

EBOLA VIRUS
STOWAWAY UPDATE No. 2 AND CREW ISSUES
SOUTH AFRICA

We recently sent out a loss prevention notice following a “scare” on a vessel carrying stowaways that arrived in South Africa. We are pleased to report that the vessel was not quarantined as we pushed to have the stowaways checked and blood samples drawn in order to avoid any delays to the vessel.

Since the incident, we have been speaking to Port and Immigration authorities as well as liaising with the South African Association of Ships Agents as numerous vessels call at South Africa after discharging cargoes or receiving cargoes in West Africa.

Cape Town, for example, is a common port for removing injured or sick crewmembers or for removing an repatriating stowaways. As a result of the Ebola Virus and the number of vessels calling at South African ports, Transnet National Ports Authority as now issued the following guidelines which will be applicable for all ports. Please can claims handlers and members note the sections in bold:

MEMORANDUM: HARBOUR MASTER WRITTEN INSTRUCTION (01) of 2014

1. BACKGROUND

There has been an increase in the number of World Health Organisation warnings with regards to Communicable Disease outbreak in West African Countries. As a result the Authority feels it will be prudent to implement measure to safe guard our Ports against the exposure to the threat posed by those visiting vessels.

2. PROCEDURE

The following procedure has been developed to prevent the spread of any contagious disease. The quarantine period will be confirmed by Port Health based on their assessment

*2.1. Prior to boarding a vessel call up Port Control and confirm Free Pratique has been received and also **enquire about last three ports of call**. Security to also check with ISPS pre-arrival notification.*

*2.2. Upon boarding confirm **Health Status of crew with Master**.*

2.3. For high risk vessels (that is vessels that have been to West Africa or where the ship has a West African connection) ensure that you are wearing face mask and hand gloves.

2.4. For the warning period all South African Citizens are to refrain from consuming foods or liquids on board vessels from high risk areas. Gifts involving foods should also not be accepted.

*2.5. **All off port limit crew transfers from affected areas to be carefully screened - no crew to be taken off a vessel without Port Health clearance.***

*2.6. **Port health declaration also required for all Off Port Limit transfers.***

2.7. All medical evacuations from vessels from affected areas need to be screened by Port Health before person taken off vessel.

*2.8. **Captain of the vessel to confirm in writing stowaway sweep was done when departing last port - Stowaway search may be requested to be done when alongside***

at vessels cost using stowaway sweeper companies whose members have undergone training and /or awareness on Ebola Virus Disease.

2.9. Security to inform Port Control of any reported stowaways from vessels calling from affected areas - if reported vessel to remain at anchor until cleared by Port Health for entry or advised otherwise.

2.10. All masters of vessels must report stowaways on his vessel if calling from affected area - vessel to remain at anchor until stowaways examined & cleared by Port Health or otherwise advised

2.11. Strict gangway watches to be maintained at all times.

2.12. All members involved in evacuation of infected crew or stowaways must be trained by Port Health on Ebola Virus.

2.13. Separate lists of vessels calling from Ebola affected areas are to be maintained for record purposes.

2.14. All galley waste of vessels from affected areas to be incinerated and not accepted ashore.

2.15. Additional Security to be deployed by Agent of vessel for contaminated vessels and no one must be allowed on board a contaminated vessel except Port Health and only after clearance can anyone be permitted to enter the vessel.

2.16. If possible contaminated vessels should be allocated an isolated berth away from other vessels.

3. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF INFECTED PERSONS:

3.1. Symptoms include high fever, bleeding and central nervous system damage. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, and in some cases bleeding.

4. PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO PREVENT INFECTION AND SPREAD OF VIRUS:

4.1. Wear face mask and hand gloves

4.2. Leave on gloves when shaking hands with vessel crew from affected areas

4.3. Sanitise hands frequently

4.4. Avoid contact with people showing signs and symptoms indicated above

4.5. Avoid consuming foods and other products.

4.6. Do not utilise the facilities on board.

4.7. Do not make contact with bodily fluids.

For further clarification, please contact the Harbour Master's or Marine Services' and Human Environment Departments.

In our previous notice we provided the advice from the WHO on symptoms of the virus as well as preventative measures which crews can take to safe guard themselves against infection.

It is therefore imperative that vessels arriving in the hotspot region must have preventative measures in place so that the virus does not infect the crew and the cause the ship and crew

to be quarantined at subsequent ports. For example, no stores or provisions to be taken on board and the crew should remain on board throughout the port stay. All visitors to the ship should be screened.

As you can see from the above, ships coming from West Africa and then calling at South African ports are going to be screened and checked prior to berthing and therefore members trading in West Africa, especially liner and feeder vessels in the container trade must expect delays.

If members have any questions then they must not hesitate to contact me or any of the P&I Associates team who handle crew and stowaway matters.

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