



Marine Safety Information Bulletin

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MSIB Number: 11-20
Date: Mar 19, 2020

Novel Coronavirus – Port and Facility Operations

In conjunction with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance provided to commercial vessels by the Coast Guard in Marine Safety Information Bulletins (MSIB), the Coast Guard is providing the following information to port and facility operators as it relates to COVID-19.

The facility compliance regulations outlined throughout 33 Code of Federal Regulations remains in force, and facility operators are expected to continue to comply with these requirements. Questions or issues that arise as a result of COVID-19 should, where possible, be addressed in accordance with regulations outlined in 33 Code of Federal Regulations, and any plans and manuals already approved/reviewed by the Coast Guard. However, it is recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a myriad of unique operating conditions that warrant special considerations. Some challenges have included cruise ships mooring at facilities not approved for passenger operations, garbage removal, and facility and vessel crew interactions. Because of these operational concerns, the following clarification and guidance is provided to help ensure the safety and security of workers, ports, and facilities:

- **Declarations of Security – 33 CFR 105.245** and approved Facility Security Plans require a Declaration of Security (DoS) to be completed in certain situations, depending on the Maritime Security (MARSEC) level. While there may be a requirement to complete a DoS, there is no requirement for the coordination of security needs and procedures, signature of the DoS, or implementation of agreed upon measures to be conducted in a face-to-face manner between the Facility Security Officer and the Master, Vessel Security Officer (VSO), or their designated representative. As such, electronic communication may be used for the purposes of completing the DoS, however a conversation should still occur between both the vessel and facility.
- **Declarations of Inspection – 33 CFR 156.150** requires a Declaration of Inspection (DOI) to be completed before any transfer of oil or hazardous material to or from a vessel. Prior to the transfer beginning and in accordance with 33 CFR 156.120 and 156.120(w), the persons in charge (PIC) from the vessel and facility shall meet to begin completing the DOI and hold a conference to ensure both parties understand the operation. The DOI meeting/conference can be completed over the radio, phone or at a safe social distance and still meet these requirements, however both PIC's must communicate with each other before beginning any transfer. Additionally, both PIC's shall sign the DOI, but it can be done electronically. All other requirements of 33 CFR 156.150 must be met before the transfer begins.
- **Seafarer's Access** - Maritime facility operators are reminded they are not permitted to impede the embarkation/disembarkation of crew members as permitted under Seafarer's Access regulations. The authority to restrict access resides with Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the Coast Guard, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) for medical matters. Facility operators should contact their local CBP, Coast Guard, or the CDC, State and local health department offices regarding specific questions or concerns about their individual operations. Nothing in the Seafarer Access requirements prevent the

facility from maximizing options to minimize direct interaction that may include use of camera systems, barriers, or other measures. These modifications can be made to the Facility Security Plan or use of Noncompliance, as discussed below, may be used.

- Noncompliance – 33 CFR 105.125 discusses noncompliance with the facility security requirements. If a situation arises where a facility will not be able to comply with the requirements of 33 CFR 105, the facility must contact the Captain of the Port (COTP) to request and receive permission to temporarily deviate from the requirements. Potential situations where this can be used are modified escort requirements in secure areas or mooring a cruise ship at a non-passenger terminal. This request should include any new measures or safeguards the facility plans to employ to mitigate any risk from the non-compliance with 33 CFR 105. While not discussed in 33 CFR 105, the facility operator should also evaluate and consider any safety risks that may be created from the non-compliance. For example, if a facility will receive a different type of vessel than they normally receive, the facility operator should consider if the dock is physically capable of handling that vessel, and any logistical issues that may arise such as movement of personnel from the vessel off the facility, any medical issues or personnel that may be introduced to the facility, supplies for the vessel, and waste removal from the vessel.

- Waste Reception Facilities – Garbage and Medical Waste
33 CFR 158 regulations require all ports and terminals under the jurisdiction of the United States to provide vessels with reception facilities for garbage (33 CFR 158.133(c)). International regulations require these reception facilities to have a Certificate of Adequacy (COA) issued by the Coast Guard that attests to their ability to offload garbage, which may include medical waste (33 CFR 158.410). Medical waste is defined in 33 CFR 158.120 as “isolation wastes, infectious waste, human blood and blood products, pathological wastes, sharps, body parts, contaminated bedding, surgical wastes and potentially contaminated laboratory wastes, dialysis wastes and such additional medical items as prescribed by the EPA by regulation.”
 - Reception Facilities - Ports and terminals must be ready to receive any medical waste from any vessels calling at their facility. This means that those ports/terminal with or without a COA for garbage, must provide vessels with adequate reception facilities for medical waste or a list of persons authorized by federal, state or local law or regulation to transport and treat such wastes.
 - Vessels - In addition to notifying the COTP, vessels must coordinate with the port/terminal/recreational boating facility their needs for reception facilities for medical waste, 24 hours in advance of their arrival (33 CFR 151.65(b)), or immediately if already in port.
 - COA Waivers - If there are issues or concerns with the health hazards associated with any garbage, reception facilities and vessels should work with the appropriate federal, state, and/or local agencies to determine the actual risks and formulate a plan of action based on information received from those agencies. COTP may also exercise their authority to grant waivers under 33 CFR 158.150, if necessary, to allow for offloading of medical waste or garbage to a reception facility without having a COA.

- TWIC Enrollment Centers – If applicants are planning to visit an enrollment center, please use the “Find an Enrollment Center” feature at the bottom of the Universal Enroll website (<https://universalenroll.dhs.gov/locator>) to determine if the center is open and its hours of operation.

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