

British Virgin Islands

PROTOCOLS TO RECEIVE CRUISE SHIPS IN RELATION TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Acknowledgement for the Safe Return of Cruise Calls to BVI Ports

In response to the current COVID-19 pandemic and to protect the populace, the BVI Ports Authority has developed COVID-19 Management Plans detailing the requirements to receive cruise ship calls. The contents of this plan take into account Caribbean guidelines that have been developed for the safe resumption of Cruise Ship Operations within our region and aboard cruise vessels. This plan speaks to the minimum conditions to receive a passenger ship at the BVI Ports Authority Cruise Pier.

Rationale

To set out the protocol for the safe acceptance of cruise calls at the Cruise Pier during a pandemic which shall replace all normal operating procedures until the Health Emergency Operations Centre advises otherwise and the return to normal operating procedures is re-established by the BVI Ports Authority.

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Territorial Contact Points

1. Cruise Agent & Tour Operators

- 284-340-5718/494-2872 romneyops@romascogroup.com Romasco
- 284-541-6297/494-2268 operations@islandshipping.com Island Shipping
- 284-541-6297/340-3692 eptoursvi@gmail.com Elroy's Cruise Line & Trading Co. Ltd

2. BVI Ports Authority

Operations Director, Dean Fahie 284-442-5600 dfahie@bviports.org

3. TPPL

CEO- Vance Lewis 284-541-1000/vlewis@tortolapier.com

4. BVI Health Services Authority:

- 852 7545 Emergency Room
- 542 8144 Health Disaster Coordinator
- 440 1730 Infection Control Manager

5. 24/7 contact point for emergencies

911 Emergency Call Handling Centre
Local Cruise Agent (as above)

Duties and Authorities

The BVI Ports Authority (BVIPA), the Tortola Pier Park Ltd (TPPL), the Environmental Health Division (EHD), and Her Majesty's Customs (HMC), along with local Cruise Agents, are responsible for the implementation of this plan.

The BVIPA is responsible for:

- Ensuring that each cruise line is provided a copy of this document;
- Receiving and reviewing cruise lines' COVID-19 Management Plans;
- Providing copies of this document to local cruise agents;
- Providing 24-hour security at the Cruise Pier and monitoring the secured Pier area for the duration of a vessel call;
- Adhering to all cleaning/disinfection and public health protocols including the appropriate wearing of PPEs by all staff and visitors to the ports;
- Adhering to all general health and safety guidelines including the protocols on the handling of ill staff or visitors to the premises.

The TPPL is responsible for:

- Adhering to all cleaning/disinfection and public health protocols including the appropriate wearing of PPEs by all tenants, staff, and visitors to Park.
- Ensuring that all tenants meet and maintain the general health guidelines to operate their establishments;
- Adhering to all general health guidelines including the protocols on the handling of ill staff or visitors to the premises;
- Developing a COVID-19 Management Plan for the Park and sharing it with cruise lines and local cruise agents.
- Maintaining a safety bubble effect for the Park during a cruise call by requiring full compliance with prescribed COVID-19 health and safety protocols.
 - ☐ **Phase One:** corridor from ship to shorex authorized transport only. (Including escorted authorized independent tours. TPPL businesses excluded from participation)
 - ☐ **Phase Two:** corridor from ship to shorex authorized transport only. TPPL businesses permitted based on % of workers vaccinated. General Public Excluded.
 - ☐ **Phase Three:** Authorized shorex, TPPL Businesses and General Public permitted

EHD is responsible for:

- Timely submission of all relevant documents to the Ministry of Health and Social Development:
 - a. Maritime Declaration of Health
 - b. Ship Sanitation Control Certificate
 - c. Crew List
 - d. Passenger List
 - e. Certified COVID-19 Full Vaccination List
- Design of sickbay to manage COVID-19 cases
- Enforcing prescribed COVID-19 Control and Suppression measures such as handwashing and or the use of hand sanitizer, and the wearing of face masks.

HMC is responsible for:

- Clearance of vessels once Free Pratique has been granted by EHD.

BVI Immigration is responsible for:

The Immigration Department is responsible for the clearance of the persons aboard the vessel so that they may legally enter the Virgin Islands once all health protocols have been addressed and approved by EHD.

