



Covid-19 Response - Guidelines for the use of PPE and precautions to be taken during pilotage

Pilots play a key role in keeping national supply channels open. In doing so they must keep themselves safe.

These guidelines are for a pilot's protection but also for the protection of the ship's crew, so pilots do not introduce the Covid-19 virus to their environment. The guiding principle is to illustrate the need for physical separation and good hygiene protocols when a pilot is performing his duties.

The following guidelines have been written by pilots – for pilots. They should be followed when attending all vessels. They may be amended as the response to Covid-19 evolves.

Masks

Different types of mask are currently available.

- Traditional hard cup type.
- Face masks with external filters (reusable with exchange filters). This type may be more difficult to use with a radio.
- Soft material masks (3M Aura type, surgical masks) in a sealed wrapper. This type is easily carried (if attending more than one ship). These masks allow unrestricted use of a handheld radio even in windy conditions.
- It is essential that a good seal is made across the bridge of the nose when using any mask (this is especially the case when wearing glasses to reduce fogging).

Gloves

- There are a variety of different types and sizes. All should be of the disposable type. Nitrile gloves may be preferred.
- Care must be taken when fitting as they need to be stretched on without tearing.
- Always check gloves for tears and puncture.
- Take care also when removing – they must be turned inside out – starting from the wrist before careful disposal.

Glasses

- Both clear and tinted glasses should be available.
- Note that these may fog up in some conditions and may hinder vision in rain. This effect can be partly mitigated by ensuring the mask seal is firm across the bridge of the nose.

Sterile wipes

- These are important as a general cleansing medium and are ideal for wiping down work areas and equipment.
- Use them particularly to clean any equipment taken to the ship and to clean the office workstation before and after use – keyboard, mouse, phone and desk

- Ensure you clean the workstation on completion of your task (so the next person is left with a clean area).
- A container of wipes is kept in the pilot car to ensure contact surfaces are cleansed.
- It may be prudent to have a container in your private car so you do not transfer contamination to its surfaces

Sanitiser – Hand or spray

- Several sizes and types are available – both liquid, spray and aerosol.
- Dispensers should be located at entrances/exits and on the launch.

Procedure to be followed

The following actions illustrate a minimum level of response to the situation. It is important that you follow these protocols. An individual Pilot may choose to take even more stringent precautions if an enhanced threat is evident. These actions may be amended as the response to Covid-19 evolves.

Preparation

- On arrival in the office – sanitise your hands and then the work area
- Prepare equipment and complete paperwork
- Take care to contact the minimum number of areas and equipment
- Maintain safe distance from any others in the office or hallways.
- Clean the PPU and handheld radio
- Take water or food with you if needed – avoid using any supplied by the ship
Caution as to how these are consumed as contamination by gloved hands may defeat the benefit of bringing your own supplies.
- Take a fresh set of gloves and mask (also take a spare set of gloves – keep in jacket or bag in case of unexpected situation)
- Remember to take spares if doing 2 ships consecutively
- Wipe the place down when you leave.
- If using the Pilot car – wipe down the steering wheel, arm rest, brake handle, gear lever, indicators and key
- Onboard launch – the crew will wipe all surfaces at the Pilot station between tasks (screen, radio, table, arm rests, hand grip bars, door handles – avoid touching anything else).
- Individual requirements may need a mask to be worn while on the launch
- Last item before leaving launch and boarding is to put on fresh gloves and mask.
- Climbing the ladder – work gloves can be worn over sterile gloves if needed.
- Proceed to the bridge – touch as little as possible and keeping safe distance from crew.
- Avoid being in confined areas – such as a small lift to the bridge– with crew.
- The best option is to transit via outside access but this may not always be available
- All attending crew/officers should be wearing masks.

During the task

- Always avoid contact with your face and eyes while on the ship
- Maintain a sensible social distance – this may be difficult during the MPX.
- Avoid contact with ship's paperwork and pens.
- Keep your own paperwork and pens in your bag – avoid putting items in your pockets
- If possible, conduct pilotage from a position removed from ship's crew
- Ask the team for supporting information – e.g. radar distances - rather than have physical contact with the ship's equipment.

- It is difficult to be sure how well and what parts of the bridge have been cleaned – treat all surfaces and equipment as if it was contaminated.
- Use your handheld radio when possible – if using the ship’s radio hold clear of your face
- Use binoculars with extreme caution – either outside of your glasses but away from contact with your face and eyes.
- As the task evolves, assume all your equipment is now no longer sterile as your gloves will have been in contact with other surfaces - VHF radio, pen, glasses, helmet, PPU, bag, lifejacket, cell phone
- All these items will need to be wiped clean on returning ashore or before moving to another ship.
- When leaving the ship, remove the gloves and mask and put in a zip lock bag for disposal.
- Wipe down the radio etc when in the car or launch where there are sterile wipes.
- If proceeding to another task, then a new set of gloves and mask are required and a cleansing of all handled items

It is unlikely ships have adequate sanitizers or spray systems to clean the whole bridge wing, pilot ladder, tug lines, mooring lines, gangway rails, and alleyway handrails, so pilots must assume these surfaces are not clean and wear gloves at all times when touching them. This extends to tug crews and linesmen handling lines and the ship’s gangway.

Finally, when leaving the office sanitise your hands and if necessary, wipe contact surfaces in your car. Avoid taking clothing and shoes into your house. Leave jackets and shoes in a position ready for your next task.

And remember to wash your hands thoroughly when you return home.....