



An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport

# COVID-19 agreed protocol for International Ro-Ro Passenger Transport Services, Ports & Terminal Service Operators

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# COVID-19 Agreed Protocol for International Ro-Ro Passenger Transport Services, Ports & Terminal Service Operators



## **COVID-19 Agreed Protocol for International Ro-Ro Passenger Ferry Services, Ports & Terminal Service Operators**

The majority of scheduled sailings in and out of Ireland on Ro-Ro passenger ships and other shipping continued during COVID-19 to ensure the continued supply of goods and the carriage of essential workers to critical jobs along with the repatriation of citizens. While shipping remained open, Ro-Ro passenger operators saw reductions in passenger numbers of up to 98% due to the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions by Governments on travel.

This agreed protocol has been put together through collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the shipping industry, ports and the Department of Health on a voluntary basis (list of stakeholders appended). The protocol has due regard to the National Guidance in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and maintain passenger and crew safety. The aim is to ensure a broadly consistent approach to the facilitation by maritime transport providers of a safe restoration of maritime passenger transport as countries lift travel restrictions. The document is aimed at Ro-Ro passenger ships on international services and relevant Irish ports and passenger terminal operators.

Participating Ro-Ro passenger, terminal and port operators have committed to the principles and responsibilities stated in this voluntary protocol. These operators will also promote a culture of collective responsibility for public health safety, involving passengers, staff and crew.

This is a living document which means as Government restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new Government advice and changes to protocols when they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the Government's "[COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery: The Path Ahead](#)" and based on the latest health guidance available from the Department of Health and the HSE. The links to latest guidelines are outlined below.

This protocol is without prejudice to the role and responsibility of the Flag State where the ship is flagged and other relevant guidance issued by other states of embarkation and disembarkation. In all cases, the requirements of the flag state must be followed and the overall layout and arrangements of the ship including the operation must not be changed without the prior approval of the flag state and port state authorities. However, at all times participating operators should be mindful of guidance in place by Irish public health authorities on journeys to Ireland.

It should be noted that this agreed protocol and the advice within does not affect the responsibility of shipping companies and operators to ensure compliance with their obligations under the relevant international conventions and codes and that they remain subject to Flag State and Port State Control.

Flag State surveys and inspections are the responsibility of the flag state of the ship. Port State Control inspections are carried out in Ireland by Port State Control Officers on foreign ships in accordance with the port state control regulatory regime – which include, inter alia, matters relating to living and working conditions of those onboard the vessels and policies and procedures relevant to the operators ISM (International Safety Management) Code.

The vessel's Safety Officer will be assigned responsibility by the operating company for conducting regular audits of COVID-19 measures, and forwarding the outcomes to the vessel's ISM Managers. This would be in line with existing ISM procedures. The COVID-19 measures will also be included in the ISM Managers' Internal Audit process, and it is expected that external ISM auditors acting for the flag state will also verify processes during their audits.

Nothing in this document alters or detracts from Public Health Guidelines and Government restrictions in operation at any given time. The Guidance in this document has been drawn, as appropriate, from the following published Guidance (updated regularly) which should also be referred to:

Health Service Executive advice on preventative measures

<https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/?source=banner-www>

Return to work Safely Protocol

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/22829a-return-to-work-safely-protocol/>

Guidance on use of face coverings

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/aac74c-guidance-on-safe-use-of-face-coverings/>

Healthy Gateways Advice

[https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EU\\_HEALTHY\\_GATEWAYS\\_COVID-19\\_Cleaning\\_Disinfection\\_ships\\_09\\_4\\_2020\\_F.pdf?ver=2020-04-09-124859-237](https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EU_HEALTHY_GATEWAYS_COVID-19_Cleaning_Disinfection_ships_09_4_2020_F.pdf?ver=2020-04-09-124859-237)

EU Healthy Gateways European Manual for Hygiene Standards and Communicable Disease Surveillance on Passenger Ships

<http://www.shipsan.eu/Home/EuropeanManual/TabId/146/PID/649/CategoryId/31/CategoryName/EuropeanManual/Default.aspx>

<https://www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus>

EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS working group titled "Interim advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 on board ferries after lifting restrictive measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" (Version 1 – 24/06/2020)

[https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/Advice\\_Passenger\\_Ferry.pdf?ver=2020-06-25-091223-253](https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/Advice_Passenger_Ferry.pdf?ver=2020-06-25-091223-253)

Interferry Guidance on reopening passenger services

[https://interferry.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INTERFERRY\\_GUIDANCE-ON\\_MITIGATING\\_SPREAD\\_OF\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://interferry.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/INTERFERRY_GUIDANCE-ON_MITIGATING_SPREAD_OF_COVID-19.pdf)

Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport

[Maritime Transport Passenger Accessibility](#)

