



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH WELLNESS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

COVID-19 PROCEDURES FOR CRUISE SHIPS



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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Bubble	A bubble represents a space where, as a result of the public health measures that are enforced, there is a reduced risk of transmission of COVID-19
Cruise Line	Any cruise ship or other vessel operator or their agents using the Port, Falmouth Harbour or Barbuda Island, that will be liable to pay any of the various charges and tariffs including but not limited to Cruise Passenger Charge in order to use the Port, Falmouth Harbour or Barbuda Island (as applicable)
Full vaccination	(For the purpose of this guidance, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series or \geq two weeks after they have received a single dose vaccine).
Government Personnel	means the representatives of the government on Antigua and Barbuda, the Port Authority and St. John's Development Corporation (SJDC) and all other staff, labour and other employees of SJDC and any other personnel notified to the Company, by the Contracting Authority Representative as Government Personnel.
Heritage Mall Properties	All designated areas, buildings and properties in the port to display and sell products, provide customer service and checkouts.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Specialized clothing or equipment worn by company's personnel, passengers, crew, ship agent, company's representative for protection against the COVID-19 health hazard.
Taxi Area	All declared areas for taxis to operate per attached location map
Port	means the area and facilities at St. John's Port identified in A-0 1 [<i>Port</i>] of the Concession Agreement (31 st January 2019) and which is comprised of the following: (a) the Existing Piers; (b) the New Pier; (c) the New Commercial Properties; (d) the Heritage Mall Properties; (e) the Fraser Family Properties (f) any government properties related to the tender operation into the Port; Together with any other areas that are to be included by mutual agreement of the Parties within the Port under the terms of the Agreement from time to time.
Port Authority	The Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority, a statutory body created under the laws of Antigua and Barbuda with offices at Deep Water Harbour, St

	John's, Antigua and Barbuda.
Port Operator	The Company, GPH Antigua Ltd with responsibility for management of the Port Area
SARS CoV-2	The virus that causes COVID-19
Secured Area	All areas to which only authorized company's personnel and company's representatives possessing the confidential/sensitive security information have access.
Taxi Area	All declared areas for taxis to operate
Terminal	All areas of embarkation/disembarkation of passengers, crew and visitors.
Tour Dispatch Area	All declared areas for tour guides to operate per attached map

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CARPHA	Caribbean Public Health Agency
CBH	Central Board of Health
CDC	Centers for Disease Control
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ER	Emergency Room
GPH	Global Port Holdings
ICAO	International Air Transport Association
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IDC	Infectious Disease Centre
IHR	International Health Regulations
MERS	Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome
MSJMC	Mount St. John's Medical Centre
nCoV	Novel Coronavirus
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RT-PCR	Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Background

On 11 March 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a novel coronavirus, COVID-19 as a pandemic. Antigua and Barbuda saw its first case of COVID-19 in March 2020 and to date has recorded 1211 laboratory confirmed cases of the disease.

The aim of the government of Antigua and Barbuda is to stop transmission and prevent the spread of the virus using public health measures including social and physical distancing, the wearing of face masks, proper cough and sneeze etiquette, hand hygiene and more recently vaccinations.

2. Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an immense public health impact and has caused significant morbidity and mortality. The pandemic has also created substantial economic effects across many sectors in Antigua and Barbuda. The cruise tourism sector including the hospitality sector is an important sector that has been especially impacted by COVID-19.

While cruise tourism and industries that are linked to the industry are anxious for sailing to resume, all stakeholders recognize that the economic impact of suspending operations cannot be addressed until the public health risks associated with the pandemic are appropriately mitigated.

The government of Antigua and Barbuda is also eager for cruise operations to resume given the importance of this industry to the country and our region as a whole. Yet the safety of the port workforce, crewmembers, passengers and our communities are the government's highest priority.

This document provides interim public health guidelines for the return of cruise tourism to Antigua and Barbuda. This information is based on currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion and is subject to change as any new information becomes available. It should be read in conjunction with Antigua and Barbuda's public health legislation, port health, maritime and quarantine regulations, and requirements for International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005 capacities at Points of Entry. The information in this document has been adapted for Antigua and Barbuda's situation, and therefore may differ from guidance developed by other international agencies. This guidance will be updated as more information becomes available on COVID-19 disease outbreak.

