



EVERGREEN MEDIA LINES

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) - Wuhan, China

Issue Statement: On December 31, 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in Hubei province, Central China, issued a public statement that they had identified an outbreak of pneumonia of unknown cause. China has made a determination that a novel coronavirus (referred to as COVID-19) is responsible for cases of pneumonia in the Wuhan outbreak.

For the latest and most up-to-date information about COVID-19, including the latest number of confirmed cases, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus.

These media lines have been prepared for use by media relations and senior officials to respond to requests for information.

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Key messages on COVID-19

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is actively monitoring the situation regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and planning for all possible scenarios based on evidence as the science of the novel coronavirus continues to emerge.
- Canada has multiple systems in place to prepare for, detect and limit the spread of infectious disease, including COVID-19, in Canada.
- This is a serious public health issue and there is the possibility that the virus is present in countries that may not have the capacity to detect or contain the virus.
- The Government of Canada is working collaboratively with partners at all levels of government to respond to COVID-19, and to plan and prepare should the situation escalate.
- There are however a number of things that we can all do to stay healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory infections. Wash your hands, cover your cough and stay home when you are sick.
- For the latest and most up-to-date information, visit Canada.ca/coronavirus or call the new toll-free phone line (1-833-784-4397) to get answers to questions about the 2019 novel coronavirus.

Global spread and preparedness

- COVID-19 is a global issue and there is the possibility that the virus could be present in countries that may not have the capacity to detect or contain the virus.
- Our response must be based on evidence as our understanding of the science of COVID-19 continues to grow.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has assessed COVID-19 as a pandemic.
- The assessment by the WHO is not unexpected.



- In Canada, our health system is prepared for such a situation.
- Since the outset, the Public Health Agency of Canada – along with public health authorities at all levels of government across the country – have been working together to ensure that our preparedness and response measures are appropriate and adaptable, based on the latest science and the evolving situation.
- Our public health efforts will continue to focus on containment to delay the onset of community spread by rapidly identifying cases, meticulously finding close contacts and using tried and true public health measures such as isolation and physical distancing.
- In the event of community transmission, these actions will continue as long as feasible to interrupt chains of transmission in the community and to delay and reduce an outbreak where possible.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada and the Chief Public Health Officer are in close contact with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international partners, as well as with provincial and territorial counterparts.
- A Special Advisory Committee of Canada's Chief Medical Officers of Health is in place to respond to COVID-19. This Committee will focus its attention on coordination of federal, provincial and territorial preparedness and response across Canada's health sector.
- It is a critical time with global efforts focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread.
- This is an evolving situation, and we will provide Canadians with new information as it becomes available.

Canada's preparedness and response

- Canada has multiple systems activated and in place to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to the spread of novel coronavirus. These include the following:
 - The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) activated the Health Portfolio Operations Centre (HPOC) to ensure effective planning and coordination of PHAC's response efforts, in collaboration with international and federal, provincial and territorial partners.
 - Public Safety Canada has activated the Government of Canada Operations Centre to coordinate activities across federal departments and agencies.
 - PHAC, through Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, is in close contact with provincial and territorial Chief Medical Officers of Health to share information, coordinate response efforts, and support informed vigilance as the situation evolves.



- A Special Advisory Committee of Canada's Chief Medical Officers of Health and senior public health officials has been activated to focus on coordination of federal, provincial and territorial preparedness and response across Canada's health systems.
 - Routine traveller screening procedures are in place at all of Canada's ports of entry, and additional border screening measures have been expanded to all international airports in Canada to help identify any travellers returning to Canada who may be ill, and to raise awareness among travellers about what they should do if they become sick.
- The Government of Canada maintains continual preparedness for public health emergencies, taking precautions to mitigate the potential risk of introduction and spread of infectious diseases:
 - a comprehensive surveillance infrastructure to rapidly identify emerging events and infectious diseases, including respiratory illnesses;
 - routine infection prevention and control precautions in all Canadian hospitals; and
 - public health laboratory capacity that is well equipped to rapidly detect serious infectious diseases.
- Now is the time for organizers to be canceling, postponing or modifying events where many people gather. This includes concerts, conferences, and large social or religious gatherings. We need to help prevent transmission of the virus. Particularly if you are ill, do not attend large events or crowded spaces.
- Everyone has to contribute to flattening the epidemic curve. We have to modify our behaviours including personal hygiene measures, like frequent hand-washing, covering our coughs, and practicing physical distancing.