Marine Notice No 6 of 2020 on the Submission of Maritime Declarations of Health

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/74076/749c6677fc0840988712cbd1065410f7.pdf#page=null>

International Maritime Organization (IMO) Advice for IMO Member States, seafarers and shipping especially letter of May 6 2020 Coronavirus (COVID 19) – COVID-19 related guidelines for ensuring a safe shipboard interface between ship and shore-based personnel

<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers

<https://www.ics-shipping.org/publication/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers-v3/>

Advice and Information on food safety during COVID-19 provided by the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)

<https://www.fsai.ie/faq/coronavirus.html>

All persons aged 18 years and older arriving from overseas are legally required to complete a COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form online in advance of travel with an obligation on carriers to refuse boarding to any passenger (except those exempt) who does not produce an e-receipt for a completed form. The form may be used by health authorities to contact passengers in order to verify their location in the country. It will also help contact tracers get in touch with a passenger should someone on their flight or ferry be confirmed as having COVID-19. Ireland is also implementing the EU Digital Covid Certificate for travel within the EU.

[Covid-19 Passenger Locator Form](#)

EU Guidance on the progressive restoration of transport services and connectivity

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication\\_transportservices.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication_transportservices.pdf)

Information provided by EMSA

<http://www.emsa.europa.eu/newsroom/covid-19-measures.html>

IMO guidance for embarking crew

<https://www.martek-marine.com/blog/imo-marine-guidance-recommended-coronavirus-Covid-19-framework-of-protocols-for-safe-crew-change-and-travel/>

WHO Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/operational-considerations-for-managing-Covid-19-cases-outbreak-on-board-ships>

Ferry operators should also refer to the Fáilte Ireland Industry Guidelines incorporating the latest Health Protection Surveillance Centre advice in relation to physical distancing requirements for the various businesses operated onboard, in particular the guidelines for pubs, restaurants and cafes.

<https://covid19.failteireland.ie/operational-guidelines/pubs/>

<https://covid19.failteireland.ie/operational-guidelines/restaurants-cafes/>

General guidance on travel requirements

[www.gov.ie/travel](http://www.gov.ie/travel)

## 1. PASSENGER GUIDANCE

The following guidance is for passenger awareness and should be used in communications and promotional material.

All passengers should be directed to [www.gov.ie/travel](http://www.gov.ie/travel) for the most up to date travel information for Ireland.

- **Do not travel if you have the following symptoms:** fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell; or if you have tested positive in the last 14 days;
- **Do not travel** if you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19;
- **Do not travel** if you have been advised by a doctor to restrict your movements;
- **Follow the carrier's advice** concerning the expected duration of time required to be at the port before your ferry departures;
- Answer the health-related questions that may be asked at check-in;
- Be aware that **only passengers intending to travel or travelling should enter the ferry terminal buildings;**
- Follow the **instruction of terminal staff and ferry crew**, when in the port, when embarking and disembarking the ferry and on the ferry;
- Where possible use **on-line check-in and electronic boarding passes; and electronic payment methods;**
- At all times **practice physical distancing where possible, respiratory/cough/sneeze hygiene etiquette, hand hygiene, avoid touching face, nose, eyes and mouth;**
- Wearing a face covering onboard the ship is strongly recommended at all times apart from inside a personal cabin, eating or drinking (the wearing of a face covering *in indoor settings on a ship as it enters a port may be required by local guidance*);
- In Ireland, it is a legal requirement to wear a face covering inside the terminal building at all times;
- **Please bring enough face coverings for the duration of your journey; Be aware that there may be limited movement allowed onboard during sailing, and that face coverings can be removed temporarily for specific reasons, e.g. while in your cabin, eating or drinking;**
- **Watch and listen to all announcements and safety demonstrations;** be aware that **new procedures** requiring the following of specified routes and social distancing will be in place for onboard services – such as lavatories, disembarkation, etc.;
- Where appropriate, collect your bags and leave the **terminal building as soon as possible;**
- **Reduce the risk of virus transmission by minimising interaction with people** in the arrival or departure terminal and in communal areas onboard the ferry;

Be aware that any passengers travelling to Ireland must be in possession of evidence of:

- An e-receipt from a passenger locator form completed online and one of the following:
  - a) Evidence of having been fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the European Medicines Agency<sup>1</sup>;
  - b) Certification of having recovered from COVID-19 in the previous six months;
  - c) Evidence of a negative/not detected result from a RT-PCR test taken up to 72 hours prior to arrival; or
  - d) Evidence of a positive result from a RT-PCR test administered to the person no less than 11 days and no more than six months prior to arrival.

**Note: Evidence of an antigen test will not suffice. Passengers travelling on the basis of a test will be denied boarding if it is not a RT-PCR test.**

Passengers **will** be denied boarding if:

1. they are 18 or over and do not have evidence of having completed an online passenger locator form; and/or
2. if travelling on the basis of a test and it is not a RT-PCR test.

