



U.S. Coast Guard Sector Baltimore

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MARITIME SAFETY & SECURITY BULLETIN 21-09

Swine influenza virus

Dear Port Partners:

No doubt you have all seen the news regarding Swine influenza being detected in the United States. This is a very fluid situation that may change several times over a few days, if not in one day. Resources for updated information on swine flu, pandemic flu, and prevention methods can be found at www.cdc.gov, www.hhs.gov, www.dhs.gov, www.usda.gov, www.who.org and www.pandemicflu.gov, a site run by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The human swine flu outbreak continues to grow in the United States and internationally. Today, the Centers for Disease Control CDC reports additional cases of confirmed swine influenza and a number of hospitalizations of swine flu patients. Internationally, the situation is more serious too, with additional countries reporting confirmed cases of swine flu. In response to the intensifying outbreak, the World Health Organization raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 4. A Phase 4 alert is characterized by confirmed person-to-person spread of a new influenza virus able to cause "community-level" outbreaks." The increase in the pandemic alert phase indicates that the likelihood of a pandemic has increased. Agents are asked to voluntarily query vessels bound for the U.S. regarding the health of crew members and passengers.

MANAGEMENT OF PASSENGERS OR CREW MEMBERS WITH SYMPTOMS OF INFLUENZA

- Be aware of the possible symptoms of swine influenza including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and in some cases, diarrhea and vomiting. Visit CDC's website about swine flu (http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/key_facts.htm).
- Minimize the number of personnel directly exposed to the ill person.
- Separate the ill person (6 feet) from others as much as possible without compromising safety.
- Have the ill person wear a facemask, if it can be tolerated, to reduce the number of droplets coughed or sneezed into the air.
- If a facemask can not be tolerated, provide tissues and ask the ill person to cover his or her mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing along with a plastic bag for proper disposal of contaminated tissues.
- Gloves are not intended to replace proper hand hygiene. Gloves should be carefully removed and discarded and hands should be cleaned immediately following activities involving contact with body fluids. Gloves should not be washed or reused.
- Personnel having close contact with an ill person should wear a facemask at a minimum or, ideally, a NIOSH-certified particulate respirator rated N-95 or better.
- Dispose of soiled material, gloves, items contaminated with body fluids, and disposable respirators in a sturdy plastic bag that is tied shut and not reopened, and disposed of according to state solid waste regulations.
- Personnel should wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water before tending to the ill

person, and after removing gloves and mask, touching commonly touched surfaces, contacting respiratory secretions or tending to the sick person. Use waterless, alcohol-based hand gels when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled.

- If a person shows observable signs of swine flu illness while on vessel bound for the US, the captain should report the illness to the nearest U. S. Quarantine Station via their agent prior to arrival or as soon as illness is noted (see http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dq/quarantine_stations.htm). Quarantine officials will arrange for appropriate medical assistance to be available and will notify state and local health departments and the appropriate CDC officials.
- Quarantine officials will work with local and state health departments to assist with medical transportation of the patient upon arrival, disease control and containment measures, passenger and crew notification and surveillance activities, and disinfection procedures.

For the Baltimore area, the two closest Quarantine stations are Washington, DC and Philadelphia, PA.

- CDC Washington D.C. Quarantine Station (703) 661-1320 (24-hour access) Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday: 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. ET Dulles International Airport POB 17087 Washington, DC 20041 Fax: (703) 661-5095
- CDC Philadelphia Quarantine Station (215) 365-6401 (24-hour access) Office Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday: 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. ET On call: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

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