



From Common infectious diseases/Hygiene & Inspections

GGD Amsterdam, GGD Rotterdam-Rijnmond and GGD Kennemerland,
in collaboration with the RIVM

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This advice document contains the minimum requirements, roles and responsibilities of cruise ship operators and the relevant Regional Public Health Services (GGD's) or the Regional Medical Emergency Preparedness and Planning Offices (GHOR offices) for preparedness and response to (probable) cases of COVID-19 on board a cruise vessel in the Netherlands. This concerns both inland and maritime navigation.

In addition to the following documents:

- Interim Guidance for Preparedness and Response to Cases of COVID-19 at Points of Entry in the European Union (EU/EEA Member States (MS) (EU Healthy Gateways - <https://www.healthygateways.eu/>)
- Guideline for a Minimum Standard for the Resumption of River Cruises in Europe under COVID-19 (IG River Cruise and the European Barge Union)
- RIVER CRUISES OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES (IG River cruise)
- Vorgehen bei COVID-19- Fällen und Verdachtsfällen auf Fahrgastschiffen auf dem Rhein (Gesundheitsdepartement des Kantons Basel-Stadt)
- European Manual for hygiene standard and communicable disease surveillance on passenger ships. (ShipSan)

EU/Healthy Gateways recommendation: ensure that the onboard information is always up-to-date and provide relevant information on the cruising area in question, relating in particular to the ports of call.

For the latest updates of the Dutch advice documents, please consult the following websites of <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19> and www.rivm.nl.

1. Definitions (for the latest available definitions, see the RIVM Guideline)

Probable case of COVID-19 in the Netherlands:

- cold-like symptoms, such as a blocked or runny nose, sneezing, a sore throat;
- cough;
- shortness of breath;
- a high temperature or fever;
- sudden loss of smell and/or taste (without nasal congestion).

Confirmed COVID-19 patient:

A person who tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 using a validated PCR or a different type of nucleic acid amplification test.

Close contact:

A close contact is defined as any person with one or more of the following exposure to a confirmed case in the two days prior to symptom onset up to until 24 hours after the symptoms disappeared:

- A person who stayed in the same cabin/suite as the probable or confirmed case.
- Any person having been in contact with the probable or confirmed case for 15 minutes or more and at a distance of less than 1.5 metres.
- Any person who had a high-risk exposure to the probable or confirmed case during less than 15 minutes in some other setting (for instance, coughing in the face or direct physical contact, such as kissing).

Reporting through the Maritime Declaration of Health:

In the event a probable and/or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified on board, the boatmaster (in accordance with Art. 50.51 of the Police Data Act) must immediately alert the competent authorities.

2. Roles and responsibilities of the shipping company – Preventive measures

General measures for river and ocean cruises:

- Passengers and crew are required to maintain 1.5 metres physical distance from others at all times.
- Persons from a high-risk country (both passengers and crew) need to quarantine for 14 days on board the vessel or before embarking. (<https://www.government.nl/topics/coronavirus-covid-19/tourism-in-the-netherlands>).

With regard to allowing the entry of persons from abroad, the national guidelines and restrictions shall be followed. The shipping company should already be familiar with the rules for providing accommodation for people from outside the EU / Schengen area. Specific rules have been set down in writing.

- Prior to embarkation, each person shall undergo a health check as part of the shipping company's health screening protocols (<https://www.rivm.nl/en/documenten/letter-for-passengers-flying-to-netherlands-from-covid-19-high-risk-countries>).
- Strict and consistent compliance with its own COVID-19 outbreak management plan on board, providing all measures on at least the following:
 - a) prevention measures
 - b) an isolation plan
 - c) procedures for cleaning and disinfection
 - d) measures related to ventilation
 - e) measures to be adopted in case of a symptomatic passenger (see CH3)
 - f) Measures to be adopted in case of a COVID-19 confirmed passenger/crewmember (see CH4)

- Accommodate each crewmember in a separate cabin wherever possible, reducing the risk of new infections.

Testing

- Persons with symptoms should get tested immediately. It is the responsibility of the cruise operator to make arrangements for the transfer of a person with suspected coronavirus symptoms to the drive-through test site of the GGD.
- For testing persons without symptoms, as a preventive measure or for example relating to a health declaration form for travel, tests may be carried out by commercial partners (this will not be provided by the GGD).
- The cruise company shall have repatriation procedures in place.

Ocean cruises

- The MDoH (Maritime Declaration of Health) shall be submitted to the competent port authorities by the ocean cruise vessel before arrival in each port of call. If the answer to a question was “Yes”, the declaration shall be forwarded to the local GGD of the relevant port. The GGD will then decide whether further action is necessary and inform the port authorities of its decision and, if necessary, contact the boatmaster of the vessel.