3. What is the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is the disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. The virus belongs in the same family of coronaviruses that caused Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002/03 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) that caused outbreaks in 2012. The COVID-19 virus is a new strain of coronavirus not previously identified in humans.

4. How is COVID-19 transmitted?¹

Currently, COVID-19 has been shown to spread by:

- Large respiratory droplets often produced by coughing or sneezing which land on a person or surface and transferred to the mouth or nose
- Direct or indirect contact with infected secretions
- Body fluids (e.g., blood, sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhea)
- Increasing evidence has led the WHO to indicate recently that airborne transmission cannot be ruled out at this point.¹
- COVID-19 disease may be spread by individuals that exhibit no symptoms
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread by water, mosquitoes or food.

The source of the current pandemic is yet to be identified. Person-to-person transmission has been demonstrated in many countries. Precautions must therefore be taken to prevent human-to-human transmission of the disease.

5. Ship Preparedness²

Prior to sailing the ship's management must ensure that:

- all medical, public health, cleaning and housekeeping staff on board are fully informed about COVID-19 and what to do if a case is suspected on board;
- all medical staff, public health, cleaning and housekeeping staff on board have access to enough quantities of personal protective equipment (PPE);
- all medical staff, public health, cleaning and housekeeping staff on board are trained in the appropriate use of PPE.
- All cleaning and housekeeping staff are aware of infection prevention and control measures and follow them.

Ships will sail at a capacity that allows for adequate social and physical distancing.

6. Pre-embarkation and Embarkation

6.1 Pre-Embarkation Requirements:

- Passengers embarking the vessel must present a negative Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test³ for SARS CoV-2 result dated no more than 7 days prior to the day of travel.
- All crew members are required to present a negative RT-PCR test for SARS CoV-2 dated not more than 7 days hours prior to embarkation and proof of full vaccination⁴ for COVID-19

¹WHO, 2020. Transmission of SARS-CoV-2: implications for infection prevention precaution. 9 July 2020

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precautionrecommendations>

²<https://www.carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Technical%20Guidance/Conveyances%20Travelling%20to%20Caribbean%20Countries%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic.pdf>

³ The test must be done on a nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal sample.

⁴ For the purpose of this guidance, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥ 2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series or ≥ 2 weeks after they have received a single dose vaccine

- All cruise lines must ensure that all crew members are fully vaccinated at the time of embarkation.
- Passengers embarking the vessel must present proof of full vaccination for COVID-19 or meet the vaccination requirements of the vessel.
- Shore leave will be allowed for fully vaccinated crew members within a defined “bubble”.
- Passenger should be advised about Antigua and Barbuda’s COVID-19 protocols prior to arrival.
- The following screening procedures from the Cruises Lines International Association (CLIA)⁵ are recommended.
 - Conduct temperature screening, at initial embarkation for all persons boarding. Any individual with a temperature detected at or above 100.4°F/38° C is to receive secondary screening to include a medical assessment.
 - Conduct illness screening for all persons who have travelled from, visited or transited via airports in any high risk destinations within 14 days before embarkation. Illness screening includes symptom history checks for fever, cough and difficulty breathing in the 14 days before embarkation and taking of temperature or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

Depending on the results of further screening, denial of boarding is recommended for persons who have travelled to any of the high risk areas identified by the CDC within 14 days or anyone who has had contact with, or helped care for, anyone suspected or diagnosed as having COVID-19, or who are currently subject to health monitoring for possible exposure to COVID-19.

6.2 Embarkation-Homeporting Operation

- All passengers arriving in Antigua and Barbuda must meet Antigua and Barbuda’s port health entry requirements including a negative RT-PCR test result dated not more than 7 days prior to their travel.
- All passengers arriving in Antigua and Barbuda via chartered flights may proceed directly to the cruise vessel via the vessel’s/cruise ship agent’s organized transfer, approved by the Central Board of Health to ensure a safety bubble.
- All passengers who arrived in Antigua and Barbuda more than 72 hours prior to embarkation time will need to repeat a RT-PCR test if required by the vessel.
- Antiguan residents embarking the vessel must meet the vessel’s boarding requirements.