The World Health Organization declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and what it means for Canada

- The Director General of the WHO has accepted a number of recommendations of the Emergency Committee and is calling on all countries to work together in the spirit of cooperation and solidarity, to assist countries with weaker health systems, and to accelerate research for the development of therapeutics and vaccines.
- Also acknowledged is the need for all countries to work together to combat misinformation: focusing on fact not fear, science not rumours and solidarity not stigma.
- The Government of Canada supports the WHO's recommendations to control the outbreak.
- Authorities, frontline health providers and the greater public across affected areas of China have taken extraordinary measures to contain and control the spread of the novel coronavirus.
- Canada is already well positioned. We have been preparing with the provinces and territories since we heard about the first cases in China.



- Even before the WHO declaration, Canada has had its multiple disease prevention and control systems in place across the country to detect, contain and prevent the spread of this novel virus.
- Canada's detection and management of the confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in Ontario and British Columbia demonstrates that our disease prevention and control systems are working across the country as they should.
- Protecting the health and safety of Canadians is our top priority. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to monitor the situation.

Risks to Canadians

- COVID-19 poses a serious health threat and the situation is evolving daily.
- Given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered high.
- This does not mean that all Canadians will get the disease.
- This means that the health care system is already feeling the repercussions, which could affect the health care resources available to Canadians with and without COVID-19 if we do not flatten the epidemic curve now.
- The risk is higher for Canadians aged 65 and over, and those of all ages with compromised immune systems or underlying medical conditions as they are at an increased risk of more severe outcomes.
- This is why we ask all Canadians to avoid all non-essential travel, as well as public gatherings, and to practice physical distancing.
- Public health authorities across the country are working to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities and mitigate its consequences.
- The risk will also vary between and within communities.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada, along with provincial, territorial and community partners, continues to reassess the public health risk, based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

Self-isolation

- The health and safety of all Canadians – both those that are travelling from affected areas and those in Canada – is our top priority.



- Identifying and containing the virus is one component of our multi-faceted public health response.
- The research and data on COVID-19 continues to grow and evolve. We will continue to adapt our advice for travellers based on the latest science available.
- All travellers coming from outside of Canada continue to be at an increased risk for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
- We are aware that the novel coronavirus can cause a range of mild to severe symptoms. It is possible that individuals will not recognize when they first develop symptoms, because they can be similar to a cold or flu.
- If you or anyone you know develop a fever, cough or difficulty breathing within 14 days after arriving in Canada, it is important to contact the appropriate public health authority and tell them about your symptoms and your travel history.
- As of March 16, 2020, all travellers entering Canada are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days upon entry with exceptions for workers who are essential to the movement of goods and people. Individuals should avoid contact with other people for 14 days, while monitoring themselves closely for symptoms.
- To limit contact with others:
 - stay at home;
 - avoid individuals with chronic conditions, compromised immune systems and older adults;
 - avoid having visitors to your home;
 - avoid situations such as social gatherings, work, school, daycare, health care facilities and seniors residences;
 - avoid taking public transit;
 - wash your hands often with soap under warm running water often for at least 20 seconds; and
 - cover your mouth and nose with your arm to reduce the spread of germs.

Exemptions to self-isolation

- The continued global movement of goods and the ongoing delivery of essential services will be important for Canada's response to COVID-19.
- Consequently, an exemption to the request to self-isolate for 14 days should be provided to workers who are essential to the movement of goods and people. For example, this exemption would apply to:
 - healthy workers in the trade and transportation sector who are important for the movement of goods and people across the border, such as truck drivers and crew on any plane, train or marine vessel crossing the border;
 - healthy people who have to cross the border to go to work, including health care providers and critical infrastructure workers.