### **Passenger Locator Form (PLF)**

This form must be completed online in advance of travel. Further information and the form are available here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ab900-covid-19-passenger-locator-form/> Passengers aged 18 and over and not in possession of an e-receipt from a PLF e-receipt **will be denied boarding.**

The following adults are exempt from completing a passenger locator form:

- International transport workers who hold of a valid annex 3 certificate and arrive in the course of performing their duties;
- Drivers of a heavy goods vehicle who arrive in the State in the course of performing their duties; or
- Diplomats.

Children under 18 travelling with a responsible adult/s should be included on the passenger locator form of the/one of the responsible adult/s they are travelling with.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/human-regulatory/overview/public-health-threats/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/treatments-vaccines/vaccines-covid-19/covid-19-vaccines-authorized#authorized-covid-19-vaccines-section>



Unaccompanied children aged 12 and over will be required to complete a passenger locator form, but this will not be a penal provision.

No child under 18 should be denied boarding for failing to complete a passenger locator form.

### **PCR Testing**

Passengers entering Ireland and who are not covered by an exemption listed below must be in possession of a negative/not detected result from an RT-PCR test taken up to 72 hours prior to their arrival in Ireland or, where a positive RT-PCR test, such test was administered to the person no less than 11 days and no more than 6 months prior to arrival. Passengers not in possession of this evidence **will be denied boarding**.

The following persons are exempt from this requirement:

- Those with evidence of having been fully vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the European Medicines Agency \*;
- Those in possession of a certificate of recovery from COVID-19 within the previous 6 months\*;
- Children aged 11 and under;
- An international transport worker who is travelling in the course of their duties and is in possession of an annex 3 certificate;
- Driver of a heavy goods vehicle in the course of their duties;
- An aircraft pilot, other aircrew, maritime master or maritime crew who arrives in the State in the course of performing his or her duties;
- A person who cannot secure a RT-PCR test before travelling **and** is in possession of written confirmation from the Minister for Foreign Affairs that the person has an urgent humanitarian reason for travelling;
- A member of An Garda Síochána, the Defence Forces or equivalent body or organisation travelling to the State in the course of performing his or her duties;
- A person who travels to the State for an unavoidable, imperative and time sensitive medical reason, and that reason is certified by a person who is a registered medical practitioner or person holding an equivalent qualification outside the State;
- A person providing services to or performing the functions of an office holder appointed under any enactment or under the Constitution or a member of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament travelling in the course of providing such service; or
- A person travelling to the State pursuant to an arrest warrant, extradition proceedings or other mandatory legal obligation.

*\*Every passenger whether vaccinated/recovered or not, arriving from or having transited through a designated/emergency brake state in the 14 days prior to their arrival, must have*

*evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test taken up to 72 hours prior to arrival.*

### **Self-Quarantine**

Passengers who:

- A. (i) are travelling on the basis of a RT-PCR test, and
- (ii) have travelled from outside the EEA, and
- (iii) have not been in or transited through a designated/emergency brake state in the 14 days prior to their arrival; or
  
- B. have a vaccination certificate, or proof of recovery, but have been in or transited through a designated/emergency brake state in the 14 days prior to their arrival,

are **legally required** to self-quarantine for a period of 14 days after arrival. Note this period of quarantine may be reduced if evidence of a negative/not detected result from a RT-PCR test taken no less than 5 days after arrival is received. Such evidence should be retained for 10 days. A free post-arrival test can be arranged at [www.gov.ie/test](http://www.gov.ie/test)

Children aged 11 and under, and children aged 12 to 17 in possession of a negative/not detected RT-PCR Test, vaccination or recovery certificate travelling with parents or guardians who have a vaccination/recovery certificate are exempt from self-quarantine. However, where one accompanying adult needs to self-quarantine, then all children must also self-quarantine.

### **Mandatory Hotel Quarantine**

Passengers who:

- A. (i) are travelling on the basis of a RT-PCR test, and
- (ii) have been in or transited through a designated/emergency brake state in the 14 days prior to their arrival; or
  
- B. arrive from any location on the basis of a test and the test is not a valid RT-PCR test taken less than 72 hours before arrival; or
  
- C. arrive from any location and proof of their health status is deemed invalid or expired;

are **legally required** to enter a hotel quarantine facility for up to 14 days. The duration of the stay will depend on the passenger's health status and travel history. The cost of this facility is

at the passenger's own expense. Passengers are legally required to book their stay at the quarantine facility in advance of travel and will be denied boarding if they cannot produce their booking. Further information on mandatory hotel quarantine and how to book is available here: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a6975-mandatory-hotel-quarantine/>

The following persons are exempt from the requirement to enter Mandatory Hotel Quarantine:

