

In the context of the prevention of infection with the COVID-19 ('Corona') virus, the government of The Netherlands (RIVM) has drawn up a number of policies and measures. These are in effect and also applicable to seagoing vessels. This document adapts these policies and measures for implementation on board ships.

### General-summary:

- Human-to-human transmission via direct droplet infection only (coughing and sneezing), no airborne transmission
- Incubation time: 2-14 days (average 5-6 days)
- Symptoms: varies from mild respiratory symptoms with fever to severe pneumonia and shortness of breath
- There is no evidence that indirect transmission via objects such as toilets, door handles, cutlery, hand contact points, food, etc. play a (substantial) part in the spread of the disease
- Exact data on the infectious period is missing. In any case, a patient is contagious during the symptomatic phase (if he/she shows symptoms of disease)
- The current case definition: a person with: **fever (at least 38 degrees Celsius) AND at least one of the following respiratory symptoms: coughing, shortness of breath**
- Actual info at:  
<https://lci.rivm.nl/richtlijnen/covid-19>

### Translation into the situation at sea:

- Basically, seafarers are healthy people (holding a medical certificate declaring them fit for duty) without serious underlying conditions. The risk of serious complications in seafarers is therefore limited
- Crew changes can be a potential source of contamination
- In case a seafarer is suffering **from either coughing or sneezing or fever**, he should be isolated in his cabin. If he shares a cabin with others, another solution must be found so that he resides by himself in a confined space
- Severe cases (apart from coughing, sneezing or fever **also** severe general illness and shortness of breath) should be submitted to a Radio Medical Service (TMAS/RMA)
- Personal protection measures such as the use of a mouth-nose mask, splash glasses and plastic apron are, analogous to the advice for care staff, only necessary for seafarers who are required to provide medical care to potentially infected people on board
- In the Netherlands, the MDoH is used to report any infectious diseases to the authorities. In some countries flying the yellow (quarantine) flag is mandatory. This is not a requirement in The Netherlands
- All ships are required to timely file a full and correct MDoH. Please state clearly:
  - any relevant complaints or medical symptoms of any crewmember (see definition)
  - any measures already taken/implemented on board (like isolation)
  - if a Radio Medical Service has been contacted and why (TMAS/RMA)

- If a MDoH has been filed timely, a ship can sail to any NL port
- As soon as a ship has submitted a MDoH and has been assessed by the GGD (Municipal/Port Health Authority), the captain will be notified whether additional measures are needed
- Passenger ships with potential Corona cases must contact the Rotterdam Port Health Authority as soon as possible (see below)
- If a ship still flies a yellow flag, the Port Coordination Centre must be notified (0031 10 252 1000 or VHF channel 11)
- Latest info on:  
<https://www.portofrotterdam.com/nl/scheepvaart/port-health-authority>

**Prevention and additional information:**

- Because Covid-19 is distributed mainly through drops but also through hands, general hygiene measures such as hand washing, hygiene when preparing food and beverages, sneeze/cough hygiene etc., will be useful to prevent transmission and reduce the epidemic. These measures will not completely prevent getting infected by COVID-19
- Practically, this means:
  - Wash your hands regularly
  - Cough and sneeze in the inside of your elbow
  - Use paper handkerchiefs and discard them immediately after single use
  - Touch your nose, mouth and face as little as possible.
  - Don't shake hands
- Additional detailed info on Corona from IMO, WHO and IMHA:  
[https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6](https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-(covid-19)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6)