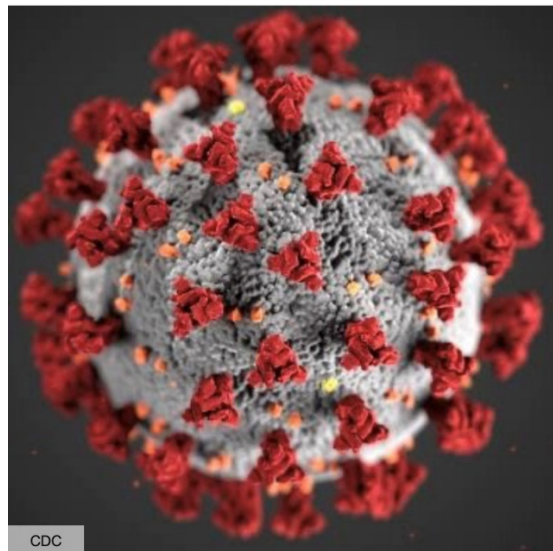


COVID-19 and Seafarers' Wellbeing

Six months ago, we did not discuss viruses, COVID-19, epidemics, and now a pandemic every day. Yet, the COVID-19 virus is a huge concern worldwide, and we will deal with this major virus best – together - with solid knowledge and practical awareness.



Corona Virus – COVID-19

Seafarers are vital for the continuing global supply of goods, medicine, fuel, and food. Most of all, seafarers are the most important asset to continued movement of these essential goods around the world. With 1.6 million seafarers manning the merchant fleet across the globe, there are roughly 100,000 seafarers ending their employment contracts and needing repatriation to their home countries each month. Many face significant challenges in the return to home countries.

With the constantly evolving guidelines for virus containment, including strictly closed borders in many nations, 14-day quarantine rules, and national and regional lockdowns, seafarers are often required to continue service 30 days and sometimes 60 days longer than assignments. This is a hardship for

you, your families, and ultimately, the safety of the vessels, where crew changes and visits home assist greatly. The disappointment, the fears of the unknown, and the uncertainty of new regulations are difficult to absorb and adapt to well. This situation requires fortitude, conscious planning to span the additional days, and of course, the regular work aboard ship.

How can you best stay aware and healthy during these circumstances? First, rely on trusted, reliable sources for key information. If you have Internet access, limit the massive amounts of news and data that is available. It may quickly become overwhelming, as the unknown factors are perhaps the most difficult to consider. Try to be aware when your anxiety is rising: perhaps your tension increases, your stomach clenches, and your shoulders rise to your ears. Others may experience stress with lack of sleep and irritability, or withdrawing from others. That's a time to take a break from too much news, social media, or from constantly worrying. Weighing facts over fear is invaluable, and faith, meditation, prayer, and stillness are important to ease anxiety.



Non-Medical Face Mask

Exercise is also fundamental to wellbeing and studies prove that physical health supports better and more positive mental health. Exercise allows our minds to focus on movement, energy, release of tension, and may also help with better sleep. Reading or learning something new is also helpful. A combination of healthy habits, and positive activities assists with passing the time not spent working.

Washing one's hands frequently with soap and water is important, and disinfecting hard surface common areas. Wearing a non-medical cotton or paper mask is a good reminder to stay physically distant from other crew members whenever possible, and it helps to prevent touching your face. A simple bandana tied over your nose and mouth works just as well for this purpose. Knowing the difference between various illnesses may also help you (chart at the end of this article).



Wash hands vigorously for 20 seconds - often.

Sleep and rest are essential – something that is not customarily easy aboard ship. Restorative sleep and good nutrition help your immune system stay stronger. Concern or worry about family members when apart is additional stress that negatively affects the immune system, and reduced



immunity increases susceptibility to the virus if exposed. If you have underlying medical conditions, please be especially focused on health and wellbeing.












Social distancing, washing hands frequently, exercising, eating well, and staying mentally strong are precautions that help you and your fellow seafarers aboard ship. With tight restrictions on port calls, internet access, and family communication, it's more important than ever to work out a family communication routine to check in at home, even if the contact is brief. For a family member, know this contact is a check in, and keeping each other informed and not overwhelmed is worthwhile. Support is so helpful in challenging times.

This pandemic will end, and being aware, following health guidelines, and focusing on healthy behavior will serve you well. If you feel poorly, have a fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and are concerned, alert your supervisor immediately. Resources are available through your union and/or welfare centers, with international helplines available.

Continuing to work past contracts while concerned for your family at home and your own mental wellbeing is walking a fine line between virus containment – and the safety of your vessel. Global supply depends on seafarers; a population too often invisible to those outside maritime. Please know you are valued. We will get through this critical time, and working together helps ensure the health and wellbeing of you, your families, your vessels – and our one and only world. THANK YOU for your daily contributions, and please stay safe and well!

NOTE: Please see chart on next page for COVID-19, common flu, and allergy symptoms.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS vs. Flu, Cold & Allergies

	COVID-19	FLU	COLD	ALLERGIES
 COUGH	●	●	●	●
 FEVER	●	●	●	●
 BREATHLESSNESS	●	○	○	●
 BODY ACHES	●	●	●	○
 HEADACHE	●	●	●	●
 FATIGUE	●	●	●	●
 SORE THROAT	●	●	●	○
 DIARRHEA	●	●	○	○
 RUNNY NOSE	●	●	●	●
 SNEEZING	●	○	●	●
 WATERY EYES	○	○	○	●

● Frequently ● Sometimes ● Little ● Rarely ○ None

Sources: WHO, CDC

www.co.carver.mn.us/covid-19



COVID-19 Symptoms vs Cold, Flu, or Allergies