6.3 Vessel Entry

The following must be submitted for review by the relevant authorities:

- A Maritime Declaration of Health twenty-four hours prior to arrival to the Chief Health Inspector and Chief Medical Officer.

⁵ CLIA, 2020. Cruise Lines international Association (CLIA) Statement on COVID-19. <https://cruising.org/news-andresearch/press-room/2020/march/clia-covid-19-toolkit>

- On-board protocols and the ship’s management plan submitted to Global Port Holdings (GPH) Antigua and the Chief Health Inspector twenty-four to thirty-six hours prior to berthing.

The plan should include information on the following:

- The ship’s capability to conduct rapid testing on any passenger or crew who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.
 - A description of isolation/quarantine areas and rooms for any passenger or crewmember who tests positive for COVID-19 or who, due to symptoms or exposure require isolation/quarantine.
 - The social distancing guidelines and sanitization regime.
 - Evidence that the cruise liners’ destination requirements relating to support and disembarkation of COVID-19 passengers and crew while maintain itinerary viability needs to have been factored into the plans.
- The following should also be readily available.
 - A travel log indicating the previous ports.
 - Travel histories of passengers and crew.
 - The medical log for the ship that includes the daily temperature recording of crew.

Approval for the vessel entry into Antigua and Barbuda’s ports will be given by the Antigua and Barbuda’s Port Health Authorities and Port Authority after these documents have been reviewed and it is determined that all requirements have been met. Note that it is recommended that the total number of ships allowed in port per day during the initial phase of the return of cruise ships is 1 (one)⁶.

7. Shipboard Operations

7.1 Proper Safety Signage

All companies must review the operations and place signs and COVID -19 safety protocols in the view of all passengers and crew members, from preboarding to disembarkation.

7.2 Physical distancing

It is recommended that companies establish a minimum physical distance to be respected considering the advice and recommendations from the CDC and the Antigua and Barbuda Port Health Authorities.

7.3 Hand hygiene

Frequent and meticulous hand hygiene by washing with water and soap and using an alcohol-based hand-rub solution can contribute to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Easy access to hand washing facilities and alcohol-based hand rub solutions, and health promotions materials (e.g., poster, videos, etc.) that promote the importance of hand hygiene and explain how to preform effective hand hygiene should be available in all areas of the ship.

⁶ The number of ships allowed in port per day will be reviewed daily.

7.4 Health education for what is expected on shore.

All disembarking passengers and crew should be advised on Antigua and Barbuda public health protocols prior to disembarkation via posters and videos approved by GPH Antigua Limited and the Central Board of Health. All passengers and crew are expected to adhere to the protocols and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment.

7.5 Use of PPE

The type of PPEs and the occasions when PPE should be used has to be considered in the Plan based on the CDC guidelines on the use of PPEs. Accordingly, it is recommended that companies review the occasions and places where the use of PPE is needed, for the protection of both crew and passengers, and define the appropriate type and certification where relevant.

7.6 Cleaning and disinfecting

Special consideration should be given to those spaces, objects and furniture, etc. that can be used/touched by several persons. These should be cleaned regularly.

7.7 What to do if a Case of COVID-19 is Suspected Onboard⁷

If a crew member or passenger onboard develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19 and reports either a travel history to the affected areas with person-to-person spread of the virus or close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19, carryout an initial assessment and manage the case.

7.7.1 Initial assessment and reporting

- Immediate expert medical opinion should be sought, and the event should be reported as soon as possible to the next port of call by the appropriate onboard authority.
- Depending on the situation, the competent authority at the relevant port of entry may need to arrange medical evacuation or special arrangements for disembarkation, hospitalization of the patient, and laboratory diagnosis.
- Antigua and Barbuda requires arriving ships to complete and deliver the Maritime Declaration of Health (International Health Regulations (IHR) Annex 8). Measures taken on board should also be noted on the IHR Ship sanitation control certificate (IHR Annex 3).