Workers in these sectors should:

- practice physical distancing (maintain a distance of 2 metres from others)
 - **closely self-monitor**
 - self-isolate should they exhibit any symptoms
- It is recommended that employers in these sectors conduct active daily monitoring of their staff for COVID-19 symptoms (checking for cough, fever or shortness of breath).
 - Be aware that local public health authorities at the workers' point of destination in Canada may have specific requirements. For example, for those working in the health care sector and others who are likely to come into close contact with high-risk groups for COVID-19.

Mass gatherings

- Mass gatherings occur in a range of public places such as spiritual and cultural settings, theatres, sports arenas, festivals and conference halls.
 - They result in a large number of people being in close contact for an extended period of time.
 - The Public Health Agency of Canada advises that gatherings of 50 people or more should be cancelled or postponed.
 - Organizers should consult their local public health authorities who may set other criteria depending on specific circumstances.
 - Older adults and people with underlying medical conditions should reconsider attending gatherings. This includes large gatherings and even smaller events in crowded or enclosed settings.
 - If you have symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing), do not attend a mass gathering, event or places where people gather. You could put someone whose health is vulnerable at risk.
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- The Public Health Agency of Canada has posted a risk-informed decision-making [tool](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus) on Canada.ca/coronavirus to help public health authorities and event organizers work together to determine public health risks and actions for mass gatherings.
 - If the virus causing COVID-19 spreads within a community, individuals may also consider avoiding non-essential gatherings, running errands outside of peak hours and increasing physical distance with others to 2 metres, where possible.

Surveillance for COVID-19

- Canada's health system has been on high alert to detect possible COVID-19 cases for many weeks.



- Frontline health providers and laboratories have been vigilantly triaging and testing possible cases. Public health authorities have carried out detailed investigations and contact tracing on all confirmed cases to rule out the possibility of community spread.
- Canada is stepping up our preparedness and response approach, based on the latest and best evidence available, to meet the challenges posed by this evolving outbreak.
- At this time, Canada remains focused on containment efforts to delay and slow the spread of COVID-19. We do this by rapidly identifying cases, meticulously finding close contacts and using proven public health measures such as isolation and recommending that Canadians practice physical distancing, which means increasing physical distance with others to 2 metres, where possible.
- In the event of community transmission, these actions will continue as long as feasible to interrupt chains of transmission in the community and to delay and reduce outbreak activity where possible.
- In addition, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 outbreak to, and within, countries around the world reinforces the priority we are placing on expanding surveillance in Canada.
- This will increase our ability to detect cases that could signify possible community spread in Canada, and assist public health authorities in taking rapid and targeted action to interrupt spread and delay and reduce the impact of COVID-19 outbreaks.
- Canada has a highly integrated federal, provincial and territorial approach to surveillance, involving frontline healthcare settings and laboratories across the country that have effectively equipped us to detect respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19.
- Public health laboratories across Canada are also working together to report COVID-19 test results weekly. These reports will allow us to monitor where COVID-19 is occurring, which can provide us with an early signal of potential clusters that can indicate community spread.
- Hospital surveillance is another important area for detection of COVID-19. These sites allow us to monitor for people with respiratory symptoms, including those with pneumonia or severe infections, even if they have not travelled to an affected country. This is another means of broadening the scope of our surveillance to identify signals of potential community spread so that public health authorities can take appropriate action.
- Finally, Canada has established networks of pediatricians and family doctors that are essential to surveillance. These networks include providers at the front line of primary care, who are often the first to detect new or unexpected patterns of illness that may be a first alert to an emerging health concern.
- It is by bringing data together from all these sources that we can detect signals and investigate transmission patterns to closely monitor the potential emergence and spread of COVID-19 in communities across Canada.



