

LOSS PREVENTION
EBOLA VIRUS AND STOWAWAYS
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P&I ASSOCIATES (PTY) LTD

We have just been made aware of a new case involving stowaways that boarded a vessel in West Africa.

The vessel arrived in South Africa with 6 stowaways on board and the vessel was not allowed to berth because local health authorities were concerned about the identity of the stowaways and their nationality and whether the stowaways could be infected with the Ebola virus.

No doubt all international group P&I clubs have advised their members of the Ebola outbreak and the precautions that should be taken by vessels when calling at West African ports. The vessels will be boarded by numerous people who could have come into contact with people with the virus. No doubt vessels are adopting safeguards to protect the crew from such exposure to the virus.

We attach a useful guide which we received on the virus which has been distributed around our offices.

Vessels calling at West African ports also need to exercise greater diligence with regard to stowaways gaining access to the vessel and should the vessel then depart with stowaways on board, the vessel may be delayed or detained at her next port whilst local health officials check all the individuals on board.

The vessels may be further delayed if there are stowaways on board the vessel as local health officials will want a full investigation carried out as to the nationality of the stowaways and whether they are from areas which have been declared hotspots by the World Health Organization.



South Africa does not as yet seem prepared for this virus and the country is quickly trying to address the situation by putting procedures and methods in place to test for the virus. Accordingly ship owners must expect delays on berthing or obtaining health clearance until the stowaways have been properly vetted by immigration and health officials.

No stowaway can be landed in South Africa unless the stowaway has a valid passport or travel document and these often take time to arrange.

Our stowaway questionnaire must be properly completed and as much information as possible be obtained from the stowaway. Authorities will not accept incomplete questionnaire in order to obtain an emergency travel document.

We will keep you advised on local developments as they occur.

If the club or its members have any queries on the subject then please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the P&I Associates stowaway team.

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