- The BVI Immigration Department will usually receive notification of berthing before the beginning of the cruise ship season from the agent.
- This notification will include cruise ship arrival and departure information for the entire season.
- On the arrival day, the agent will notify officials via chat of the expected vessel and time of berthing; to have officials be present for arrival. This notification also targets any early, delayed, or canceled berthing.
- After the ship is docked, Immigration Officials will conduct a contactless clearance where the agent will supply all documents and manifest of names of passengers and crew with their particulars.
- If a crew or passenger is departing the ship, immigration officials will be notified and the passenger are taken off and escorted to the Immigration Office (to be identified based on the berth location of the vessel) where they will be formally be entered for ongoing transit purposes.
- All passengers passport are not stamped however if a passenger so desires, a stamp will be given to them at that point or the Waterfront Immigration Office, at a later time.
- When Customs officials give the all-clear for the vessel, the ship is cleared, and both officials depart the clearance area.

Local Cruise Agent is responsible for:

- Providing notice of vessel arrival;
- Ensuring that Cruise Lines submit:
 - ☐ all required documentation no later than 72 hours before arrival (or on the day of boarding if the planned arrival time is within less than 72 hours) See timeline requirements for documentation.
 - ☐ updated submission with General Clearance Paperwork and pre-arrival Health with COVID-19 documentation within 24 hours of arrival;
- safe pilotage services
- Safe delivery of supplies

Minimum Conditions to Receive a Ship

The BVI port and public health authorities must review and endorse a cruise line's COVID-19 health and safety protocols before its vessels are permitted to call at a BVI Port. Minimum requirements include:

- All guests 16 and older and at least 95% of crew members (not in quarantine) must be fully vaccinated (i.e. at least two weeks have elapsed since receiving the last dose of an approved vaccine¹).
- Cruise lines shall comply with CDC Technical Instructions for Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Cruise Ship Crew. These requirements address among other topics, testing, quarantine and monitoring requirements for all crew.
- All guests approved to disembark in the BVI age 2 or older MUST present a negative result from a PCR test taken no more than 3 days before boarding the vessel or a Sars-Cov-2 negative test taken on the day of embarkation before boarding the vessel
- Passengers showing signs of illness are to be denied boarding.
- Guests and crew that require emergency or other medical treatment will do so at their own expense or in accordance with any insurance policy or company policy that may exist. Under no circumstances will there be recourse to BVI Government funds.
- CRITERIA FOR DENYING PRATIQUE-
 - ☐ Threshold/Outbreak: > 1% cases crew and 1.5% cases guest (Adapted from CDCS Protocols for Cruise Ships)
 - ☐ For any passenger or crew member that is tested COVID-19 positive:
 - ☐ All cases MUST be reported immediately.
 - ☐ If threshold >1% of total crew or 1.5% of total guest: local public health authorities reserve the right to deny pratique pending further investigations and consultation with health official onboard the vessel or impose additional measures.
 - ☐ Failure of vessel to submit requested documents in a timely manner
- Onboard Procedures – These will be in accordance with CDC guidelines
- On Land Procedures – These will be in accordance with existing BVI Public Health Protocols as follows:
 - a) Face masks are required for all passengers and crew in public/communal settings and during excursions when physical distancing cannot be upheld; masks are also mandatory for crew when working around food and beverages. Children under 5 years may wear face shields instead of face masks.
 - b) Physical distancing is to be maintained in accordance with health authorities' distancing guidelines of 6' during embarkation, on excursions, on island and onboard.
 - c) Hand washing and sanitizing options and reminders must be visible and accessible during disembarkation and excursions.

¹ Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson or AstraZeneca. Additional vaccines may be added based on WHO Emergency Listing

Documentation/Pre-Arrival

All pre-arrival documents must be submitted to the relevant agencies via email in order to complete a contactless clearance. This includes all customs documents and last port clearance.

A day before the ship's arrival, an electronic manifest is sent to immigrationinfo@gov.vg the Chief Immigration Officer, Mr. Ian Penn, and Senior Immigration Officer, Mrs. Penn- Richards for notification.