Analysis

Testing incidents under investigation

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Lab (NML) in Winnipeg is performing diagnostic testing for the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The NML is working in close collaboration with provincial and territorial public health laboratories to ensure that persons under investigation for the novel coronavirus are confirmed or ruled out through laboratory testing.
- Multiple provincial public health laboratories can now test for the novel coronavirus with a very high degree of accuracy.
- British Columbia, **Saskatchewan**, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec are able to confirm laboratory diagnostics for the virus that causes COVID-19. For all other provinces, their results undergo additional testing at NML because this is a previously unknown virus and it is good practice to use additional tests to provide further confirmation of initial laboratory findings.
- Presumptive positive cases that are identified through provincial/territorial testing are managed from a public health and infection control perspective in the same manner as confirmed cases.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is in close contact with provincial and territorial counterparts.
- We will keep Canadians informed as the situation evolves.

Coronavirus test kits

- The National Microbiology Lab (NML) is working in close collaboration with provincial and territorial public health laboratories to ensure that persons under investigation for COVID-19 are confirmed or ruled out through laboratory testing.
- Provinces and territories are using the testing approach developed and validated by the NML.
- Furthermore, provincial lab results undergo quality assurance testing at the NML.

Testing individuals

- Testing for the novel coronavirus in symptomatic individuals has clear clinical and public health value, but the same is not true for testing asymptomatic persons.
- Canada has and will continue to test all symptomatic individuals, as part of our evidence-based approach, while considering the evolving science on other testing



scenarios. As the science evolves, our approach will keep pace, and policies and protocols will be updated accordingly.

- The value of testing asymptomatic individuals is unclear. Canada has and will continue to take a measured, evidence-based approach to all of these critical decision points around some of the key unknowns on COVID-19.
- One thing that is clear in our approach is that we test all symptomatic individuals and our threshold for that has been very low.
- It is important to understand that this is not a simple or straightforward issue, and the science is not clear.
- Testing asymptomatic individuals can confer a false sense of reassurance because an asymptomatic individual who tests negative could still go on to become symptomatic and develop the disease within the incubation period. The timing of testing matters. This is why we took the precaution to quarantine individuals again in Canada. There is a real assurance in monitoring for the 14-day incubation period and that means more for preventing spread than a potentially false negative test result.
- In addition, if an asymptomatic individual was tested and the test was positive, it is not clear what the significance and implications are. A positive test could mean presence of virus genetic material was detected, but that does not mean the person is necessarily infectious to others.

Why asymptomatic people are not being tested for COVID-19

- It is important to focus on testing the right people at the right time.
- Testing in Canada is focused on people who present with symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
- Testing people who are asymptomatic is not considered an effective approach to detecting and preventing the spread of this virus and may give a false sense of reassurance.
- Most individuals tested to date have had symptoms and a history of travel, or contact with a traveller, to a known affected country.
- More recently, all travellers returning from any destination outside of Canada are being advised to monitor their symptoms. If they experience symptoms, they are asked to isolate themselves and contact their public health authority or health care provider who will determine whether they need further health assessment and testing.
- In addition, we are expanding testing for people without travel history by including testing of COVID-19 for patients who are already being tested for other respiratory viruses.



- This approach will help bolster our response by helping us quickly detect and monitor any potential community spread of COVID-19.

Virus epidemiology

- In Canada, and around the world, researchers are actively investigating all aspects of the novel coronavirus outbreak to further understand this disease and how the outbreak may progress.
- Canada is following the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO), which recommends a quarantine period of two weeks (14 days).
- The WHO noted on February 10, 2020 that it is not considering changing its recommended quarantine time.
- The WHO has cautioned that a 24-day incubation period could be an outlier or an unrecognized second exposure. An unrecognized second exposure is a situation where an individual already recognized as having been exposed to the virus is exposed to the virus again but this second exposure is not recognized. If they develop illness due to the second exposure it may mistakenly appear like the incubation period is longer than 14 days because the “clock was not reset” at the time of the second exposure.
- To date, there has been no verified data to suggest the incubation period extends beyond 14 days. The report from China requires careful review to establish whether the finding is valid.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is an active participant in a number of expert groups that are examining how the disease is transmitted, developing models to predict how it may spread, and developing guidance for infection prevention and control based on the most recent information.
- PHAC continues to liaise with international partners, including the WHO, to better understand the epidemiology of this disease.

