



FONASBA

**ANNUAL MEETING
ANTWERP 2022**

SHIP AGENT PLENARY MEETING
24th MAY 2022

INFECTIOUS DISEASES PROTOCOL

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Why?



- 2020 Ship Agent Plenary webinar featured a presentation by Jesper Sebbelin FICS, of the Danish Shipbrokers and Port Operators association, and Gustav Jakobsen, CEO of Schultz Shipping, on the need to keep ship agents safe whilst maintaining service provision during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Outcome: *“Suggest that FONASBA initiate a project to develop a protocol “Keeping Agents Safe on Board” to the advantage of competitiveness. The protocol to be accessible to members of the national FONASBA associations as a membership benefit to ship agents.”*

Initial Development/1



- As part of joint industry actions to support the maritime sector during the pandemic, the International Chamber of Shipping developed its “Guidance for Ensuring a Safe Shipboard Interface Between Ship and Shore Personnel”
- Compliments other documents issued by IMO and associated UN bodies
- Input by, and support from, the members of the international associations group established to discuss and develop COVID mitigation strategies for the shipping sector (FONASBA included)

Initial Development/2



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Guidance for Ensuring a Safe
Shipboard Interface Between Ship
and Shore-Based Personnel



Initial Development/3



Supporting organisations



Initial Development/4



- ICS guidance includes a detailed “hierarchy of protocols”, a useful series of steps for providing a logical workflow for assessing and mitigating risk and communicating with all related parties
- As a supporter of the original document, and in the spirit of “reuse and recycle”, “never let a good idea go to waste” we decided the ICS framework was a suitable base for our document

Hierarchy of Controls



1. Eliminate
2. Reduce
3. Communicate
4. Control
5. PPE

1. Eliminate:



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1 Eliminate

Elimination of the hazard is the most effective measure to reduce risks.

Work onboard should not be conducted if there is a safer method to undertake the task, such as not going to a ship. In a number of instances e.g. conducting audit, surveys, inspections and training remote possibilities exist which may eliminate the need to go onboard or reduce the numbers of personnel needing to attend.

- Is attendance on board necessary at this time?
- Can the work be undertaken remotely?
- Can the work be postponed?

If attendance on board cannot be eliminated, then can the risk be reduced? For example, can numbers attending be **reduced** and/or can part of the work normally conducted onboard be reduced e.g. can documentary review and interviews etc. be conducted remotely?

1. Eliminate:

Action should be taken by the agent to minimise unnecessary in-person contact with the vessel as a means of reducing the likelihood of transmission of the disease from the ship to shore or vice versa. At all times however, the agent must be mindful that one of their obligations is to provide appropriate husbandry and pastoral care to the Master and crew. The right balance must therefore be struck between minimising contact and ensuring the crew receive the pastoral care they deserve.

Where possible therefore:

- The exchange of documents and other operational information should be undertaken remotely
- Physical attendance on the vessel should be limited to the minimum number of personnel required to carry out the tasks concerned
- Contact with crew members should involve only those crew members and shore-based staff directly relevant to the matter under discussion
- Meetings should be strictly time-limited to further reduce possible exposure
- Visits to the vessel should be scheduled to minimise contact between different parties
- Visitors to the vessel should use their own transport and avoid having other parties travelling in the same vehicle
- Consideration should be given to meetings being held remotely, or outside the accommodation block where unavoidable

By eliminating the risk of cross-transmission of infections in other areas, and efficiently addressing the necessary administrative tasks, as detailed above, it is anticipated the agent will be able to devote appropriate time to the husbandry and pastoral needs of the crew.

2. Reduce:



<p>2 Reduce</p>	<p>Can attendance on board be reduced?</p> <p>Where it is not possible to fully eliminate the hazards, the risk could be reduced by minimising the onboard element of the work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can numbers of persons attending onboard be reduced and/or duration of time spent onboard be reduced?• Can part of the work be undertaken remotely e.g. visual inspections, witnessing drills, interviews?• Is it necessary to attend on board in person or can meetings be set up remotely to reduce numbers attending and reduce duration?• Can information be provided for remote review to reduce shipboard attendance? <p>Once attendance onboard has been reduced as far as possible, then consideration should be given to how to control the remaining risk.</p>
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2. Reduce:

The examples of elimination strategies detailed in section 1 above will, if implemented correctly, significantly reduce the levels of contact between the ship and shore and therefore minimise the risks of cross-infection. Any reduction in contact should however be assessed in the context of maintaining a minimum level of physical attendance at the vessel, consistent with the ship agent's ability to provide adequate and appropriate service to the shipowner or operator, and the crew.