7.7.2 Case management

- The person should be isolated as best as possible.
 - An isolation room on a ship is recommended. If one is not available ask the person to remain self-isolated within their cabin and the doors kept closed.
 - Arrange for meals to be served to the person in their cabin, preferably by a single designated person.
 - Limit visitors to only essential persons.
- Assign one person who is in good health without additional health risk conditions to care for the person.

⁷<https://www.carpha.org/Portals/0/Documents/Technical%20Guidance/Conveyances%20Travelling%20to%20Caribbean%20Countries%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic.pdf>

- Family members (of passengers) should stay in a different room or, where this is not possible, a distance of at least 1-2 meters from the ill person should be maintained (e.g. sleep in a separate bed)⁸.

7.7.3 Infection prevention and control onboard ships

- Provide information about the risk of COVID-19 transmission and appropriate PPE to persons who will take care of the patient or enter their cabin or isolation room.
- Anyone providing care to the person should assess the risk and select the appropriate PPE.
- Maintain a log of all people caring for the sick person or entering the cabin or isolation area, all of whom should be considered contacts until a diagnostic test is reported as negative or the 14-day incubation period has passed.
- Ensure that anyone who enters the isolation area/cabin to provide care to or serve the affected person or to clean the cabin uses personal protective equipment as follows:
 - o Non-sterile examination gloves or surgical gloves
 - o A well fitted medical mask.
 - o Before exiting the cabin or isolation room personal protective equipment should be removed in such a way as to avoid contact with the soiled items and any area of the face.
- Staff caring for the person should perform hand hygiene by hand-rubbing with an alcohol based hand-rub solution contain between 60% and 80% ethanol or isopropanol for about 20 seconds or hand-washing with soap and water for about 20 seconds if hands are visibly dirty, before putting on gloves, after any direct contact with the affected passenger or with his/her personal belongings or any objects/surface potentially contaminated with body fluids and after removing personal protective equipment.
- Limit the movement and transport of the affected person from the cabin or isolation room to essential purposes only. If transport is necessary, the affected person should wear a medical mask and disembark in such a way as to avoid any contact with other persons on board the vessel.
- Should a suspect case be identified, staff should feel safe to clean the environment as basic cleaning agents will sufficiently kill the virus. Staff should wear gloves and a face only during the cleaning process or when in the same room with the sick person.
- It is important to ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly. Thoroughly clean high-touch surfaces with water and detergent; applying commonly used disinfectants (such as bleach) is effective.
- Medical devices and equipment, laundry, food service utensils and medical waste should be managed in accordance with safe routine cleaning and disinfection procedures.
- Used linen, cloths, eating utensils, laundry and any other item in contact with a patient's body fluids should be collected separately and disinfected in such a way as to avoid any contact with persons or contamination of the environment.

⁸ An exception may be considered for a breastfeeding mother. Considering the benefits of breastfeeding and insignificant role of the breast milk in transmission of other respiratory viruses, the mother could continue breastfeeding. The mother should wear a medical mask when she is near her baby and perform careful hand hygiene before and after close contact with the baby. She would need also to apply the other hygienic measures described in this document.

- Surfaces or objects contaminated with respiratory droplets, other body fluids, secretions or excretions should be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible using standard detergents/disinfectants.
- All waste produced in the cabin or isolation room should be handled according to the protocol of the ship for clinical infectious waste.
- Work with local Public Health Authorities to ensure contact tracing can begin immediately.
 - Close contacts of the affected persons (e.g., passengers, crew members or cleaning staff) should be identified, assessed for their specific level of exposure and asked to do self-monitoring of symptoms for 14 days.
- In addition to the above, cabin crew on long voyages with mild illness can be managed in keeping with World Health organization (WHO) recommendations on public health measures and the safe home care for patients with suspected coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infection presenting with mild symptoms⁹.

7.8 Crew Accommodation

Each crew member must have his/her own room with bathroom. There should not be sharing of cabins and bathrooms among crew.