Supplies and medical devices

Personal Protective Equipment

- There are global challenges securing personal protective equipment – that’s masks, gowns and diagnostic tests.
- Urgent work is underway with provinces and territories to bulk order supplies and get them where they are needed.
- We are pulling out all the stops from bulk ordering to expediting delivery.



- We have issued an industry-wide call out so that we are in constant touch with suppliers on Canada's requirements.
- Canadians can be assured that Canada is working non-stop on all fronts to provide essential supplies.
- As an emergency public health measure, Canada is expediting access to medical devices.
- Canada needs 7 million masks immediately and we have commitments from suppliers to meet most of that requirement.
- Canada has secured near-term supply of swabs for the next week and are taking steps to secure a very significant supply for all provinces and territories.

Interim Order Respecting COVID-19-related Medical Devices

- Our top priority is the health and safety of Canadians.
- Early diagnosis is critical to slowing and reducing the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- As an emergency public health measure, the Minister of Health has signed an Interim Order to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices.
- With the Interim Order, two new diagnostic tests are made readily accessible in Canada:
 - the Roche Molecular Systems Inc. cobas SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic device;
 - the ThermoFisher Scientific TaqPath™ COVID-19 Combo Kit.
- An Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms available to the Government of Canada to help make health products available to help address larger-scale, public health emergency situations.

If pressed on the US directive to allow unauthorized health products:

- Health Canada will continue to use all tools at its disposal to expedite the supply of safe and effective health products related to COVID-19. However, the department is not providing blanket approval of unauthorized drugs or devices. We will update Canadians with any new information as it arises.



- The Interim Order will also ensure that other COVID-19-related medical devices are available to treat, mitigate, or prevent COVID-19, as necessary.

If pressed on Cost Recovery:

- To remove impediments for manufacturers in this time of public health need, Health Canada will waive all application fees for COVID-19 medical devices subject to this Interim Order.

Border measures

- As the outbreak of COVID-19 has spread to an increasing number of countries, we have expanded our border measures.
- The Government of Canada has put in place enhanced border measures at Canadian airports to help identify **any** travellers returning to Canada who may be ill—regardless of where they are coming from.
- The Government of Canada has prohibited foreign nationals from entering Canada. This measure does not apply to air crews, travellers arriving in Canada in transit to a third country, Canadian permanent residents, diplomats or immediate family members of Canadian citizens.
- The Government will redirect some international passenger flight arrivals to four airports: Toronto Pearson International Airport, Vancouver International Airport, Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport and Calgary International Airport.

This measure will not affect domestic flights or flights from the United States, sun destinations (such as Mexico and the Caribbean), or St. Pierre-et-Miquelon, which can continue to operate on their regular routes and land at current Canadian destinations. The Government is working closely with the airline industry and airports to avoid unnecessarily disrupting operations and minimize inconveniencing travellers.

Canada will also implement measures at airports to:

- strengthen health screening;
- increase presence to conduct further health screening and public outreach;
- increase signage throughout the arrivals area to encourage travellers to follow the latest public health guidance;
- prevent all travellers who have COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of their citizenship, from boarding international flights to Canada;
 - airlines will conduct a basic health assessment of all air travellers based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada.



- This includes making information readily available and raising awareness among **all** travellers about what they should do if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. In addition, we continue to advise travellers coming from any location to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- In addition, airlines will prevent all travellers who present COVID-19 symptoms, regardless of their citizenship, from boarding international flights to Canada. Airlines will conduct a basic health assessment of all air travellers based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Also, if you return from Italy, Iran, or Hubei province (China) you will be asked to contact the public health authority in the province or territory where you live or are staying within 24 hours of arriving in Canada and to provide your contact information.
- We continue to monitor and assess the global risk of COVID-19. To keep pace with the evolving situation, our response measures are being adjusted and refined in accordance with the global risk assessment. This includes updating our travel health notices with increased risk levels.
- For Canadians who have travelled abroad, we continue to advise that you monitor your health after you return. If you become sick, it is good practice to call ahead to inform your health care professional and tell them about your travel history.

Screening of Canadian Travellers Returning to Canada

- As part of the Government of Canada's enhanced border measures to contain further introduction and spread of COVID-19, airlines are conducting a health check of all travellers before boarding a flight to Canada.
- The health check is based on guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada, in line with the World Health Organization's recommendations.
- Individuals will be screened for the following symptoms by airline personnel:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Difficulty breathing
- If air operators observe a traveller with symptoms or if the passenger answers yes to any of the questions on the health check, they will be refused boarding for a period of 14 days or until they provide a medical certificate confirming that their symptoms are not related to COVID-19.
- Further instructions and advice will be provided to travellers who are denied boarding advising them to follow the guidance of local public health authorities. These travellers will also be directed to the appropriate consular services.



- These measures will help protect the health of all Canadians.

On the health check

- Airline staff will be advised to maintain distance between themselves and travellers at all times, and to encourage travellers to do so as well.
- Airline staff will observe if travellers are showing symptoms of COVID-19 and will ask every traveller if they have a fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- They will also ask if travellers have been denied boarding in the past 14 days due to a medical reason related to COVID-19.
- However, there is allowance for travellers to provide a medical certificate certifying that any symptoms they have are not related to COVID-19.
- These measures are focused on travellers, not crew members.

On enforcement

- Any traveller who provides false or misleading answers about their health during screening could be subject to a penalty of up to \$5,000 under the *Aeronautics Act*.

Travel Advice

- The Government advises to postpone or cancel all non-essential travel outside of Canada. This means reconsidering vacations, sporting and entertainment events, large international conferences and other elective travel.
- This is especially important for older adults and people with underlying medical conditions who are at a higher risk of developing severe disease. In addition, it is particularly important for health care workers and others who come into close contact with these individuals to avoid travel.
- By making the choice to stay at home and not travel, you are protecting yourself, your family and doing your part to help us to slow the spread of coronavirus and protect the most vulnerable in our communities.
- It is also important to remember that if you travel abroad, you could be subject to the measures of other countries. Your one-week trip may become much longer. You may also have reduced access to quality healthcare.



- Federal and provincial public health leaders have recommended that all travellers from outside of Canada self-isolate for 14 days. These efforts will contribute to slow the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in Canada.
- All travellers are reminded to follow usual health precautions such as washing their hands often, with soap and warm running water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available, and practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette. Canadians should always tell a health care professional about their travel history if they become ill after returning to Canada.
- Upon returning to Canada, travellers are also being asked to monitor their health for fever, cough or difficulty breathing, wash their hands often for 20 seconds and cover their mouth and nose with their arm when coughing or sneezing.
- In addition, some provinces and territories may have specific recommendations for certain groups such as health care workers.

Travel Health Notices

- The Public Health Agency of Canada issues Travel Health Notices to inform Canadian travellers of an increased or unexpected potential health risk in a country or region outside of Canada.
- The Travel Health Notices also provide information on preventative measures travellers can take to help reduce these risks.
- The following is considered when adding countries or areas to the COVID-19 affected areas list.
 - Multiple instances of spread have occurred at the community level (multiple clusters—not in definable settings such as a household).
 - Evidence of geographical spread; and
 - Whether cases can be linked to an exposure (i.e. to another case or because of travel to another country with ongoing transmission of COVID-19).
- The COVID-19 Affected Areas List on Canada.ca/coronavirus includes all countries with Travel Health Notices related to COVID-19.

Cruise ships

Cruise ship travel

- The Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending that Canadians avoid all cruise ship travel because of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.
- Cruise passengers include travellers from around the world who may be arriving from areas with known or unknown spread of the novel coronavirus.



