

# COVID-19 update for Maritime Pilots (v.4)

---

Last updated: 30 July 2020

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

---

Maritime NZ continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will update this guideline as the situation develops.

## Pilotage, shipping, and the operation of ports is essential

Pilotage is deemed an essential service.

## Alert Levels versus Border Control Measures

Irrespective of the current Alert Level in New Zealand, when boarding ships which have come from foreign ports, Maritime Pilots should take into account the current border control measures and Ministry of Health advice.

## Establishing the health status of inbound ship crews

Health declarations from ships (the request for free pratique) now include reference to COVID-19 symptoms. As of March 2020, the ship must include reference to COVID-19 when submitting a 'no change of health status' report 12 to 24 hours (or shortly before arrival). This should be submitted to health officers at the vessel's port of arrival. Each port must have a system in place to ensure that those boarding vessels are aware of the status of the ship before boarding.

## Ministry of Health advice regarding Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Pilots must take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and reasonable care to minimise the risk of an outbreak, or the spread, of COVID-19. This is best achieved by maintaining physical distance, wearing PPE, and following Ministry of Health advice. More information on social distancing considerations and use of PPE can be found in Appendix 1.

Basic hygiene measures remain important to stop the spread of infection. Basic hygiene measures include:

- hand hygiene – washing hands on return to operational base
- staying at home if you are sick or begin to show symptoms
- coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and then performing hand hygiene, and
- cleaning surfaces regularly e.g. using a sanitising wipe to clean a surface that will be worked on.

Good hygiene practices are also relevant on the pilot boat to keep this environment as sterile as possible and surfaces should be cleaned regularly. Good practices for when pilots return to their operational base should also be considered.

Pilots should consider in respect of every visiting ship if there are exceptional circumstances that need to be taken into account or if there are additional measures that can be taken to protect their own, or other's health and safety.

Appendix 2 provides prompts for pilots and ports to prepare for exceptional circumstances that may arise.

## Testing for COVID-19

Ports should have a system to monitor the health of their pilots. If a Maritime Pilot is symptomatic, they should self-isolate immediately and follow the Ministry of Health process to be assessed and tested, advising that they are a front-line border worker. If testing is required, self-isolation may end on return of a negative test.

### **Call your doctor or Healthline on 0800 611 116**

Maritime Pilots are considered to be front-line border workers. Employers of Maritime Pilots are expected to implement systems that give effect to the latest Ministry of Health advice regarding testing.

# Appendix 1

This Appendix is intended to prompt consideration of relevant factors for social distancing and use of PPE.

## PPE

The use of PPE such as face masks and gloves can reduce the spread of infection when used correctly. A surgical/medical mask is acceptable. Pilots should note and manage the risks associated with wearing masks, including:

- That any glasses worn, are not affected.
- That the potential for communication issues (due to an increased risk of Pilots' advice being misunderstood) are understood.

The risk of communication issues should be mitigated as far as possible and in the following ways:

1. maintaining greater than 2 metres.
2. following robust bridge resource management practices, including closed loop communications, confirmation, and checks to ensure advice has been received accurately.

Boarding of the ship should allow sufficient time to take the measures above and to inform the ship's Master and crew of any additional procedures.

Pilots should take spare pairs of gloves on board with them in case they need to be changed and use hand sanitiser as appropriate. The wearing of reading glasses and or hearing aids may interfere to some extent with the optimal wearing of face masks. However, the mask is a first line of defence against body fluid droplets in either direction from nose or mouth. It has a secondary and equally important feature of stopping inadvertent touching of the face with potentially contaminated fingers.

## Social distancing considerations

Other social distancing considerations might include:

- Is it possible to access the bridge via an external stairway?
- Is it necessary for the crew escort to also be in the elevator with the Pilot?
- Any symptomatic seafarers should not be interacting with anyone.
- Refreshment hospitality is a very common gesture from bridge team members to Pilots.

For the period of COVID-19 restrictions, to maintain their personal health and wellbeing, Pilots should decline refreshments.

# Appendix 2

This appendix is intended to prompt consideration of exceptional circumstances involving pilots, to help planning and preparation to take appropriate measure against COVID-19. Ports and pilots may want to consider the following situations and ensure that they have processes in place:

- What practices are in place in case of an emergency response?
- What steps should be undertaken in case of a pilot remaining on board for longer than planned? For example, being carried over due to bad weather or pilot boat breakdown?

There will be other occasions where the standard pilotage operations may not be able to be carried out. For operational issues, such as pilots acting as loading masters or coastal pilotage, there should be standard operating procedures in place to ensure that the health requirements continue to be met regarding PPE, social distancing and testing.

Ports and pilots should also ensure that they have reviewed their quarantine processes, including nominated places of anchorage for vessels which require quarantine.