River cruises

- Prior to its arrival in the Netherlands, the river cruise vessel shall send the MDoH to mdoh@rivm.nl. This institute will forward the MDoH to the relevant GGD. The GGD will then decide whether further action is necessary and inform the port authorities of its decision and, if necessary, contact the boatmaster of the vessel.
- In the event that during a river cruise a suspected or confirmed case is identified on board, a MDoH shall be resent to mdoh@rivm.nl, from where the positive MDoH will be forwarded to the relevant GGD. The GGD will then inform the port authorities.

3. Roles and responsibilities of the shipping company – Response to a probable case

General measures for river and ocean cruises:

- Safeguard the (mental and physical) health and safety of all persons on board the vessel, especially when isolation is required.
- Have an isolation plan including designated spaces for isolation of several or even dozens of people on board the vessel or ashore or at both of these locations.
- Persons that meet the case definition for a probable case of COVID-19 should immediately be isolated on board the vessel. Each person should be housed in a separate cabin (one person-one cabin) with a private bathroom.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping company to have adequate cabin capacity on board to isolate all persons (passengers and crew) meeting the definition of a probable case.
- Trained medical staff on board and/or ashore should be available 24/7, e.g. port physician, Central Doctors, Hoteldoc.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping company to make arrangements for the transfer of persons from the vessel to a shoreside medical facility/GP. Prior to the transport to the medical facility/GP the shipping company should first contact the medical services by phone for advice on how to proceed.

- The shipping company shall contact the national hotline (0800-1202 or +31 850 659 063) and/or contact the local GGD to book an appointment for a test at the testing site in the port where the vessel is berthed or in the next port of call when it is underway.
- The vessel shall remain in this port until all test results are available. The GGD can advise on the process to follow and, if necessary, designate a vessel as quarantine location.
- Testing must be notified to the port authorities, so that the GGD and other parties can be informed, in order to avoid unwanted scaling up of measures.

4. Roles and responsibilities of the shipping company – Response to a confirmed case

General measures for river and ocean cruises:

- It is the responsibility of the shipping company to put in place arrangements for housing of all probable and confirmed cases as well as all close contacts in on-shore isolation/quarantine quarters within 24 hours. The shipping company must make these arrangements in advance (e.g. an appropriately prepared hotel). The shipping company remains responsible for the welfare of the persons in isolation ashore and will provide assistance to the practical needs of these people. In the event of an outbreak, the GGD, in consultation with the boatmaster, shall assess whether it would be better to isolate/quarantine on board or ashore.
 - **Additional EU/Healthy Gateways requirement:**
The cruise company should obtain practical information on the specific facilities in the ports of call in advance and make clear arrangements with the relevant hotels, doctors, taxi services, etc. The hotel concerned shall have adequate facilities to allow several persons to isolate and take appropriate preventive measures. The GGD can provide advice or monitor the situation on site.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping company to make arrangements for persons in isolation on board the vessel who are to be transferred to isolation quarters at a shoreside location. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring that close contact persons, probable and confirmed cases are not transported together.
- Trained medical staff on board and/or ashore should be available 24/7, e.g. port physician, Central Doctors, Hoteldoc.
- It is the responsibility of the shipping company to make arrangements for the transfer of persons from the vessel to an on-shore medical facility/GP. Prior to the transport to the medical facility/GP the shipping company should first contact the medical services by phone for advice on how to proceed.
- If the GGD requests permission to board the vessel in order to assess which set of measures would be most suitable for the situation or to collect further data, the boatmaster/cruise company should comply with that request.

Ocean cruises:

- In case a highly probable and/or confirmed case of COVID-19 is detected on board, the boatmaster (in accordance with Art. 50.51 of the Police Data Act) must immediately alert the port authorities using the vessel's MDoH.

5. Roles and responsibilities of the local GGD

- Cooperation with the port authority: timely notification of arrival of cruise vessels, rapid exchange of information/implementation of follow-up health measures in relation to a positive MDoH.
- Cooperation with the shipping company/boatmaster: dealing promptly with requests for laboratory testing and providing access to the nearest testing site. Speedy processing of tests and communication of test results as soon as possible.
- Contact tracing: in the Netherlands this means that contacts are traced starting from **two days** before the onset of the first symptoms. The GGD will contact the boatmaster in order to assess how best to collect and communicate health data and information on crew and passengers.
- Close cooperation between regional health services/emergency health response teams (GGD/GHOR) to ensure that measures are implemented swiftly and effectively in case of a positive result.
- Nominate a contact point for dealing with practical questions/providing advice while the vessel is in the port:
 - Amsterdam: 020-5555 105 (9am - 8pm). Outside office hours, contact: 020-5555 555 and ask for the doctor on-call for infectious diseases; see the procedure applied by the ports on the North Sea Canal for handling notifications and appropriate follow-up;
 - Rotterdam: office hours: 010-4339897 (call centre) and outside normal hours, contact the ambulance dispatch centre and ask for the GGD doctor on-call for infectious diseases: 088 – 6223223.
 - Kennemerland: office hours: 023 – 7891612 and outside normal hours, contact the ambulance dispatch centre and ask for the GGD doctor on-call for infectious diseases.
