential communicable disease hazards to the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The USCG continues to monitor the threat and work to prevent the possible waterborne entry or spread of the virus via U.S. ports. An Ebola Crisis Action Team has been stood up at USCG Headquarters and is conducting a comprehensive review of USCG policy to provide clarifying guidance to port stakeholders, and they will release additional guidance as necessary. Also, guidance from the CDC continues to evolve and updates will be available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola>.

Timely reporting of suspected EVD incidents is paramount. Any suspected Ebola case in the maritime environment will be considered an incident of significant national interest, so timely notification to the CDC and the USCG is vitally important, and will help ensure the most appropriate coordination between the CDC, USCG, and other federal, state, and local agencies.

Some key points to remember concerning Ebola:

- Symptoms include fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal (stomach) pain and unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising). Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola, but the average is 8 to 10 days. More information can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/symptoms/index.html>.
- Individuals could be infected if they came into contact with blood or body fluids from someone who is infected with or have died from Ebola, sick wildlife, or meat products from an infected animal. Health care providers caring for Ebola affected individuals and family and friends in close contact with an ill person are at the highest risk because of the increased potential for contact with infected blood or body fluids.
- If you were in an area with an Ebola outbreak, you should follow the CDC Guidance following any potential exposure and especially if you were in contact with blood or body fluids, items that have come in contact with blood or body fluids, animals or raw meat, or hospitals, where Ebola affected individuals were being treated.

Vessel/facility owner/operators, and local stakeholders, should be aware of the following:

- Vessel representatives are reminded that 33 CFR 160.215 requires the owner, agent, master, operator, or person in charge of a vessel to immediately notify the nearest Coast Guard Sector whenever there is a

hazardous condition aboard the vessel. An ill person on board, especially one displaying the symptoms listed above, may constitute a hazardous condition and should be reported. Facilities that encounter similar conditions are strongly recommended to report this to the Coast Guard.

- Vessel representatives are also reminded that they are required to report sick or deceased crew or passengers within the last 15 days to the CDC under 42 CFR 71.21. Regional CDC quarantine station points of contact can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/QuarantineStationContactListFull.html>, and the required forms can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cargo/reporting-deaths-illness/index.html>, and <http://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/federal-regulations-reporting-illness-death-ships-destined-united-states.html>.
- The Coast Guard will continue to review all Notice of Arrivals to determine if a vessel has visited a country impacted by an Ebola virus outbreak within its last five ports of call. Local Coast Guard Sector personnel may reach out to ship's agents of those vessels that have visited one of these countries, to affirm their understanding of the reporting requirements outlined in both 42 CFR 71.21 and 33 CFR 160.215.
- For vessels that have visited a country impacted by Ebola within its last five ports of call, a vessel's owner or operator is highly encouraged to determine how long each individual crew member has been on that vessel. This should include whether or not the crew member visited countries currently impacted by Ebola within the 21 days prior to embarkation. While this information is not required under current Coast Guard regulations, having reliable data available to document this history will help reassure the public and port stakeholders and facilitate cargo operations.
- It is recommended that local industry stakeholders, in collaboration with their Coast Guard Captain of the Port do the following:
 - Continue to review and be familiar with section 5310 Procedures for Vessel Quarantine and Isolation, and Section 5320 Procedures for security segregation of Vessels in their Area Maritime Security Plan.
 - Continue to review and be familiar with their Marine Transportation System Recovery Plan.
 - Consider conducting a table top exercise to plan and address items such as an evaluation of how to handle a vessel arrival with a suspected Ebola case (allow to berth?, keep it at anchorage?, etc.), what steps need to be considered if a medical evacuation is needed, and, possibly how a ship would be decontaminated in order to commence cargo transfers? Please keep in mind that this is not an all inclusive list. These are just a couple examples to start with. It is recommended that the COTP and local industry stakeholders go through other scenarios as they see fit.

Lastly, the CDC has issued travel warnings and we strongly recommend that personnel traveling to those affected countries review travel alerts issued by the CDC prior to their arrival. **Travel alert information can be found at:** <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices>.

Questions regarding this should be forwarded to the Coast Guard Office of Commercial Vessel Compliance, Foreign and Offshore Vessel Division (CG-CVC-2) at **202-372-1218** or by email at CGCVC@uscg.mil. Port and Facility questions regarding this MSIB should be forwarded to the Office of Port and Facility Compliance (CG-FAC) at **202-372-1171/1107** or by email at CGFAC@uscg.mil.

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