

THE EBOLA VIRUS DISEASE (EVD) – KEY POINTS

Ebola virus disease is a severe illness, with death rates up to 90%. Presently, there are no licensed medicines or vaccines for EVD. The illness affects humans and non-human primates.

Several countries in West Africa are currently affected by this outbreak and the following advice includes information collated from official recognised sources. The following was current on 15 August 2014 and you are recommended to check the WHO website regularly for updates at: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en/>

Ships' Masters may wish to print this sheet and post prominently in areas such as the gangway and accommodation.

WHEN VISITING AFFECTED AREAS

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

The incubation period ranges from 2 to 21 days and early symptoms include:

- Sudden onset of fever
- Intense weakness
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat.

Late symptoms include:

- Coughing
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea (may contain blood)
- Bleeding from nose and mouth
- Rash
- Liver and renal failure.

EDUCATE YOUR CREW

Before arriving at affected countries, ensure the ships' crew are educated and trained in identifying the symptoms. The crew should understand the preventative measures and know what to do in the event of infection or suspected infection.

HAVE AN ACTION PLAN

Consider developing a contingency plan that includes infection control procedures such as quarantine arrangements, ensuring infected and non-infected persons do not share toilet and bathing facilities, catering arrangements, sanitising procedures and suitable PPE.

ACT IMMEDIATELY

If a crew member exhibits signs of infection seek medical attention immediately and control the spread of infection as per your contingency plan.

WASH HANDS REGULARLY

Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly using soap and hot clean water.

DON'T TOUCH INFECTED PEOPLE

Do not make direct physical contact with persons infected with EVD or who are suspected to be infected. Do not touch an infected person's belongings, clothes, sheets or their bodily fluids.

DON'T TOUCH ANIMALS

Do not touch wild or dead animals, particularly monkeys and apes and avoid contact with bats. Do not eat food that has been eaten or touched by wild animals.

CONTROL ACCESS TO THE SHIP

Maintain effective ship and gangway security when in affected areas and ensure unauthorised personnel do not board the vessel.
Restrict access into the ship's accommodation – keep doors locked.
Remain vigilant for signs of infection of persons accessing the ship.

RESTRICT SHORE LEAVE

Give careful consideration to granting any shore leave to the ships' crew when calling at ports in the affected areas.

AVOID CREW CHANGES

The ship manager and/or shipowner should avoid making any crew changes in the ports of affected countries.

COOK FOOD THOROUGHLY

Ensure food is cooked thoroughly and raw products are washed. Avoid sourcing food from affected areas if possible.