

CORRESPONDENT'S ADVICE

INDIA

ENNORE - KATTUPALLI - KARAIKAL -
KATTUPALLI PORT - CHENNAI (EX MADRAS)

08 DEC 2021

COVID-19, Omicron variant

The following information was received from our correspondent on 8 December:

QUOTE

Please find attached guidelines issued by PHO Chennai for all ships arriving Chennai, Ennore, Kattupalli and Karaikal port.

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In view of the Omicron alert as variant of concern as declared by WHO and the possible high transmissibility of this variant of COVID-19, the Min. of Health & Family Welfare has given guidelines for Ports to be under strict vigil.

The ships will be under strict pre-arrival scrutiny for planning the inspection of the ships with 3 scenarios coming to our ports will be considered as high risk category ships (AS GIVEN IN THE CIRCULAR). These ships will be cleared for port operations with strict compliance of all the Officials, Stevedores following the PHO instructions of PPE, Minimal/essential numbers only on port operations, by ensuring the non-contact port operations SOPs for all type of ship cargo operations. If the existing SOPs are followed strictly the chance of spread of COVID-19 omicron variant of concern, can be prevented and Port operations can go unhindered and smoothly.

As we have the omicron variant of concern cases being reported in India too and may increase in the coming days here; its also very important to prevent the spread of same to ship crew too, so the strict PPE use, COVID-19 Appropriate behavior, prevent unauthorised visitors, adequate Hand disinfection facilities, toilet facilities, cleanliness, water availability are all followed at Jetties, Port areas, IEC circulated to all



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again to continue the learned COVID-19 appropriate behavior & protocols. The Port and Port users are advised to check again departments concerned in port operations viz, Pilots, Tugs, Mooring Crew, Crane Operators, Dock Labour staff, Agents in boarding, stevedores team head, surveyors, other Port departments, Port Users, CHAs are asked to follow on PPE stocks, proper use/disposal by them, the COVID-19 Vaccination status and encouraged to complete the schedule if incomplete.

Crew Changes will have to follow the same SOP very strictly as they will be followed for new strain among crew who may become positive on Sign off. Sign On crew are to follow the new entry guidelines of India and at risk countries crew after joining will not be able to recheck RT PCR on 8th day so they have to follow the Crew Isolation for 7 days & Crew Changes SOP very strictly for 14 days with proper PPE. If the ships have Antigen testing facilities they may check on 8th day and follow the crew changes SOP, PPE use, COVID-19 SOP for early detection of symptoms and isolation, treatment plans of their Company, reach nearest Port for assistance.

Immigration Rules to be followed and ensure back up plans on the possibilities of the sign on crew catching infection and possible longer stay in India also if they become positive. Try to follow the travel plan to sign on the day of sailing as much as possible and have greater transit visa time. Ask them to follow strict PPE/face shield use/Hand sanitizer during travel. Ensure the crew are follow the travel SOP on single vehicle/ big vehicle with separate entry for driver/crew, non-interaction with driver/others till they reach hotel quarantine and until joining the vessel.

Ships must be stocked with PPE as per SOP-8 well before their arrival.

All the non essential ship inspections, repairs work are to be avoided for time being till we have more clear picture on the variant, if the visitors follow the SOP for any work on board greater than 1 hour we can ensure the safe essential inspections also.

Its our endeavor to assist the smooth Port operations and also ensuring the health of Crew, Pilot, Agents, Authorities, Stevedores, essential services visitors. Kindly follow the same SOPs strictly which will ensure no spread of infection even if this variant takes foothold, as we have been practicing for the past 2 years. I have recently started noticing among us there is a slight non compliance of Covid appropriate behavior and overconfidence on the reduced infection levels in community. Now is the time not to loosen our guard as we are better placed with good vaccination and lesser community infection to prevent this new variant becoming dominant in transmission of COVID-19.

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UNQUOTE



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DATED: -04.12.2021

-C I R C U L A R-

This Office has been ensuring the safe Port operations for all the ships calling in Chennai, Ennore, Kattupalli, Karaikal from the time the PHEIC was notified in 30th January 2020. The Ship visitors who are entering the ship for Port Operations are only Agent, Customs and Immigration Officers. All the Stevedores, Surveyors involved in the operations are already following very strict non-contact Port operations with no one allowed to communicate with the ship crew or enter the ship accommodation. All their interactions are only done through VHF, Email as per SOPs.

In view of **omicron variant of concern alert**, the Ports are also under alert for the same. The ships who have following scenarios will be under strict pre-arrival scrutiny for berthing and screening, Port operations.

- Ships coming from or crew of any nationalities joining in “**at risk**” countries & coming to our ports within 14 days.
- Ships with crew of the “**at risk countries**” nationals signing on the ship from any parts of the world & ship coming within 14 days.
- Ship crew who has joined a ship without any RT PCR tests coming within 14 days will be tested on arrival (so ensure all sign on crew are tested with RT-PCR reports before joining).

All such ship's crew are to follow the Crew Changes SOP and practice isolation for first 7 days of joining or in the event of emergencies alone/ individual station duties are allowed to work with PPE.

After PHO clearance the **Pilot** have to use full PPE, N95 during berthing.

PHO Screening will ensure the health status of the crew and cleared for safe Port operations or Control measures/Testing if any suspect is identified among the crew.

All officials will be in full PPE and only open place meeting or Bridge meeting area will be allowed. **Stevedores** are to follow the non-contact SOP very strictly & Agent to ensure it with all of them.

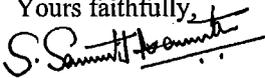
Crew who are under **above scenarios** will be under isolation till 7 days completion, during Port operations and if they are needed for any essential Port operations, will be permitted by PHO after screening, advice with full PPE. COVID-19 SOP 8 adequacies must be checked before arrival.

Crew Changes: - **Sign Off** procedures will be same and Positive crew will also undergo genome sequencing, will follow the protocol as per Government guidelines for omicron suspect.

Sign On crew from at risk countries after clearance to join are to be under self-isolation, not involve in Port operations, practice crew changes SOP for 2 weeks and first 7 days with more strict restriction on need-based work only. Sign On crew from at risk countries to have travel plans to join the ship on the day of sailing or can join same day if there are facilities for isolation on ship and safe Port operations is possible by old crew.

Cruise Passenger Vessels SOP and instructions will be given when such calls are made in Port. PPE use and ensure strict COVID appropriate behavior & facilities by all in and out of port areas. Keep in touch for any assistance.



Yours faithfully,

(Dr.S. Senthilnathan)
Port Health Officer,
Chennai.

At Risk countries update will be added as per this list link dynamically.

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/ListofCountriestobereferredtoincontextofGuidelinesforinternationalarrivalsdated28thNovember2021updatedon30112021.pdf>

Guidelines of International Arrivals, 30.11.2021

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember2021.pdf>

All the SOPs for safe port operations, PPE/Disinfection/Screening/Safe disposal has already been shared.

CC To: - The Commissioner of Customs, Chennai

The FRRO, AFFRO, Immigration Officer, Chennai, Kattupalli seaports.

The Chairman of CPT, The CMD, KPL, The GM, AKKPL, The Principal Officer of MMD, The President CHENSAA, The President, CHA & Stevedores

Association Chennai, Ennore, Kattupalli.