- Holders of a valid annex 3 certificate;
- Drivers of a heavy goods vehicle, airline pilots, aircrew, maritime master or maritime crew;
- A person travelling to the state pursuant to an arrest warrant, extradition proceedings or other mandatory legal obligation;
- A member of An Garda Síochána or Defence Forces (or their equivalent from another state) and travelling to the state in the course of duty;
- A person travelling to and from the state for unavoidable, imperative and time-sensitive medical reasons and these reasons are certified by a registered medical practitioner or person with equivalent qualifications outside the state;
- A person having been outside of the state to provide services to or perform the functions of an office holder (under any enactment or the constitution) or a member of either house of the Oireachtas or the European Parliament;
- Diplomats and certain other categories of persons entitled to privileges and immunities in the State;
- Transit passengers who do not leave the port or airport before travelling out of the state;
- A person who holds a certification from Sport Ireland;
- An adult resident of Ireland who is accompanying a child who was not born in the State and has never previously been in Ireland travelling for the purpose of becoming ordinarily resident in Ireland;
- Persons deemed fully vaccinated with an EMA approved vaccine (and any accompanying dependants including children);
- Unaccompanied minors;
- A person arriving to provide essential works as certified by a State Body.

Refer to Appendix II for a comprehensive summary of passenger guidance.

**The best way to protect yourself and others against COVID-19:**

**Wash your hands frequently\***

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth**

**Practice respiratory/cough/sneeze hygiene**

**Maintain social distancing**

**Wear face covering in public areas aboard the vessel at all times apart from inside a personal cabin, eating or drinking**

**Wear face covering in the terminal building**

**Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily**

*\*by doing this you eliminate viruses that may be on your hands and avoid infection that could occur by then touching your eyes, mouth, and nose*

## 2. RECOMMENDED MEASURES FOR FERRY OPERATORS AND PORT/FERRY TERMINAL OPERATORS TO HELP PROTECT PASSENGERS AND EMPLOYEES

The international maritime passenger sector in Ireland is served by Ro-Ro passenger ships, often referred to as ferries. Ferry and terminal operators as well as port authorities will need to assess the impact of applicable health and safety directives and guidance when determining appropriate mitigation strategies. The below guidance is designed to assist operators in developing procedures and practices consistent with the most recent directives and guidance allowing for the resumption of passenger travel. The procedures that apply onboard vessels should be embedded in quality control processes to the greatest extent possible and in particular, those processes that relate to hygiene, cleaning, staff training and induction.

The first step is for the ship operating companies to assess all identified risks to their ships, crew, passengers and other persons in relation to the COVID-19 disease and to establish appropriate safeguards. In establishing safeguards or implementing mitigating measures in relation to COVID-19 pandemic, available relevant codes, guidelines, and standards regarding COVID-19 should be taken into consideration. In particular, relevant IMO and EU COVID-19 related documents, in particular guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), should be considered for implementation as found relevant and applicable.

### Written contingency (outbreak management plan)

A written COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan should be developed by ferry operators as per WHO guidance and EU Healthy Gateways<sup>1</sup> for the prevention and control of possible cases of COVID-19, and all crew onboard should have good knowledge of this and preparedness to implement. As per WHO Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases or outbreaks on board ships, in Ireland this plan shall be available for inspection by HSE Port Health Officers.

The ships onboard management team, under the command of the ship's master will be responsible for implementing.

The plan should include:

#### A. Preventive measures

- Physical distancing measures;
- Personal hygiene rules;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) use;
- Health monitoring of symptoms for transport staff and where applicable passengers and record keeping;
- Procedures for responding to a possible case (temporary isolation, arrangements for providing the preliminary medical examination by the ship's doctor or the master of the ship or a medically trained officer as applicable);

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/operational-considerations-for-managing-covid-19-cases-or-outbreaks-on-board-ships-interim-guidance>  
<https://www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus#Interim>

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) for cleaning and disinfection covering all types of surfaces and materials and defining the disinfectants and the methods to be used;
- SOPs for laundry of linen and clothing;
- SOPs for cleaning and disinfection of body fluid spills in the environment;
- Food safety management;
- Potable water safety management;
- Recreational water safety management;
- Ventilation of indoor areas; and
- Communication plan including reporting public health events to the competent authorities.

#### **B. Measures for the response and management of a possible case**

- Isolation/separation plan of the possible case;
- Communication with competent authorities at ports;
- Collaboration with the national competent authorities for contact tracing and quarantine of contacts ashore;
- Cleaning and disinfection procedures of contaminated spaces, objects and equipment (daily and final cleaning and disinfection); and
- Waste management procedures.

#### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

It is recommended that the company reviews the emergency procedures in view of the measures outlined in this document and includes, where necessary, additional considerations to deal with persons infected or suspected to be infected, whilst ensuring that all the other precautionary measures for non-infected passengers and crew are kept.