- The virus can spread quickly on board cruise ships because of the close contact amongst passengers.
- Older people and people with a weakened immune system or underlying medical condition are at a higher risk of developing complications from COVID-19.
- As the situation evolves, many countries are implementing policies and restrictions in order to contain the COVID-19 outbreak, which could ultimately result in travellers being subject to quarantine procedures.
- The most important precautions recommended for travellers to prevent respiratory and other illnesses while travelling include:
 - wash your hands often with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds;
 - use alcohol-based hand sanitizer only if soap and water are not available; it is a good idea to always keep some with you when you travel;
 - eat and drink safely abroad by staying away from raw or undercooked food and meat;
 - avoid high-risk areas such as farms, live animal markets and areas where animals may be slaughtered; and
 - avoid close contact with people who may be sick, especially if they have difficulty breathing or have a fever or cough.
- In addition, effective March 1, 2020, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the world's largest cruise industry trade association, and its members have adopted enhanced protocols for ocean-going guests and crew who have recently travelled from or through Iran, South Korea and China, including Hong Kong and Macau.
- CLIA members are to deny boarding to all persons who:
 - have travelled from, visited or transited via airports in Iran, South Korea and China, including Hong Kong and Macau, within 14 days before embarkation;
 - have had close contact with, or helped care for, anyone suspected or diagnosed as having COVID-19, within 14 days before embarkation; or
 - are currently subject to health monitoring for possible exposure to COVID-19.

Japanese quarantine – Diamond Princess cruise ship

Given the evolving nature of the situation, please consult before using these key messages.

- The Government of Canada takes the health and safety of all citizens very seriously, both at home and abroad.
- We are aware that some Canadians on the *Diamond Princess* declined to take the government-chartered flight home from Japan. In addition, Canadians who had symptoms of, or tested positive for, COVID-19 were not permitted to board the chartered flight.



- Out of an abundance of caution, these individuals as well as any foreign nationals who seek to enter or transit through Canada on their way home who were *Diamond Princess* passengers will be placed in mandatory quarantine for up to 14 days in a designated quarantine site near their point of arrival.
- The length of the quarantine will in part depend on when they disembarked the ship prior to their arrival in Canada.
- Authority to quarantine is made pursuant to an Emergency Order under the *Quarantine Act*.

Supplementary messages

- Many air carriers and countries have established travel restrictions in response to the spread of the coronavirus. Canadians and other travellers who have chosen not to evacuate may face travel restrictions.
- Canadians and foreign nationals seeking to travel to Canada by commercial means will be subject to the *Quarantine Act* upon their arrival.
- This measure includes any foreign nationals who were in quarantine on board the *Diamond Princess* cruise ship and who attempt to transit through Canada onward to their final destination.
- We have taken this step to support the health of individuals arriving in Canada from an area with an outbreak of COVID-19 – and therefore at greater risk of having been exposed to the virus or becoming ill – and to minimize the risk of exposure among the broader population.
- At this time, we have been able to detect any cases within Canada, treat them appropriately, quickly share information across jurisdictions in Canada and, through isolation, limit the spread of the coronavirus disease, COVID-19.
- As this is an evolving situation, we continue to closely monitor the situation and will adapt measures, if and as required, to protect the health and safety of all Canadians.
- We will continue to provide Canadians with new information as it becomes available.

MS Westerdam cruise ship

- Protecting the health and safety of Canadians – both at home and abroad – is our top priority.
- Canadian officials have been in contact with the Canadian citizens who were on board the *MS Westerdam* and have offered them consular assistance.
- Out of an abundance of caution because of a reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case, Canadian passengers identified as having been on the *MS Westerdam*



initially underwent enhanced screening upon arrival at their point of entry into Canada.

- They were also asked to self-isolate for 14 days and to report to their local public health authority to be monitored for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Based on recent evidence, and what we know about the health of the passengers from the *MS Westerdam* cruise ship, there is no indication that individuals on the ship were exposed to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.
- As a result, Canada's border measures specific to passengers who were on the *MS Westerdam* have been changed to reflect the reduced risk to public health.
- These individuals will now be asked to monitor their health and contact a local public health authority if they develop symptoms. They will also receive an information handout on COVID-19.
- We have multiple systems in place to prepare for, detect and limit the spread of infectious disease, including COVID-19, in Canada.
- Travellers are reminded to follow usual health precautions such as washing their hands often, avoiding contact with persons who are sick, and practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Canadians should always tell their health care providers about their travel history if they become ill after returning to Canada.

Repatriation of Canadians in China

[content is in a separate package – will be added to this one at a later date]