

COVID-19: Information and guidance for NZ workers aboard international ships

This document is uncontrolled if printed. Please refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for the latest version.

Who this guidance is for

This information and guidance is for all New Zealand workers, including marine pilots and stevedores, who access international vessels during COVID-19.

Essential precautions

YOU MUST WEAR PPE AND MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Clause 25 of the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Maritime Border) Order (No 2) 2020 imposes requirements on individuals who board vessels to wear PPE and maintain physical distancing. It states that a person who undertakes a necessary task and who boards a ship that is in isolation or quarantine must take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of an outbreak, or the spread, of COVID-19 by:

- a) maintaining physical distancing (to the greatest extent practicable) from any person who is in isolation or quarantine; and
- b) wearing personal protective equipment.

Maritime New Zealand has determined that a gangway, ramp, ladder or other equipment or installation used as a means of boarding or disembarking a ship, is part of the ship for the purposes of this Maritime Border Order. A person on a gangway, ramp, ladder or similar is deemed to be aboard the ship.

The Ministry of Health has provided specific guidance relating to the type of PPE that must be worn and when, as well as other appropriate infection control measures that must be utilised.¹

Boarding affected ships

Before stepping on the gangway, ensure appropriate hand protection is in place (sanitising has occurred or gloves are in use) and face coverings are on and adjusted properly. Face

¹ See <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-workers>

coverings **must** be worn while boarding and disembarking the ship via **gangways and ladders** (but are not mandatory on spreaders, ro-ro ramps, and other means of embarking/disembarking, if other controls such as physical distancing can be achieved).

Do not access the gangway if others are coming up or down it in the opposite direction. People moving in the same direction on the gangway should physically distance themselves from crew.

After stepping off the gangway onto the ship's main deck and signing in at the ship's security desk (as applicable), sanitise hands and gloves (if not using disposable gloves). Continue to wear your face covering until away from crew.

Face coverings must be worn when transiting between work areas and/or tasks while on the vessel, and you should sanitise your hands upon reaching and prior to leaving each work area.

When you report to a work area, follow the PCBU's² procedures for reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19.

Properly retain or dispose of PPE when not required to be worn.

Non-disposable PPE such as work gloves (cloth or leather) and some respirators must be sanitised after use in high-traffic areas aboard the ship where crew are known to transit. Refer to the manufacturers' instructions when cleaning re-usable PPE.

Wear gloves in work areas such as crane cabs, or ensure they are properly disinfected before using them.

SANITISE AND PROTECT YOUR HANDS
WEAR A FACE COVERING
MAINTAIN YOUR DISTANCE

Safely undertaking tasks

Workers undertaking essential tasks onboard ships should follow a risk-based approach to PPE use. In practice, this means that when accessing 'higher risk' areas, workers should wear the appropriate PPE and where possible continue to use other infection control measures such as hand sanitising.

Higher risk areas

The following areas are higher risk, even if you're just passing them.

- The gangway
- The sign-in area
- The accommodation block.

² A PCBU means a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking. It's a broad concept used throughout the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 to describe all types of modern working arrangements which we commonly refer to as businesses.

Appropriate PPE

Hand protection (gloves or sanitised hands as appropriate) and a face covering that is properly put on and adjusted, constitutes appropriate PPE. Non-disposable PPE such as work gloves (cloth or leather) and some respirators must be sanitised after use in high traffic areas aboard the ship.

Outside of 'higher risk' areas

Although the risk is more variable outside of higher risk areas, a dynamic approach to risk should be applied.

- **When 2 metres distance from crew cannot be maintained, or when transiting the vessel between work areas/tasks and the possibility of contact with crew is unknown, PPE must be worn (even if personnel are just passing for a few seconds)**
- When more than 2 metres distance from crew can be maintained, no PPE is required to be worn.

More stringent controls should be used by anyone entering the accommodation block for any reason. The specifics of the PPE shall be determined based on the outcome of a risk assessment undertaken by the PCBU for the planned activity/task.

Roles of Customs, Police, WorkSafe and Maritime NZ

Customs officers and police constables have been given certain powers of enforcement under the COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020. These powers may be exercised by these enforcement officers where they have reasonable grounds to believe that a COVID-19 Order is not being complied with, or where necessary for the purposes of enforcement of the applicable Order. This includes the Maritime Border Order. Infringement options include the potential for arrest for failing to comply with requirements around the use of PPE. Customs will continue to work with port workers to ensure compliance, however wilful non-compliance will result in enforcement action.

WorkSafe is the health and safety regulator for work in New Zealand's ports. Matters of health and safety in ports and other workplaces exclusive of shipboard work should be directed to WorkSafe and all notifiable incidents must be reported.

Maritime NZ is the health and safety regulator for work on board ships and for ships as workplaces. Matters of health and safety in the shipboard workplace should be directed to Maritime NZ and all notifiable incidents must be reported.