

Member Update

UPDATE 14 of 21 • 2 August 2021

TOPIC: WA Government Notice to the Shipping Industry – Covid 19

DISTRIBUTION: GTA Members – primary contact list. Please circulate to all appropriate internal parties.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Member Update is to inform GTA members the Government of Western Australia **Notice to the Shipping Industry – COVID-19**.

2. Background

The Western Australian (WA) Government has implemented stringent measures to successfully manage the risks with COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

With the advent of the Delta strain and the rising case numbers around the world the WA government has given notice to vessel owners, charterers, masters, exporters, importers and the shipping industry generally of the WA Government's changes to its expectations and approach in managing COVID-19 risks from commercial shipping.

3. WA Government Expectations of Vessel Owners and Industry

When visiting WA, the shipping industry must take all reasonable steps to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks prior to, and during, the journey to Western Australia and to ensure that no vessel arrives in Western Australia with COVID-19 on-board.

As a minimum, the shipping industry must:

- a) Provide full, accurate and transparent reporting as required as part of the Commonwealth's biosecurity processes and for compliance with individual port authority protocols.
- b) Ensure safe and well documented crew change practices at previous ports of call and during passage to WA including:
 - i. the vaccination of crew;
 - ii. suitable quarantine of crew overseas prior to embarking the vessel, with safe transfer to the vessel;
 - iii. use of accredited COVID-19 testing of crew for early and ongoing detection; and
 - iv. keeping records of quarantine, testing and vaccination of all crew.
- c) Ensure, where practicable, any vessel with positive COVID-19 infection cases on-board does not continue on to WA.
- d) Ensure that any crew member who reports symptoms or exhibits signs of COVID-19 follows safe practices (including isolation measures) to limit the risk of transmission to others on-board.

4. Expectations of Vessel Owners and Industry - Ports of Higher Risk

Different ports of origin may pose higher risk. The WA Government may identify those vessels operated by a **particular company** or that have **visited ports of certain jurisdictions** pose a higher risk of bringing COVID-19 into the Western Australian community than other vessels. For vessels that have **visited higher risk ports** the WA Government require the following measures to be in place:

- e) There be no crew changes at a higher risk location;

- f) There be no onshore crew visits at higher risk locations involving the disembarkation and re-embarkation of crew at the location;
- g) Maritime workers boarding the vessel at the higher risk location must wear appropriate PPE;
- h) PCR COVID-19 testing of any maritime workers boarding the vessel at the higher risk location will need to return a negative result;
- i) Second daily rapid antigen COVID-19 testing to be conducted of the entire crew from the time of arrival at higher risk locations until just before entry into WA waters. Evidence of negative tests could be made a pre-condition of entering WA waters; and
- j) All crew members disembarking in WA from a higher risk location will be required to be vaccinated;
- k) A declaration of adherence to the measures outlined above by the vessel Captain prior to entry into WA waters.

5. WA Government Rules for Vessels that Arrive with COVID-19

Different ports of origin may pose higher risk. The WA Government may identify those vessels operated by a particular company or that have visited ports of certain jurisdictions pose a higher risk of bringing COVID-19 into the Western Australian community than other vessels.

In addition to existing protective measures the WA Government has had in place the following further measures will be implemented:

- a) Denying entry to WA ports for incoming vessels with suspected exposure to COVID-19 and the vessel instead being kept at anchor, where determined appropriate by the State Emergency Coordinator on advice from the Chief Health Officer;
- b) Imposing temporary prohibitions on entry of vessels which have been through higher risk ports into WA waters unless they can demonstrate that all proper measures have been taken to mitigate the risks to public health;
- c) Preventing vessels operated by a particular company that have arrived repeatedly with COVID-19 outbreaks from subsequently being granted permission to berth;
- d) Introducing an offence to knowingly or recklessly bring COVID-19 into Western Australia via a commercial vessel, which carries with it a fine or potential term of imprisonment;
- e) Increasing penalties for providing false or misleading information;
- f) Pursuing maritime claims under the Admiralty Act 1988 (which might lead to vessel arrests);
- g) Imposing port charges under the Port Authorities Act 1999 to recover costs associated with services, provisions and equipment that is supplied to assist in the event a vessel has COVID-19 on-board;
- h) Continuing to engage with the Commonwealth Government to regulate the arrival of vessels from jurisdictions where COVID-19 is prevalent; and
- i) Amending legislation to further strengthen existing powers to restrict entry of vessels with COVID-19 on-board and to manage the costs incurred by the WA Government should they arrive in our ports.

More information from the WA Government that is relevant to the maritime industry can be found at the WA Government COVID-19 Website.

6. COVID-19 test kits included on the ARTG for legal supply in Australia

The following link is to the Covid-19 tests (including Rapid Antigen Test Kits) for inclusion in the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (ARTG):

[COVID-19 test kits included in the ARTG for legal supply in Australia | Therapeutic Goods Administration \(TGA\)](#)

END.