7.9 COVID-19 Testing

All ships will have the capacity to conduct point of care testing for SARS CoV-2 in accordance with CDC's guidelines for cruise ships.

7.10 Onboard meals

There should not be self-serve meals on board.

8. Disembarkation

- Disembarkation of passengers from ships will be carefully managed to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.
- All Government of Antigua and Barbuda implemented public health protocols must be followed.
 - i. The health of passengers should be monitored prior to disembarkation to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, they are sufficiently healthy to disembark and travel for the purposes of repatriation.
 - ii. Measures to monitor and assess the health of passengers at the time of disembarkation include screening questionnaires, temperature scanning or measurement, and testing.
 - iii. Ship operators will be advised on testing available in ports or terminals for passengers who will be disembarking from the ship. At the current time, testing should only be conducted by representatives of the port health authorities.
 - iv. COVID-19 positive passengers and crew will not be allowed to disembark unless they require critical medical attention. Any passenger who has a positive test and is allowed to

⁹ WHO, 2020. Home care for patients with suspected novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection presenting with mild symptoms and management of contacts. [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-withsuspected-novel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/home-care-for-patients-withsuspected-novel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-presenting-with-mild-symptoms-and-management-of-contacts)

disembark will be isolated and will receive further medical assessment and attention ashore, as necessary, before onward travel at the passenger's cost¹⁰.

- Agreements with local health care providers for medical and dental services are recommended.

8.1 Passenger locator data

- The current standard for collecting passenger locator data is a form that was developed as a collaboration between WHO, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in 2012 for the aviation sector.
- v. The cruise company should present passenger locator forms to collect minimum data to include ship name, cabin number, full name date of birth used, mobile number, email address for any conveyance and for the maritime industry addressing both passengers and crew to the health authority upon arrival. These should also be sent electronically twenty-four to thirty-six hours prior to berth.
- vi. Prior to arrival in Antigua and Barbuda all passengers should complete to a hard copy of passenger locator form before disembarking the cruise. The same forms should be used for the cruise ship crew particularly if a change of crew is foreseen. Passenger locator data should be made available to the public health authorities as soon as possible upon their request so that they can initiate contact with exposed passengers. The prompt availability of accurate passenger locator data is extremely important for the success and effectiveness of contact tracing operations This enables public health authorities to identify and notify contacts of an infected case for active follow-up and the provision of relevant advice. Direct collaboration between cruise companies, port authorities and public health authorities would be the easiest way to obtain the necessary passenger data in a timely manner for effective contract tracing.

8.2 Passengers with COVID-19 symptoms:

- Passengers with COVID-19 symptoms will not be allowed to disembark.
- The company must receive pratique from the Antigua and Barbuda Government's port health officer prior to the gangway be lowered.
- The company will follow the instructions of the Port Health, Safety and Environment supervisor or other designated Government officer. Instructions shall include:
 - Testing arrangements for possible and suspected cases of COVID-19.
 - Transfer to the Mount St. John's Medical Center (MSJMC) if indicated and permitted (See Appendix I)
- If a cruise ship is found to have suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 on board, the ship may be placed in quarantine. A suitable location will be identified by the Antigua and Barbuda Port Authority and Chief Health Inspector where the ship can receive medical and other supplies.

¹⁰ All passengers should have medical insurance to cover the cost of their management at health care facilities.

9. Terminal Operations

Terminal users must comply and conform to all COVID19 precautionary measures and protocols and instructions given by the government of Antigua and Barbuda.

9.1 Social Distancing

All passengers and crew must obey the requirements for social distancing in the terminal in accordance with the laws and regulations of the government of Antigua and Barbuda.

