

## Executive Summary



The UK Chamber of Shipping in partnership with key stakeholders has produced three framework documents which identify, measure and provide recommendations on the resumption of cruise ship operations from the UK in the context of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The three documents focus on operators, the management of seafarers and advice for passengers prior to going on a cruise.

All three documents have been built on the basis of identifying potential risks which could increase the spread of COVID-19, and the subsequent mitigations which should be put in place to reduce that risk. This has been done using existing shore-side UK Government guidance as well as guidance from the European Centre for Disease Control, the European Maritime EMSA, EU Healthy Gateways and the IMO.

### **Framework for UK Cruise Operations during COVID-19 for operators**

This framework document focuses on the COVID-19 management plans operators must have in place to ensure that upon their restart, they can actively reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission onboard their vessels.

In this document there is a list of prerequisites which all operators must consider prior to setting sail on their first voyage. An external verification by a third party will be done to ensure the operators' COVID-19 Management Plans meet the standards called for in the framework documents. This includes ensuring that all the existing UK Government shoreside guidance is upheld and that shipboard operations have been reviewed and updated. In addition to this, voyage planning will require the identification of key ports which will play an important role in case of an outbreak onboard a cruise ship. These key ports are strategically located along the voyage, and operators will have arrangements in place with the ports to allow them to disembark passengers or seafarers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and for them to either receive medical assistance or be repatriated home.

The framework documents stress the importance of informing passengers of the changes made to cruising and what they can expect from the moment they book to the moment they disembark. This includes enhanced health screening, changes made at terminals and what to expect onboard the ship and during any shore excursions the passengers may take.

The onboard experience mirrors that of UK Government guidance for a variety of venues on land to ensure passengers and seafarers can be kept as safe as possible throughout the voyage.

Shore excursions, which are a fundamental part of cruising for certain passengers, have been modified to ensure that the safety of passengers and seafarers can be upheld. Operators will not let passengers disembark in countries which are not on the UK's travel corridor list, and shore excursions offered by operators will provide health measures comparable to those onboard the ship. This includes social distancing, mandatory use of face coverings and hand hygiene facilities during excursions.

Upon disembarkation, passengers and seafarers will be expected to follow current UK Government guidelines for entering the country. Prior to arrival in the UK, a Passenger Locator Form must be completed online. It may be used by health authorities to contact passengers in order to verify their location in the country. It will also assist contact tracers in the event that a passenger is confirmed as having COVID-19. Disembarking passengers may be subject to similar requirements when finally disembarking from a cruise ship in other countries or when visiting ports of call.

The framework clearly set outs the requirements which must be in place in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, and if one individual shows symptoms of COVID-19, the contingency plan will come into action. This plan includes retroactive contact tracing to identify any close contacts.

*Measures for response and management of a possible COVID-19 case(s):*

- Pre-identified dedicated isolation and quarantine wards on ship
  - o Quarantine plan for a suspected or confirmed case
  - o Enhanced ventilation systems
- Collaboration with the national authorities
  - o Contact tracing
  - o Quarantine of contacts
  - o Isolation of cases
  - o Potential disembarkation of confirmed COVID-19 case
- Healthcare staff should keep a line list with details for cases
- Discuss with medical staff on board and relevant health authorities on land
- Cleaning and disinfection procedures of contaminated spaces
- Graduated approach to implementing further control measures where required. This may include placing restrictions on services and events, and closing of targeted facilities
- Communication strategy with passengers and seafarers
- Immediately inform the MCA and the FCO Global Response Centre of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case

If operators need to repatriate passengers or seafarers from the ship, the framework sets out what they must do to facilitate this. Operators are responsible for the management and implementation of repatriation of passengers and seafarers. As a part of the voyage planning, operators should have identified and agreed protocols in place with key ports geographically appropriate to the planned itinerary. Repatriation should be done in a timely manner, whilst still providing good medical care and transport connection for the repatriations. The arrangements may include facilitating the docking of the vessel, disembarking of passengers, health screening, quarantining and potential hospitalisation of passengers or seafarers.

**Framework for UK Cruise Operations for the Management of Seafarers during COVID-19**

The purpose of this document is to identify measures and provide recommendations for the management of seafarers on the resumption of cruise ship operations from the UK, in the context of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The framework clearly explains that the selection of crew should not be restricted based on nationality or the place of ordinary residence. Instead it focuses on risk mitigations needed to ensure COVID-19 stays off the ship.

Prior to embarkation, seafarers joining the ship must comply with the health precautions and requirements provided by the IMO, flag state, port state and national authorities. In addition to this, operators have gone further than required within UK legislation, and have decided it prudent to quarantine seafarers upon arrival in the UK. Such seafarers will be permitted to start work upon

completion of the self-isolation period and confirmation of a negative test result towards the end of the self-isolation period. Any individual who tests positive will be required to be referred to the national health authority and self-isolate for 10 days from the date of the positive test.

Prior to embarkation, the operator will instruct and require seafarers to comply with any instructions and procedures from relevant local or national authorities regarding self-isolation or quarantine onboard. The seafarer will be accommodated in a single cabin with private facilities so as not to interact in any way with the general population onboard.

Routine onboard health monitoring for all seafarers can help with early detection of symptomatic COVID-19 cases. In addition to this, and where feasible, periodic PCR testing for COVID-19 may be used at regular intervals to help check there are no asymptomatic seafarer cases onboard.

The framework clearly set outs the requirements which must be in place in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19. Operators have collectively agreed that if one seafarer shows symptoms of COVID-19, the contingency plan will come into action. This plan includes retroactive contact tracing to identify any close contacts.

The framework recommends that in order to limit interaction among seafarers, they should live and work in cohorts. Seafarer cohorts should be based around job type and shift time. Each group may be given scheduled times for food service, domestic and lifestyle activities to minimise interaction between cohorts. Where possible, it is advised that the maximum number of seafarers living in the same cabin should be two. This is particularly important for seafarers where social distancing and interaction cannot be avoided. Cohorting in terms of living arrangements should be maintained with seafarers who are working together.

All seafarers intending to work onboard, as well as external contractors who interact with passengers or seafarers onboard or ashore, should complete training on COVID-19 appropriate to their onboard role. Operators should provide training and instructions to their seafarers regarding the recognition of the signs and symptoms compatible with COVID-19. Seafarers should be reminded of the procedures that should be followed when a passenger or a seafarer displays signs and symptoms indicative of COVID-19. Each seafarer should be trained in their role and responsibilities to implement measures as per the contingency plan.

### **Framework for UK Cruise Operations during COVID-19 for passengers**

This framework document is directed towards passengers. It lays out the changes made to cruising to ensure it is both safe for the passenger as well as the seafarers working onboard the ship.

The document clearly lays out current UK Government advice which all passengers should consider prior to booking a cruise, with an emphasis on following both onshore UK Government guidance as well as foreign travel guidance from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

The framework also sets out the expectations which passengers should have whilst on the cruise. All activities will be in line with current UK Government guidance, and passengers will be expected to act accordingly whilst doing any of the activities onboard the ship.