In addition, normal safety related emergency procedures should also be considered. For example, to ensure social distancing is maintained during all safety training and drills.

## AT BOOKING

This is the first opportunity operators have to advise passengers (including those with reduced mobility or requiring special assistance) of the procedures in place onboard. Operators should take advantage of this to ensure passengers know what to expect and that they are adequately prepared for the journey. Particularly, passengers should be advised of the guidance as set out under section 1 “Passenger Guidance”.

- Ensure information is provided about the importance of handwashing/hand sanitising, coughing routines, handshaking, etc.;
- Advise passengers to bring enough face coverings for the duration of their journey; and
- Facilitate ordering of onboard services and other measures to reduce contact with personnel onboard, where possible.

## AT CHECK IN

As this process requires face-to-face interaction, in order to ensure that the health of employees and passengers is adequately protected, the following measures should be put in place:

- Passengers with symptoms and passengers that have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or have been advised by a doctor to restrict their movements are to be denied boarding;
- Check that passengers are in possession of a receipt for a passenger locator form (PLF) and deny boarding to passengers aged 18 and over who cannot produce a PLF receipt.
- Where the PLF is completed on the basis of a test, check and verify that it is a RT-PCR test. Evidence of an antigen test will not suffice. Deny boarding to a passenger where the test is not a RT-PCR test. A negative/not detected result should be from a test taken 72 hours prior to arrival in the State and a positive result should be from a test taken no less than 11 days before travel and no more than 6 months where the passenger could not secure proof of recovery. Advise passengers who declare they are claiming an exemption that documentation supporting their exemption will be examined on arrival by immigration officers and they may be subject prosecution without valid supporting documentation;
- Information should be provided by way of text, video or e-learning to each passenger on how to behave while onboard;
- Implement the necessary measures to control and manage queues safely (e.g. distance-signage, distance markings on the floor, different check-in times, staff on hand to organise queues where necessary);
- Public lavatories are to be cleaned and disinfected frequently;
- Hand sanitising by personnel on every passenger entering the building;
- Automatic check-in machines to be disinfected frequently;
- Sneeze guard/Plexiglass on manual check-in desk to be mounted;
- Manual check-in desk and all other common touch points disinfected frequently;

- Check-in clerks informed about handwashing/disinfection routines and issued with relevant national guidance;
- Credit card and contactless payments preferred; and
- PETS chip scan done by the passenger, scanner to be disinfected after use.

Given the additional measures to be put in place to protect the health and safety of employees and passengers, it is important that passengers are made aware that there may be delays in relation to embarking and disembarking the vessel and that they should leave enough time to allow for such delays. In particular, passengers should be advised of the following measures to be implemented outside and inside the terminal and when boarding.

### **PORT SIDE/OUTSIDE THE TERMINAL**

- Pre-embarkation areas outlined with distance markings. This can be achieved to some extent as long as passenger volumes do not reach maximum. Additional staff may be required for monitoring;
- Present instructions on how to conduct check-in for:
  - foot passengers;
  - car passengers;
  - truck drivers; and
  - other passenger types.

### **PORT SIDE/INSIDE THE TERMINAL**

- Compulsory wearing of face coverings inside terminal buildings in the State;
- Passengers instructed to bring their own face covering;
- Physical distancing of at least 1m between individuals not travelling together should be maintained, as much as possible, in Irish ports;
- Distance markings & walkways to be clearly outlined;
- Manage access/numbers to WCs. Closure of every other urinal, etc.;
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of sanitary facilities recorded and records available for inspection;
- Physical presence of a member of cleaning at every ship call for regular disinfection of desks;
- Public area marshals, if the volumes dictate the need;
- Plexiglass/sneeze screen protection for employees should be installed;
- Maximum number of passengers allowed inside the terminal to be implemented;
- Credit card and contactless payments preferred as payment method;
- Wearing of gloves when cash handling;
- Extra hand sanitising stations available in terminals and onboard;
- Schedule of cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched hand points; and
- Information in different languages available in all terminals.



## EMBARKATION/DISEMBARKATION

- Ensure sufficient separation of passengers during loading and unloading;
- Implement a loading/unloading sequence both for foot passengers and vehicle passengers to limit the number of passengers in areas at the same time. Adapt the stopover time if necessary;
- Define the maximum number of people allowed in lifts and face coverings should be worn in lifts;
- Have measures in place to manage and control queues and have distance-signage in place;
- Ensure hand sanitising of every passenger embarking on gangway or staircase for vehicle-passengers; and
- Arrange early boarding in close collaboration with port authority and border control/customs authority where practicable.