3. Communicate:

3 Communicate

If onboard attendance of shore-based personnel cannot be eliminated, communicate and understand participant requirements.

Ensure requirements of each party, the ship and the shore-based organisation have been communicated in good time to each other and are assessed and understood.

If there are differences in requirements **control** measures should be agreed and understood by all parties prior to the shipboard intervention taking place.

- Have the ship's and shore-based organizations requirements related to risk management and control of COVID-19 been communicated in good time to all parties prior to arrival? It is envisaged that the ship's agent will need to play an important role in this regard.
- Are the requirements of each party understood by the other parties?
- Are requirements aligned e.g. requirements for the use of PPE?

If risk management and requirements of any party are not aligned or not understood, then additional administrative control measures may be necessary.



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3. Communicate:

Communication between the ship, the operator, the charterer and shore-based service providers is key to the effective and efficient operation and administration of the port call. The need to additionally communicate infectious disease prevention and mitigation information and guidance should be fully integrated into the pre-call communication planning, with emphasis being placed on ensuring the earliest possible advice of appropriate measures in place onboard the vessel and in the port, including:

- Full information on all relevant disease mitigation protocols and regulations, including policies on the use of PPE (see control 5 below)
- Information on cases of illness on board the vessel and any visits to healthcare professionals that may be required
- Details and results of tests taken by the crew, passengers, and shore-based visitors
- Information on the procedures, protocols and limitations relating to crew changes, both on and off-signing, and the precautions to be taken by arriving and departing crew members
- A schedule of planned visits to the vessel and the number of persons involved
- Information on any other visits, inspections, surveys, deliveries organised for the port concerned by the ship owner, operators or charterer, and the relevant contact details to allow same to be integrated into the visit plan
- Details of how cargo operations will be managed
- Procedures for the remote exchange of documentation and for signing (if required)

Any additional information specific to the port, the vessel, the crew, and/or the call

4. Control:

4 Control

If the requirements of each party, the ship and the shore-based organisation have been communicated to each other and assessed, and are either not understood or there are differences then administrative control measures need to be taken so that all requirements are understood and so that requirements can be mutually agreed and understood by all parties prior to the shipboard intervention taking place.

If the control measures of the ship and the shore-based organization are not initially aligned or not fully understood identify actions required to rectify the situation.

Considerations should include:

- Does additional explanation of requirements need to be provided?
- If requirements are not understood and or aligned, can control measures be implemented through clarifying requirements and or agreeing mutually acceptable requirements?
- What protective measures are in place on board and for the attending personnel?

4. Control:

Ensuring that all parties are fully informed of all aspects of the port call and the relevant procedures and protocols, and can apply them at the correct time, is vital to avoiding any confusion, conflicts, and other delays. Starting that conversation as early as possible after the destination country and/or port range are known, will allow for the fullest possible time for clarification and explanation to be provided where necessary, and the required procedures implemented. It will also ensure that all parties are fully briefed in advance and therefore able to carry out their obligations efficiently and effectively and with minimal interruption to the port call and cargo operations.

5. PPE:

5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Understand what PPE is required and expected to be used by crew and shore-based personnel during attendance onboard and at what times.

In addition to understanding mutually agreed PPE expectations of both the ship's crew and shore-based staff the following should be assessed:

- Is the agreed PPE available to both parties? If not, can it be provided by the other party if necessary, either prior to or at the time of boarding?
- Does available PPE comply with appropriate recommended specifications and is it compatible with the other PPE and equipment to be worn during the intervention. Does the provided PPE allow for the intended work to be carried out effectively?
- Is the PPE sterile, where applicable?
- Has the user been instructed how to inspect, wear, use and dispose of the PPE?



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5. PPE:

Information on company policies (both ship and shore) regarding the use of PPE and its disposal should be included as part of the initial information exchange, ensuring that both the crew and shore-based visitors are fully equipped prior to visits taking place. Again, any questions or concerns about its availability and use can be addressed in sufficient time to avoid any delays.

Whilst evidence for surface-based transmission of infections (that is through touching surfaces and materials where viruses may be present) is not conclusive, good practice would indicate that appropriate precautionary actions, such as regular cleaning and disinfecting, should be put in place to mitigate any risks from, for example, the handling of paper, touching door handles and guardrails

Next Steps



- Collect more examples of best practice from members as further experience gained from actions against COVID – after this meeting
- Acknowledge source and secure agreement of ICS for their text to be used - **done**
- Circulate to Members for final sign-off and publication in mid 2022 and....

Next Steps



- Hope they are never needed!



Thank you.