9.2 Hand Hygiene

Passenger should be advised to follow CDC guidelines regarding sanitizers and hand washing with soap and water prior to debarkation. SARS-CoV-2 is believed to be transmitted mainly via respiratory droplets and by direct contact. However, indirect contact with contaminated fomites is also believed to play a role in transmission. Therefore, frequent and meticulous hand washing and disinfection plays a key role in mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

9.3 Face Masks

The use of face masks is mandatory for both crew and passengers on disembarkation. The use of face masks should be considered only as a complementary measure and not replace the preventive measures put in place, for example physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, meticulous hand hygiene, and avoiding touching the face, nose, eyes and mouth. Before wearing and removing the face mask, hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be observed. When removing the face mask, it should be removed from behind, avoiding touching the front side. The false sense of safety that can be given by wearing a face mask should be considered: the face mask works mainly as a means of control for exhaled droplets, and not as a means of protection for the wearer. Passengers should be informed about this and about the importance of observing physical distance and frequent hand hygiene, together with the proper respiratory etiquette, to reduce the risk of infection.

9.4 Tours Dispatch and Taxi Area

Cruise ship operators should arrange shore excursions to reduce passengers and crew from being exposed to COVID-19. In ports of call, shore excursions should be limited to cruise line-controlled offerings and conducted in a manner consistent with Antigua and Barbuda Port Health authorities and local public health laws, regulations and protocols. All COVID-19 protocols for shore excursions should be pre-approved by public health authorities.

All buses and taxi will follow the Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment's guidelines for public transportation¹¹.

- Only approved and authorized taxis¹² will allowed to operate in the port/terminal.
- Passengers and crew will wait in designated waiting area¹³ and follow the instructions of the agent, terminal personnel or bus company while awaiting their tour/excursion.

¹¹ https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/COVID_news/guidelines/Guidance_for_Public_transport.pdf

¹² Approval/authorization will be determined by the CBH and may require evidence of a negative RT-PCR COVID-19 test and/or full vaccination.

¹³ This will be in accordance with local laws and regulations on social gatherings and physical distancing.

- Passengers traveling in groups must ensure that they maintain physical and social distance from other tour groups.

9.5 Post tour and excursions guidelines

On completion of all taxi trips and tours, passengers must do the following before entering the port:

- perform proper hand hygiene using soap and water and use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- wear face masks covering nose, mouth and chin;
- maintain physical and social distancing;
- respect and follow terminal/port precautionary guidelines for re-embarkation.

9.6 Shopping areas and restaurants

Retail stores, restaurants¹⁴ and bars¹⁵ must comply with all Government of Antigua and Barbuda COVID-19 laws, regulations, protocols and guidelines for tourism retail operations¹⁶.

9.7 Ill persons in the terminal area

There will be a designated area at the terminal for the management of any passenger or crewmember who becomes ill subsequent to disembarkation. If a communicable disease including COVID-19 is suspected the patient will be immediately isolated in the predesignated isolation area. Appropriate PPE must be provided to persons providing care. There was be a quick assessment to determine the patient will return to the ship or taken to a medical facility on the island.

9.8 Cleaning and Disinfecting

Global Port Holdings will ensure that the terminal is cleaned using a variety of products and technologies which may include but not limited to handheld disinfectant sprays. Ultraviolet technologies, taggers and other appropriate methods as determined by the Central Board of Health¹⁷ will be utilized.

9.8.1 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Healthcare personnel working on a medical team at the docking port, in contact with a suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19 case will wear the appropriate PPE including a medical mask, eye protection, gloves and a long-sleeved gown.
- Healthcare workers will strictly follow the procedures for putting on and safely removing PPE in the correct sequence.
- Hands must be washed immediately after the removal of PPE.
- All healthcare personnel will receive ongoing training in the proper use of PPE.
- PPE including should be changed every time it is worn; if this is not possible, it should be changed when it becomes soiled, dirty or wet.

¹⁴https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/COVID_news/guidelines/Guidelines_for_food_service_Establishments.pdf

¹⁵https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/COVID_news/guidelines/Guidelines_for_Bars.pdf

¹⁶https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/COVID_news/guidelines/Guidelines_document_for_businesses.pdf

¹⁷https://ab.gov.ag/pdf/COVID_news/guidelines/list_of_approved_disinfectants.pdf

9.8.2 Gloves

- Gloves should be worn when providing care to the patient or when coming in contact with bodily fluids.
- Gloves should be changed every time they are worn or when they become soiled, or if their integrity is compromised.