## ONBOARD

- Written COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan as per WHO guidance;
- Wearing a face covering onboard the ship is strongly recommended at all times apart from inside a personal cabin, eating or drinking (*the wearing of a face covering in indoor settings on a ship as it enters a port may be required by local guidance*);
- Physical distancing of at least 1m between individuals not travelling together should be maintained, as much as possible, on the ship;
- Where possible, walkways for passengers inside the vessel should be marked to indicate a minimum of 1m distancing;
- The escape routes, muster and evacuation arrangements onboard should not be altered from that for which the ship is designed and certified;
- Extra hand sanitising stations should be available onboard;
- Passengers in the same group (e.g. vehicle) can sit together, all others to sit separated to the extent practicable, messaging to be promulgated onboard;
- Where possible hygiene instructions for crew and passengers should be visible at all places;
- There should be appropriate frequent passenger information announcements onboard regarding social distancing and hygiene measures;
- Areas for isolation of passengers should be available if necessary;
- Have PPE (face coverings, gloves, suits, etc.) ready in case of a positive or suspected positive person onboard;
- Promote the ready access to fresh sea air on the open deck, weather permitting;
- Cabins should be disinfected after each use;
- As far as possible, passengers should be facilitated to board the ship with minimum physical contact; and
- In addition, handling of documents, if any, should be kept to a minimum.

## SHOPS

- Sneeze guards/Plexiglas protection should be placed and used at cashier desks;
- Ensure frequent disinfection of cashier-area;
- Ensure frequent disinfection of common touch-points;
- Ensure frequent disinfection of shopping-trolleys/baskets;
- Ensure hand sanitising available for every passenger on entering and leaving;
- Measures to prevent queues and distance-signage should be in place;
- The amount of visitors in different shops should be limited to maintain social distancing;
- Ensure distance marking on the shop floor to separate passengers queuing to the cash desks;
- Ensure hand sanitiser available in all shops;
- Face coverings to be available for sale onboard in the shops to passengers;
- All take away food sold in the shops should be wrapped or packed;
- Cleaning and disinfection in all shop areas should be intensified;
- Credit card and contactless payments preferred as payment method; and
- No unauthorised personnel in the stores or supply areas.

## RESTAURANTS

- Ensure frequent disinfection of cashier-area;
- Refer to the Fáilte Ireland Guidelines for Re-opening Restaurants and Cafes;
- Ensure hand sanitisers are available in all restaurants;
- Ensure all food is prepared following all HACCP procedures and are considered safe;
- Take away food from the restaurants to the cabins or other public areas will be accepted, where practicable;
- All food in cafés to be wrapped or packed;
- Plexiglas protection/Sneeze screen at in use cash desks;
- Cleaning and disinfection in all areas to be maintained; and
- Credit card and contactless payments preferred.

## CLEANING & DISINFECTION REGIMES AND HYGIENE MEASURES

Follow the EU Health Gateways advice for cleaning and disinfection of ships. Take a proactive approach in undertaking extra cleaning and disinfection in terminals/waiting areas, in booking offices and onboard ferries. It is important to increase the frequency and extent of cleaning and disinfection regimes and ensure that at a minimum the following protocols are met:

- Extra measures to clean and disinfect all touch points (touch point cleaning focuses on common areas and locations that are touched frequently by people throughout the day), especially all hard surfaces in high-contact areas such as:

- door handles;
  - grab rails/ hand rails in corridors/stairwells;
  - plastic-coated or laminated worktops;
  - access touchpads;
  - payment PIN pads;
  - ticket machines;
  - telephones/keyboards in offices; and
  - toilets/taps/sanitary fittings.
- Sufficient cleaning and disinfectant materials should be made available for use by staff as well as sufficient and appropriate cleaning utensils;
  - Extra measures to clean and disinfect crew cabins, crew mess and all other crew areas should also be implemented;
  - Extra measures to clean and disinfect crew work areas particularly at every change of watchkeeping;
  - Install hand-sanitation points with alcohol-based hand sanitiser (at least 60% alcohol) in crew areas;
  - Crew should be advised of hand cleaning and sanitization procedure, that their hands should be washed and sanitised on a regular basis and, if possible, whenever moving from one compartment of the ship to another;
  - Extra attention should also be given to cabin trolleys and equipment used by cleaners which should be disinfected frequently;
  - Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using a household cleaning product/bleach;
  - Wear rubber gloves when cleaning surfaces, wash the gloves while still wearing them, then wash your hands after you take them off;
  - Ensure soap and hot running water, paper towels or a warm air dryer for drying hands and bins for disposal of paper towels when used in all toilet facilities/washrooms;
  - Install hand-sanitation points with alcohol-based hand sanitiser (at least 60% alcohol) in passenger areas (e.g. at points of entry to/exit from the ferry, beside any food/drink outlet in the toilets) and booking offices/waiting rooms - encourage passengers & staff to use these;
  - Ensure sufficient bins available for disposal of tissues (preferably covered bins, lined with a bin bag, replace when three-quarters full);
  - Provide disinfectant desk wipes in booking offices/reception;
  - Sufficient volumes of PPE should be made available to all staff who wish to use it, particularly those who need to interact with passengers and cleaners who must attend to the areas most commonly used by the public;
  - Training should be provided to relevant staff on how to correctly and safely use different types of PPE;

- The air recycling mode should be removed where possible from the air conditioning; and
- Post a suspect COVID-19 case being removed, cleaning as per the aforementioned EU Healthy Gateways advice for Cleaning and Disinfection of Ships must occur before onwards sailing and HSE must be notified when completed and before departure.

