



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

Commandant
U.S. Coast Guard
Inspections and Compliance Directorate
2703 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE, STOP 7501
Washington, DC 20593-7501

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E-Mail: OutbreakQuestions@uscg.mil

Vessel Reporting Requirements for Illness or Death

An outbreak of respiratory illness caused by novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting mariners and maritime commerce. This MSIB serves as a reminder that the illness of persons on board a vessel must be reported to both the Coast Guard and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Reporting delays create significant challenges to protect persons on board vessels and, more broadly, maintain an effective Marine Transportation System. Vessels or masters that do not immediately report illness or death among passengers or crew may face delays and disruption to passenger and cargo operations including a requirement to return to the previous port after sailing. Additionally, vessels and masters are subject to Coast Guard enforcement action, which include civil penalties, vessel detentions, and criminal liability.

Illness of a person onboard a vessel that may adversely affect the safety of a vessel or port is a hazardous condition per 33 CFR 160.216 and the owner, agent, master, operator, or person in charge **must immediately** notify the nearest Coast Guard Captain of the Port (COTP). It is critical to report persons who exhibit symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or other illness to the COTP.

42 CFR 71.1 defines an ill person onboard a vessels as one that has:

(A) Fever (has a measured temperature of 100.4 °F [38 °C] or greater; or feels warm to the touch; or gives a history of feeling feverish) accompanied by one or more of the following:

- skin rash,
- **difficulty breathing** or suspected or confirmed pneumonia,
- **persistent cough** or cough with bloody sputum,
- decreased consciousness or confusion of recent onset,
- new unexplained bruising or bleeding (without previous injury),
- persistent vomiting (other than sea sickness)
- headache with stiff neck;

(B) Fever that has persisted for more than 48 hours;

(C) Acute gastroenteritis, which means either:

- diarrhea, defined as three or more episodes of loose stools in a 24-hour period or what is above normal for the individual, or
- vomiting accompanied by one or more of the following: one or more episodes of loose stools in a 24-hour period, abdominal cramps, headache, muscle aches, or fever (temperature of 100.4 °F [38 °C] or greater);

Additionally, as required by [42 CFR 71.21](#), the master of a ship destined for a U.S. port shall report *immediately* to the quarantine station at or nearest the port at which the ship will arrive, the occurrence, on board, of any death or any ill person among passengers or crew (including those who have disembarked or have been removed) during the 15-day period preceding the date of expected arrival or during the period since departure from a U.S. port (whichever period of time is shorter). Guidance and forms to report deaths and illnesses to the CDC can be found at: <https://go.usa.gov/xdjnj>.

Richard Timme, RDML, U.S. Coast Guard, Assistant Commandant for Prevention Policy sends.