9.8.3 Hand Hygiene

- Hands should be washed/cleaned with soap and water and sanitized immediately after removing gloves and other PPE.
- Staff engaged in environmental clean-up at the port after a possible, probable or confirmed COVID-19 case was present should wear a medical face mask, uniform and single-use plastic apron, and gloves.
- Hand hygiene should be performed each time after removing gloves or medical face mask.

9.8.4 Cleaning and Disinfecting

- All high-touch surfaces (for example, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, light switches, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables) should be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered disinfectant should be effective.
- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

9.8.5 Cleaning staff must:

- Wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling laundry and garbage.
 - Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used per the manufacturers' directions.
 - Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to [perform hand hygiene](#) after removing gloves.
- Remove and replace PPE that has been breached (e.g., tear in gloves). Report breaches in PPE or any potential exposures to the supervisor.

10. Bubbles

In the context of COVID-19 and for the purposes of this document, a bubble represents a space where, as a result of the public health measures that are enforced, there is a reduced risk of

transmission of COVID-19. These mandatory public health measures that will be applied to persons working within and entering include:

- the wearing of face masks
- physical and social distancing
- proper hand hygiene
- temperature checks and screening prior to entry
- full vaccination against COVID-19

It is recommended that passengers and accompanying crew are only allowed to go ashore via vessel-organized pre-booked excursions or remain in an “approved bubble” as outlined below.

10.1 St. John’s Port Bubble

- The Cruise Ship Port area will be designated as a bubble as described above. This includes the area known as Heritage Quay, (St. John’s Development, Tropical Adventures, the vendors’ mall, Redcliffe Quay, the Boardwalk, the dispatch areas for authorized transport and any other area designated by GPH).
- In order to enter into the St. John’s Port Bubble, from landside, all persons must provide proof of full vaccination, have their temperature checked (entry will be granted only if the temperature is normal). They must also wash their hands.
- In the St. John’s Port Bubble area, the wearing of masks will be mandatory. Masks are also mandatory upon entering any enclosed shop/building. In restaurants/bars, masks can be removed while eating and drinking. Social and physical distancing and other public health measures must be followed.

Passengers and crew are to remain in the St. John’s Port Bubble, unless on an authorized tour or are in an authorized vehicle (taxi/bus).

10.2 Beyond the St. John’s Port Bubble

In addition to the St. John’s Port Bubble there can be other areas designated and approved to bubbles as defined above. Conditions are as follows.

- Passengers are to be pre-advised of their bubble.
- Passengers are to keep face masks on at all times during the shore excursion and practice hand hygiene frequently and follow all local protocols.
- It is recommended that all persons representing tours or taxi and buses must be fully vaccinated and have their temperature checked daily.
- All tours/vehicle operators must follow protocols as agreed between themselves and the cruises lines.
- All tours/vehicle operators must follow all Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment’s protocols.
- All passengers/drivers/guides must wear masks at all times.
- At beaches masks may be optional as circumstances dictate. However, in enclosed areas/buildings or any congested areas masks are to be worn.
- Tour equipment (boats, vehicles and other equipment) are to be sanitized as required according to local guidelines.

- Tours/vehicle operators must reduce exposure of passengers/themselves and as best possible only visit Ministry of Tourism certified and Ministry of Health Wellness and the Environment inspected areas (third party areas such as beaches/bars, restaurants or restroom). All personnel at these sites must be fully vaccinated.
- Passengers are to be taken to low congested areas and remain in small groups.
- Contact with persons outside the bubble must be contained and restricted as much as possible.
- Passenger capacity of coaches, buses, and chauffeur-driven vehicles must be reduced in accordance with guidelines issued by the local Health Authorities (CBH).
- No crew is allowed shore-leave unless to receive medical treatment and with prior authorization from Port Health Authorities or to accompany passengers on a vessel-operated pre-booked excursion.
- Prior to commencement of excursions, all parties in close contact with passengers for a prolonged period are to be COVID-19 tested or present a negative COVID test taken 72 hours prior to interaction or show proof of full vaccination.