## CREW/EMPLOYEES

It is vitally important that employers ensure that all staff and crew are educated in relation to mitigating against the risks of COVID-19 and that staff and crew are aware of the strict hygiene measures that should be adhered to. They should be trained in PPE use and on the activation of the written contingency COVID-19 plan. In this regard all employees should be advised to:

- Implement secure routines for crew changes in order to reduce risk of cross contamination between crews;
- Avoid all unnecessary lingering in the common areas of the ship and maintain social distancing where a number of staff or crew must congregate;
- Avoid all extra personal contact;
- Ensure that the capacity of the ship's gym is limited and that all equipment is completely disinfected after each use;
- Ensure that only persons responsible for the ship's food provision enter the galley or food storage facility areas;
- Dine in small groups, taking into account the safe distance between crew members.
- Close contact in dining and break rooms should be avoided, and breaks and dining should be paced in such a way that as few crew members as possible will be in the same room simultaneously; and
- Ensure that the meals and cutlery delivered to the bridge are covered during delivery.

In addition to the protocols outlined above, employers should where practicable ensure:

- There is a separation of crew shifts to prevent outbreak amongst crew;
- The maintenance of health declaration procedures;
- All crew undergo regular medical crew screening for symptoms;
- All crew remain onboard the vessel while it is in port; and
- That appropriate IMO guidelines are followed for embarking crew.

## MEDICAL- DEALING WITH PASSENGER/S OR CREW WITH SUSPECTED COVID-19

The latest Public Health Guidance should always be adhered to. Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, has been in close contact with a confirmed case or has been advised by a doctor to restrict their movements should not be travelling or working. However, in instances where a passenger or crew member begins to display symptoms of COVID-19, without prejudice to any instructions issued by the Flag State, the contingency plan (outbreak management plan) should be activated, including the following steps:

The master or the designated officer in the absence of a doctor onboard shall carry out an examination of the patient in accordance with training received and report their findings to the medical teleconsultation centre (TMAS at sea or local rescue at dockside).

The assistance of a medical professional should be sought immediately as follows:

- For events at sea in Irish waters:
  - Liaise with the National Maritime Telemedical Assistance Service (Medico Cork). Contact via the Irish Coast Guard on telephone **112** or VHF Radio.  
[http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork\\_about.php](http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork_about.php)
- For events in Irish ports;
  - Contact National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) on **(01) 4631380** or **(01) 4631384** or **999/112** and ask for **HSE National Ambulance Service** for case management and Public Health assessment
- Notify the Port Authority of the suspected case as soon as possible;
- The immediate care of the ill person once in Port will be made under the instruction of Public Health; and
- The decision about the onward movement of the ship will be made by Public Health following risk assessment.

If it is determined that there is a possible case of COVID-19 onboard<sup>2</sup>, the patient should be isolated in an isolation cabin with negative pressure if available or in a designated cabin, room or quarters and infection control measures should be continued until disembarkation and transfer of the patient to the hospital ashore.

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<sup>2</sup> Possible case: any person with at least one of the following symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, sudden onset of anosmia, ageusia or dysgeusia. Additional less specific symptoms may include headache, chills, muscle pain, fatigue, vomiting and/or diarrhoea (source: Case definition for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), as of 29 May 2020. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/surveillance/case-definition>).

Advice for management of possible cases can be found in the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Interim advice for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak:

- A senior member of the ship's crew should be appointed to oversee the management of a suspect case onboard, ensuring that all relevant protocols and guidance are adhered to. This crew member should be responsible for liaising with Port and HSE Public Health Authorities;
- An area to allow for the isolation of the passenger or crew member should be designated and available at all times;
- Ensure employees onboard know what to do to manage the situation safely in order to minimise contact between passengers/crew with the ill person;
- The ill person should be separated from others and placed in the designated isolation area as soon as possible;
- Any passengers accompanying the ill passenger should also be isolated in a separate area;
- All staff coming into contact with the ill passenger in order to offer assistance should be provided with and wear full PPE;
- Details of all those coming in contact with the ill passenger should be logged (name/details of length/ nature of exposure);
- All used PPE and tissues should be disposed of safely;
- The isolation area should be fully disinfected once the passenger/crew member has finished using it;
- An updated Maritime Declaration of Health should be completed for all vessels arriving in Ireland from a port outside the Island of Ireland with an ill person onboard along with an updated crew list and passenger list;
- Further information in relation to submitting a Maritime Declaration of Health and what to do when there is suspected case of COVID-19 onboard is available in Marine Notice 06 of 2020;
- Whether the ill person is crew or passenger, contact details for crew are required – not just passengers;
- Following risk assessment by HSE Public Health, all crew and passengers may be asked to complete Public Health Contact tracing Card prior to disembarkation; and
- Following appropriate clinical assessment and investigation of the ill person, in the event of a person being treated as having COVID-19, based on risk assessment, there will be appropriate follow up of those deemed close and casual contacts, whether passengers or crew.

