



# SHIP SAFETY BULLETIN

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**Subject: UPDATED GUIDELINES RESPECTING THE MOBILITY OF ASYMPTOMATIC, PRESUMED NON-COVID-19-CARRYING\* SEAFARERS IN THE MARINE SECTOR DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**This bulletin replaces Ship Safety Bulletin No. [02/2022](#)**

## *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.

## **Keywords:**

1. Coronavirus
2. Essential services
3. Mobility

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## ***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 \(Prohibition of Entry into Canada\)](#); and
- 2) [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Quarantine, Isolation and Other Obligations\)](#)

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<sup>1</sup> traveller to enter Canada, although the preference is for all travellers be fully vaccinated.

Note that **travellers CANNOT 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 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 breathing difficulties,
- 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 breathing difficulties, 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 February 28, 2022, an Order made under the [Aeronautics Act](#) entitled [Interim Order Respecting Certain Requirements for Civil Aviation Due to COVID-19](#), requires most individuals, when departing outbound from Canada to be a fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> traveller. Unvaccinated foreign nationals, including seafarers, can still board an outbound flight as long as they provide a pre-departure COVID-19 molecular test or evidence of a COVID-19 antigen test result:

- If the result for a COVID-19 molecular test is **negative**, it must be dated within 72 hours of the traveller's initial scheduled departure time.
- If the result for a COVID-19 antigen test is **negative**, it must have been performed no more than one day before the traveller's initial scheduled departure time.
- If the test result for a COVID-19 molecular test is **positive**, it must be dated **at least** 10 days before but **not more** than 180 days prior to the traveller's scheduled departure time (e.g., the traveller would be eligible to travel on day 11 after their test was administered, since 10 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](#).

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<sup>1</sup> **Definition of fully vaccinated:** Vaccines accepted by the Government of Canada for the purpose of travel to and within Canada:

- AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD (ChAdOx1-S, Vaxzevria, AZD1222)
- Bharat Biotech (Covaxin, BBV152 A, B, C)
- Janssen/Johnson & Johnson
- Moderna (mRNA-1273)
- Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty, tozinameran, BNT162b2)
- Sinopharm BIBP (BBIBP-CorV)
- Sinovac (CoronaVac, PiCoVacc)

To qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller, you must have received, at least 14 calendar days by the day you travel:

- at least 2 doses of a vaccine accepted by the Government of Canada for the purpose of travel
- or a mix of 2 accepted vaccines
- or at least 1 dose of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine

Travellers can receive their vaccine in any country, and must provide documentation supporting their vaccination in English, French or with a **certified translation** in English or French. 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](#).

## **Domestic crew changes**

An Interim Order made under the [Canada Shipping Act, 2001](#), entitled [Interim Order No. 2 Respecting Vessel Restrictions and Vaccination Requirements Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) prohibits the operation of any Canadian vessel that either operates, or is part of a fleet of vessels containing at least one vessel that operates, with 12 or more crew on board, unless certain requirements in the Interim Order are met, namely:

- For any persons, other than a passenger, onboard to
  - be fully vaccinated, unless they provide evidence that they are unable to be vaccinated due to a medical contraindication or sincere religious reasons;
  - for any persons, other than a passenger, who are not fully vaccinated to provide the following to the vessel's Authorized Representative prior to boarding the vessel:
    - A negative COVID-19 test result that was performed no more than 72 hours prior to the person boarding the vessel; or
    - A positive COVID-19 test result that was performed at least 10 days, but no more than 180 days, prior to the person boarding the vessel; and
  - for the vessel's Authorized representatives to have developed and implemented a vaccination policy outlining vaccination requirements for persons, other than a passenger, onboard the vessel, as well as other measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

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 self-isolate for the duration and manner specified by the applicable local health authority.

## **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, and
  - who meet the Government of Canada requirements for a fully vaccinated traveller may extend shore leave beyond six hours in length, per interval.

**Shore leave for seafarers onboard Canadian vessels making domestic voyages**

Authorized representatives are encouraged to leverage their established Workplace Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative to determine appropriate shore leave measures that take into consideration the unique operating environment of the vessel to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 while maintaining operations.

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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;
- a person who is re-entering Canada after having left to participate in mandatory training in relation to the operation of a conveyance and who is required by their employer to return to work as a crew member on a conveyance within the 14-day period that begins on the day on which they return to Canada; and,
- a person or any member of a class of persons for whom the release from the requirements to quarantine, as determined by the Minister of Health, is in the national interest, if the person complies with all conditions imposed on them by the Minister of Health to minimize the risk of introduction or spread of COVID-19.

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.

Unless the person is subject to provincial or local public health orders that are inconsistent with the requirements imposed on them under the [Quarantine Act](#),

**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](#)**,
  - Symptoms of COVID-19 can vary:
    - from person to person
    - in different age groups
    - depending on the COVID-19 variant
  - Some of the more commonly reported symptoms include:
    - sore throat
    - runny nose
    - sneezing
    - new or worsening cough
    - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - temperature equal to or more than 38°C
    - feeling feverish
    - chills
    - fatigue or weakness
    - muscle or body aches
    - new loss of smell or taste
    - headache
    - 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.