Failure to keep within the bubble as instructed will result in the passenger not being allowed to remain in Antigua and Barbuda but to return to the vessel .

On returning to the St. John's Port Bubble, all persons must wash and sanitize their hands before entering the Port.

11. COVID-19 Vaccination

Vaccines are the latest public health measures being used to fight COVID-19. Those being used have been shown to prevent severe illness and death, and may reduce transmission of the disease. It is recommended that:

- All passengers and crew be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Vaccines should be those approved by the WHO and internationally recognised regulatory authorities.
- All workers in Antigua and Barbuda associated with cruise tourism should be vaccinated against COVID-19. This includes airport and airline workers, taxi and tour operators, port health workers, and vendors.

APPENDIX I

Guidelines on the transfer of COVID-19 positive patients requiring hospitalization from cruise ships to the Mount St. John's Medical Center, Antigua and Barbuda

Objectives

The objectives of these guidelines are:

- To ensure the safe transfer of COVID-19 positive cruise ship passengers and patients who require ICU hospitalization at the MSJMC.
- To provide a standard of hospital care for cruise ship patients at a level of care not below than being provided on board the cruise ship.

Scope of the Guidelines

A COVID-19 positive cruise ship passenger who is under the care of medical personnel on a cruise ship and requires medical care not available on board and needs transfer to the MSJMC.

Guiding Principles

- All patients and passengers will be treated with dignity and respect.
- All medical information will be shared only between physicians and relevant health care professionals and will be kept confidential.
- All patients should be wearing a KN95 mask and appropriate PPE.
- Receiving, EMS medical staff and medical staff on board should be wearing appropriate PPE.

Procedure for Transfer

For a COVID-19 cruise ship passenger who is under the care of medical personnel on a cruise ship and requires medical care not available on board, contact should be made with the Emergency Room at the MSJMC by calling the physician on duty at 484-2754. At that time a medical report should be given with basic patient information, the medical diagnosis if known and the status of the patient. The global and regional health situation may necessitate additional information including a detailed travel history for the patient.

Depending on the status of the patient and the situation at the time the Emergency Room physician and the ship's physician may need to converse about the patient. There may also be dialogue with the relevant Consultant Physician or Surgeon at the MSJMC who will be providing in-patient care.

The MSJMC, depending on availability of hospital beds (general and ICU) and the specialist care available may or may not be in a position to accept the patient. However, once a COVID-19 cruise ship patient is accepted by physicians at the MSJMC the authorization form Appendix II

must be completed and forwarded to the ship's physician and the EMS. The ship's agent will then contact the EMS for patient transfer. The EMS should NOT be called to transfer a cruise ship patient from the care of medical personnel on the ship to the MSJMC unless the physicians at MSJMC accept the patient.

- Sick persons should wear a facemask or [cloth face covering](#) during the disembarkation process and throughout transportation to the MSJMC, if they can tolerate a facemask or [cloth face covering](#).
- If a sick person is known to be infected with or has symptoms compatible with COVID-19:
 - All escorting personnel including EMS should wear [appropriate proper PPE](#).
 - The gangway should be cleared of all other personnel until the sick person has disembarked.¹⁸

The pathway used for disembarkation, any potentially contaminated surfaces (e.g., handrails) along the pathway, and any equipment used (e.g., wheelchairs) should be cleaned and disinfected immediately after disembarkation (see Cleaning and Disinfection section)

If a cruise ship patient is not able to be transferred to the MSJMC, physicians at the hospital and aboard the ship may continue to communicate on the patient's status and a decision may be made for later transfer.

¹⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html>

APPENDIX II

AUTHORIZATION FOR TRANSFER OF A CRUISE SHIP PATIENT TO THE MSJMC

Date

Patient's Name

Patients Date of Birth (dd/mm/year)

Patient's Age

Patients Gender

Diagnosis

Covid-19 positive negative

Patient accepted for transfer YES NO

Accepting/authorizing physician's name

Accepting/authorizing physician's signature

Date (dd/mm/year)