## CONTACTS OF A POSSIBLE CASE OF COVID-19

- Management of contacts will take place according to the national policies of HSE Public Health;
- Advice for contact definition and management can be found in the following links:
  - EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS, Interim advice for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19, available at: <https://www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus>;
  - ECDC, Contact tracing: Public health management of persons, including healthcare workers, having had contact with COVID-19 cases in the European Union - second update <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19-contact-tracing-public-health-management>; and
  - WHO, Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/operational-considerations-for-managing-covid-19-cases-outbreak-on-board-ships>.

Co-operation with relevant authorities and speed are essential here to help prevent any onward transmission of infection.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **LIST OF CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS**

**Brittany Ferries**

**Irish Ferries Limited**

**Stena Line Limited**

**P&O Ferries**

**Dublin Port Company**

**Port of Cork Company**

**Rosslare Europort**

**Department of Health**

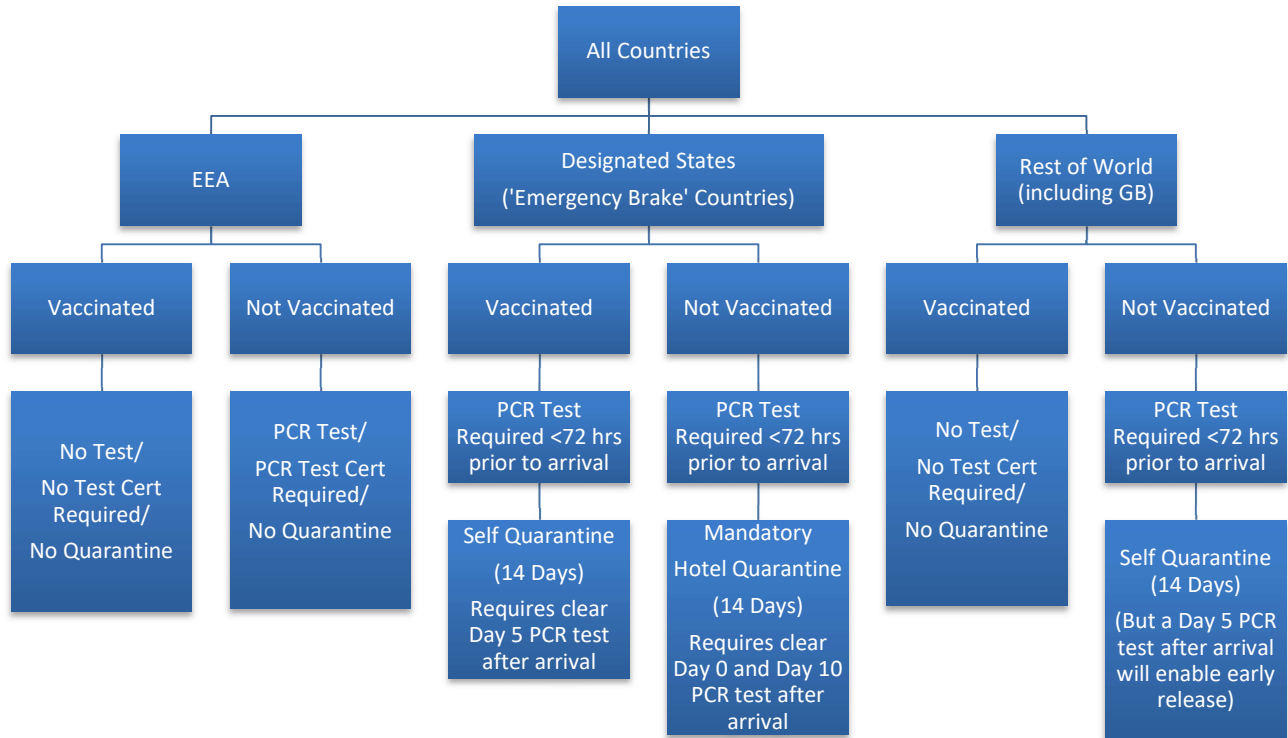
**HSE Multi-disciplinary Port Health Network**

**The Irish Maritime Development Office**



## APPENDIX II

### SUMMARY OF TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS





An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport