



International Chamber of Shipping

Shaping the Future of Shipping

ICS releases Vaccination Roadmap to quicken seafarer job rollout

As the US, Netherlands and other nations begin to roll out vaccines to all seafarers, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has today [published](#) a Vaccination Roadmap framework to help establish vaccination hubs dedicated to seafarers across the world, alongside other major maritime NGOs.

To date, 16 states in the US have begun vaccination programmes for non-native crew delivering goods in their ports. Other European countries are set to follow suit in the coming weeks and months due to successful vaccinations programmes for their own population, including the Netherlands which will [launch](#) a vaccination programme for all seafarers, regardless of nationality, flying under the Dutch flag from mid-June.

To help governments and companies responsible for creating hubs, the 21-page document has information on vaccine eligibility, implementation, distribution, administration and legal issues.

Seafarers are a unique population with their own requirements for international travel. To protect the health of seafarers, passengers and the general public, and to minimize disruptions to trade and global supply chains, vaccination of seafarers is essential.

Guy Platten, Secretary General of the International Chamber of Shipping, commented:

“The pace of covid-19 vaccine production is a modern marvel, but the world is reeling over distribution delays. Soon, seafarers will be delivering the vaccine by sea freight. Already they deliver critical PPE, safety boxes, syringes, and other medical materials for the vaccine rollout. Seafarers must be prioritised for the vaccine to not further exacerbate delivery delays.”

While industry bodies are working with authorities at a national, regional and international level to prioritise rapid access to vaccinations for seafarers, a roadmap dedicated to seafarer vaccination will help to achieve global immunization.

The document can be used by shipping companies (their agents and representatives, including crew agencies), maritime administrations and national health authorities, in liaison with other authorities (such as local customs, immigration, border control, seaport and civil aviation) and seafarers, during the planning and roll-out stages of the vaccination programme.

The roadmap allows governments, regions and companies responsible for port authorities to expedite putting procedures in place to create vaccine hubs, once they are ready to begin vaccine rollout to seafarers. Port authorities will work in collaboration with other stakeholders, including shipowners, charities and medical staff to ensure effective vaccine implementation.

These learnings can be translated and replicated globally when other countries are in the position to do the same. The roadmap will allow countries to do so quickly, by allowing governments, companies and other stakeholders to learn from the best practise of others.

Eligibility

The vaccination programme will be targeted at seafarers who:

- need to leave their vessels and return home;
- emanate from countries which currently do not have vaccination available (roughly 60% of the seafaring population);
- emanate from countries which currently have not prioritised seafarers in their vaccination campaigns.

Types of vaccination

With over 50 vaccines in clinical trials, it is recommended that the vaccination administered should be on the WHO [list of vaccines](#). Due to the transient profile of international seafarers, single dose vaccines are strongly preferred under this roadmap. However it is recognized that these may not always be available in certain countries. Should a second dose be needed, plans should be developed for the second injection to be received in a timely manner.

Implementing the roadmap

National and local authorities, ships and seafarers and welfare providers should contribute to forming a multi-disciplinary team. This will be required to establish-and implement a seafarer vaccination roadmap, from -establishing a centre to rolling out the programme.

Establishing a vaccination site

Sites for vaccination hubs will be chosen based on their efficient crew access, plentiful vaccine supply and appropriate infrastructure support to supply and store vaccines. A site could be a port or an airport, or in existing medical facilities that are already used as a vaccination centre.

Legal and liability considerations

Vaccination requires an individual's informed and voluntary consent. If an employed seafarer refuses vaccination, employers should consider the reasons given carefully. Employers may consider not allowing unvaccinated employees to work. Each case will need to be considered on its own facts and an individual response made accordingly.

Due to the complexity of legal issues involved in vaccination of seafarers, it is suggested that interested stakeholders review the [ICS guidance](#) on the subject.

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The full Vaccination Roadmap can be found [here](#).

An image of vaccinated seafarers in the USA is [here](#) (credit Barbara Shipley).

Media enquiries

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