

NOTICE: International Maritime Health Association issues advice on new coronavirus

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The International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) has issued advice for shipping companies on the new type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

The virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China in December 2019. All cases in Wuhan were connected to the 'Huanan Seafood Market'. The source of infection is clear but human-to-human transmission is possible.

Signs and symptoms of 2019-nCoV sickness:

- Fever
- Acute respiratory symptoms (cough, breathing problems, pneumonia)
- Average time from infection to disease: 7 days
- Infection from humans-to-humans may occur during incubation period (before persons shows signs of sickness)

Cases have been exported from Wuhan to other Chinese provinces and to Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, USA, France and Australia. Further global spread to other countries is possible.

The Chinese authorities have installed travel restrictions in the affected areas in China. Health measures such as fever measurements are installed at Chinese airports, bus and train stations and at ports.

Currently, the World Health Organization (WHO) does not recommend travel restrictions. IMHA advises people to follow up what local authorities recommend and stay up to date on the latest advice from WHO:

How to protect yourself from getting infected with 2019-nCoV

- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider;
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

Specific advice to shipping crew and companies (as of January 26, 2020)

- Do not restrict embarkation/disembarkation of seafarers in non-affected ports
- Do not restrict necessary ship visits by port agents, chaplains, service personnel and others
- Do not visit food markets in China. Avoid provision of fish and poultry in China
- Do not consume raw eggs, milk, meat
- For galley: Observe strict food hygiene to avoid cross-contamination

- Store facial protection for all crew (5 pieces per person)
- Provide influenza vaccination, alcohol-based hand rub and facial protection to ship inspector and other company employees who travel to China
- If a person on board falls sick AND has been travelling to affected areas 2-12 days before embarkation, the person must stay in his cabin. Consult a Medical Doctor in the next port
- If a sick person is on board of the ship, fill the Maritime Declaration of Health and notify port authority
- Further information: www.who.int



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