



New COVID-19 guidelines focus on safe interface between ship and shore staff

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the global population, it is important that ships' crew and port workers protect each other from being exposed to the virus.

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The International Group of P&I Clubs, in partnership with other shipping industry organisations, has released the [COVID-19 Related Guidelines for Ensuring a Safe Shipboard Interface Between Ship and Shore Based Personnel](#). The aim of the guidelines is to address major concerns and expectations of both ship and shore-based personnel through the implementation of practical, risk-based measures to address COVID-19 risks to all personnel involved in the ship/shore interface.

Strategies and requirements to manage risks related to COVID-19 differs from one country to another as well as between companies. Planning ahead is therefore key and the guidelines emphasise the importance of timely communication and exchange of health advice and requirements between ship and shore personnel. Ship operators and their agents are advised to, well in advance of a port call, communicate with all their anticipated service providers and port officials expected to attend on board and agree on a set of common procedures and measures that will reduce, control and manage the risks to *all* personnel from COVID-19.

As elimination of the hazard is the best way of reducing the risks, the parties involved are encouraged to always consider alternative and safer methods to undertake specific tasks, e.g. is it possible to carry out a remote audit or survey? Or to postpone an inspection? However, in those instances where attendance onboard a ship is unavoidable, the following simple steps and precautions are recommended:

- Minimise the number of persons attending.
- Use outer walkways rather than access through the crew accommodation.
- Limit time inside crew accommodation to the absolute minimum necessary to perform duties onboard.
- Maintain social distancing – preferably 2 meters but at least 1 meter apart and limit interaction with crew members to those involved in performance of duties onboard.
- Do not shake hands, use a wave, a nod or a bow.
- Frequently clean your hands with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Provide sanitising stations at appropriate locations, e.g. the ship's gangway, entry points to accommodation, the bridge, control rooms.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth.
- If wearing a face mask, ensure it covers your mouth and nose.
- Do not touch a face mask once it is on.
- Immediately safely discard single-use masks after each use.
- Clean your hands after removing masks.

As a means to limit further transmission, ship and shore based personnel that develop COVID-19 symptoms during the 14 days following a ship visit are urged to contact those that may have been infected (close contacts) and disclose this information.

Members and clients are advised to take note of the above information and be guided accordingly.

Please go to our [COVID-19 hot-topic page](#) for a compilation of links to relevant websites, guidelines, and Gard material that may assist ship operators, masters and crews to stay alert

and prepare and respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.