COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Key Facts for Seafarers

The outbreak of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which causes respiratory illness, was first detected in December 2019 in central China. The number of cases outside China now exceeds those within, with very few countries in the world unaffected by this pandemic. It is vital that everyone understands how to prevent infection and knows what to do in the event of infection or suspected infection.

Have an action plan
- Develop an action plan that includes infection control procedures such as:
  - how to request medical assistance
  - onboard isolation / quarantine arrangements and the disposal or containment of contaminated materials
  - separate toilet and bathing facilities for infected persons
  - sanitisation of affected contact surfaces and areas

Practice good hygiene
- Wash hands regularly with soap and hot clean water for at least 20 seconds – use alcohol hand gel if soap and water is not readily available.
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing – then throw tissue into a closed bin after use and wash your hands.

Keep your guard up
- Maintain effective ship and gangway security and ensure unauthorised personnel do not board the vessel.
- If someone trying to board the vessel exhibits symptoms – refuse access and report it.
- Restrict access into the ship’s accommodation – keeps doors locked.
- Have alcohol hand gel ready for use upon entry onto the ship.

Keep your distance
- Avoid close contact with all visitors, such as stevedores, port officials, agents, pilots and bunkering personnel. No handshakes!
- Try to maintain a safe distance - hold your conversations and meetings with visitors on the open deck or open bridge wings.
- If going ashore, avoid crowded areas and maintain your distance.

Know the symptoms
- A high temperature, a new continuous cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.
- Avoid contact with anyone displaying symptoms of coronavirus.
- If a crewmember is displaying symptoms, isolate them immediately and seek medical attention. Check for any underlying health issues and their current medication.

Stay informed
- Get the latest advice on safety ashore from the port agent – there may be restrictions on shore leave and crew changes.

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