



Ghana withdraws Directive imposing fines on ships with unvaccinated personnel

The Directive announcing that fines will be levied on vessels arriving in Ghanaian ports with crew or passengers not vaccinated against COVID-19 has now been withdrawn.

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Early in January 2022, our local correspondent, Sheringham P&I Services, advised that Ghana Port Health Service will levy a fine of USD 3,500 on any vessel arriving with crew or passengers not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The directive was initially due to be implemented from 15 January 2022 onwards. Following the announcement, authorities decided to allow a grace period until February 2022 to allow owners sufficient time to vaccinate their crew. According to the latest information received, this Directive has been withdrawn and vessels will not be fined if they arrive with unvaccinated crew. The Circular withdrawing the Directive can be accessed type: asset-hyperlink id: eae5d1184b6c4008abb3c9c64ee6e2d5.

Will unvaccinated personnel be vaccinated in port?

It remains to be seen if Ghana authorities will still require all unvaccinated personnel onboard arriving vessels to be vaccinated by local health authority prior to the vessel's departure. If yes, vessels may face delays as a result. We have been advised by our correspondent that free pratique will not be withheld if vessels arrive with unvaccinated personnel onboard.

Which vaccines are recognized by Ghanaian officials?

Any vaccine that is approved by either the [World Health Organization](#) or the [Ghana Food and Drug Authority](#) will be accepted by Ghanaian officials. Given that the list of vaccines approved by the WHO and local State's FDA may vary, having the crew vaccinated with any of the WHO approved vaccines would be beneficial for both owners and charterers as they are likely to have a larger acceptance in different ports worldwide.

Are on-signers required to be vaccinated?

We have been informed that all unvaccinated on-signing crew will be vaccinated upon arrival unless they have valid medical grounds allowing them to be exempt. Such a situation is however unlikely to arise as all passengers entering Ghana by air will in any case need to be fully vaccinated according to the "Covid-19 Protocol for International Travelers" issued by the Ghana Health Service on 9 December 2021. It is also worth highlighting that in December 2021 Ghana announced that airlines arriving in Ghana with passengers not fully vaccinated will be fined. Airlines will also, therefore, check for proof of vaccination prior to embarkation.

P&I cover

Members should refer to the FAQ prepared by the International Group of P&I Clubs (IG P&I) which provides guidance on the P&I insurance cover in relation to vaccination of seafarers. This document is available type: asset-hyperlink id: d2069d16d69040e883784140bb3dffab.

Members should also refer to ["Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Legal, Liability and Insurance Issues arising from Vaccination of Seafarers"](#) by the International Chamber of Shipping for other queries related to the vaccination of seafarers. The question whether the crew can be compelled to be vaccinated is also addressed in the aforementioned publication.

We recommend owners whose vessels are planning to call ports in Ghana to check the vaccination status of all crew and if there are any unvaccinated crew onboard to seek early guidance from their appointed local agents.

We would like to thank BUDD Group and our correspondent Sheringham P&I Services for their contribution to this alert.