ehd@gov.vg

publichealthehd@yahoo.com

halexander@gov.vg

Ronald.Georges@gmail.com

dr.harmony@gmail.com

Dpu@gov.vg

Publichealthhd@yahoo.com

Lmichael@gov.vg

Immigrationinfo@gov.vg

IPenn@gov.vg

MPenn-Richards@gov.vg

wsmith@gov.vg

GRomney@gov.vg

Documents	Agency	Time frame
Maritime Health Declaration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The master of the ship or medical doctor onboard ship must sign this document. 	Environmental Health Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated 12-24 hours prior to arrival and updated every 4 hours if there are any changes in the health conditions (COVID-19, AGE, etc.) aboard the ship.
Ship Sanitation certificate Passenger and crew list with COVID-19 test dates & result Number of Crew and Passengers by vaccination status (vaccinated, or not vaccinated). This will be subject to audit and verification if requested by the Ministry of Health COVID-19 positive confirmation list Crew List List of all ports of call	BVI Ports Authority and Environmental Health Division	To be submitted 12-24 hours prior to arrival
Notice of arrival	BVI Ports Authority and Environmental Health Division	Minimum of 24-48 hours before arrival. ETA timings can change slightly due to weather and local traffic at request of the pilot.

Vessel Arrival

Once a vessel arrives at the berth and there are no public health concerns, the normal process of clearance shall prevail unless there are other directions provided under special circumstances, in accordance with the law. All usual protocols will be followed utilizing a contactless approach and established public health procedures including personal protective equipment.

Reporting Requirements

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic or any public health emergency, reporting notification will be 72/24 hours.
2. Reporting will be done via Local Ship Agents as per regular procedures.
3. Issuance of timely pre-arrival notifications by cruise ship companies regarding change of health situation onboard a ship is required a minimum 4 hours prior to arrival.

Passenger Movement Arrangements

1. Physical distancing of at least six feet between individuals or family groups for disembarkation and embarkation will be required.
2. Usage of PPE for passengers and crew will be required for disembarkation and embarkation.
3. Health official monitoring during disembarkation and embarkation will be conducted by the Environmental Health Division/Social Distancing Task Force.
4. Passenger movements within the TPPL/Port Facility are guided by the TPPL guidelines (attached)
5. Passenger movement outside of Port Facilities will be guided by the Territory's COVID-19 legislation and other published Public Health measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Persons/Entities Authorized to Visit Ship & Protection Measures

During the COVID-19 pandemic or any public health emergency, authorized ship visits fromshore side may include the following persons when necessary, having been fully vaccinated and in full PPE:

- a. Ship Pilot
- b. Cruise Agent
- c. Health Inspectors
- d. Medical and veterinary personnel
- e. Law enforcement officers

Provisioning and other Port Service to Vessels

During the COVID-19 pandemic or any public health emergency all port services must be conducted in a contactless manner, including ship to ship and land to ship services.

Contingency in case of COVID-19 Outbreak and Illness Identification

The Agent/Master shall notify their local agent who shall immediately notify the BVI Ports Authority, the Environmental Health Division, and the BVI Health Services Authority, who will provide direction as to the management of the situation.

1. The BVI Ports Authority will cordon off/secure the berth area and, if deemed necessary, move other vessels that may be berthed in proximity.
2. Guests/crew ill will be supported for medivac and care as needed. Cruise agent will have responsibility for evacuation, accommodation and repatriation arrangements.
3. Persons requiring hospital treatment (including COVID-19 patients) will be transported to the Dr. D. Orlando Smith Hospital by ambulance, following established health and safety procedures.
4. Immediate family members or other companion of a patient receiving hospital treatment may be landed in the Territory by Immigration authorities, depending on the medical situation and other circumstances surrounding the particular case. Existing legal requirements and protocols governing border entry by vaccinated international travellers would apply. The cruise agent would coordinate the necessary arrangements.
5. Any passenger that displays signs and symptoms of a communicable disease or illness while at the TPPL park/Cruise Pier the identifying Port/TPPL staff will:
 - a) Escort the passenger into the allocated isolation room at the TPPL facility and brief passenger of the situation and necessary steps to be taken
 - b) Notify the relevant Cruise Agent
 - c) Notify TPPL CEO
 - d) Notify BVIPA Operations Director or Managing Director
 - e) Notify relevant BVI Health Services Authority staff:
 - 852 7545 Emergency Room
 - 542 8144 Health Disaster Coordinator
 - 440 1730 Infection Control Manager
 - f) Ensure that Security Officers are assigned to stand guard at the exit of the quarantine area, restricting access by all unauthorized persons.
 - g) Prepare BVIPA/TPPL Emergency Operations Centre if necessary.
 - h) Ensure responding BVIPA/TPPL staff dons the required PPE.
 - i) Prepare area for decontamination
 - j) Activate BVIPA/TPPL Crisis Communication plan if necessary.

