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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN 11- 03

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Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

SARS is a newly emerging and potentially fatal respiratory disease that is primarily breaking out in China, Hong Kong and Hanoi (Vietnam). Hong Kong is the probable center of the outbreak. Other areas of outbreak include Taiwan, Singapore and Thailand.

The Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization have released advisories to help increase public awareness (see www.cdc.gov). This is a serious disease syndrome often leading to pneumonia and sometimes causing death. We must be proactive in reducing the risk and/or exposure of SARS to our local maritime community.

This bulletin does not modify or supersede the requirements of U. S. Public Health Service Foreign Quarantine Regulation Title 42 Code of Federal Regulations Part 71, which require the master of a ship destined for a U. S. port to report immediately to the quarantine station the occurrence, on board, of any death or any ill person (including those who have disembarked or have been removed) during the 15 day period preceding the date of expected arrival or during the period since departure from a U. S. port, whichever period of time is shorter.

In addition to our mutual concern over the public's welfare this illness represents, I have implemented measures to help protect U. S. Coast Guard boarding teams from exposure to SARS. Among these are pre-boarding queries, intended to ensure Coast Guard personnel do not board vessels until we are sure that either no crew exhibits SARS symptoms or that Coast Guard boarding teams are equipped to conduct security boardings in a way that minimizes exposure.

In order to prevent or minimize delays which may be experienced by these on scene queries and the last minute logistics of staging protective equipment and marshalling the support of the medical community, I request the master of each commercial vessel to provide a written statement to Coast Guard Operations Center (904) 247-7311 and (904) 247-7371 (fax), no more than 12 hours prior to the vessel's scheduled arrival at the sea buoy as to the health status of the crew (see enclosure). Should these reports contain information of ill crewmembers, we will work with the local quarantine station and Public Health authorities to determine whether or not the symptoms are consistent with SARS and implement appropriate measures. I am counting on your help to facilitate this information flow, which is critical to eliminating delays to vessel transits and maritime commerce, while protecting our local maritime community.

General SARS symptoms and information:

1. Early symptoms may include flu-like symptoms such as fever, muscle ache, headache, sore throat, dry cough, shortness of breath and/or difficult breathing.
2. Late symptoms may include hypoxia, pneumonia, acute respiratory distress requiring ventilation, and death.
3. The disease is spread primarily through close human contact, most probably through body fluid contact including aerosol droplets from sneezing.
4. The incubation period may be up to 10 days.

If any crew has symptoms as discussed above, in addition to submitting the below information to the Coast Guard, the master should also submit a report to the Public Health Quarantine Station in Miami at (305) 526-2910 and (305) 526-2798 (fax).

- The crewman's name.
- Where the crewman embarked.
- Crewman's position onboard.
- Description of the symptoms; fever, cough, etc.
- If the crewman reported onboard within 10 days of symptom onset, did he/she travel to one of the areas listed in the first paragraph above? If so, when and where.

These measures will remain in place for an undetermined period of time. If you have any questions, please contact LT Knapp or CWO Schuster at the above phone number extension 152.

R. J. PETOW
Alternate Captain of the Port
Jacksonville, Florida

Enclosure: SARS Information Form

SARS INFORMATION

VESSEL NAME:

CREW MEMBER NAME:

NATIONALITY:

PLACE AND DATE EMBARKED:

LAST FIVE PORTS VISITED WITH DATES:

COUNTRIES VISITED PRIOR TO EMBARKATION:

SYMPTOMS EXHIBITED: (Circle all that apply)

FEVER

RUNNY NOSE (CONGESTION)

MYALGIAS (MUSCLE ACHE)

SHORTNESS OF BREATH

HEADACHE

DIFFICULTY BREATHING

SORE THROAT

HYPOXIA (LACK OF OXYGEN IN BLOOD)

DRY COUGH

PNEUMONIA

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: