



Marine Notice 15/2014

Ebola Virus Outbreak

Purpose

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to draw the attention of shipowners and ship operators to the recent outbreak of Ebola virus in West Africa and to provide advice on the risks posed to seafarers calling in countries affected by the outbreak.

Key facts

The World Health Organization and others report:

- Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever is a rare, severe and often fatal illness in humans.
- EVD outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 90%.
- Countries affected by recent EVD outbreaks are Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Nigeria.
- The virus is transmitted by contact with blood or body fluids of an infected person or potentially, an infected animal.
- Persons who come into direct contact with body fluids of an infected person or animal through broken skin or membranes are at risk.
- Symptoms include fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash and in some cases bleeding.
- There is no licensed specific treatment or vaccine available.

Recommendations

AMSA notes the following recommendations which have been issued by maritime stakeholders:

1. The Masters of ships calling at ports in the affected countries should ensure that all passengers, special personnel and seafarers are aware of the risks, how the virus can be spread and how to reduce the risk.

2. The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code requirements on ensuring that unauthorised personnel do not board the vessel should be strictly enforced throughout the duration of the vessel being in those ports.
3. The Master should give careful consideration to granting any shore leave whilst in impacted ports.
4. The shipowner/operator should avoid making crew changes in the ports of an affected country.
5. After departure from the impacted ports all passengers, special personnel and seafarers should be aware of the symptoms and report any occurring symptoms immediately to the person in charge of medical care or the Master.
6. In the event of a suspected diagnosis of EVD on a ship, immediate expert medical advice should be sought and the event should be reported as soon as possible to the next port of call.

Further information, including on ways to reduce the risk of infection, is available in the following websites:

<http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/Ebola>

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/>

Brad Groves
A/G Chief Executive Officer
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Australian Maritime Safety Authority
GPO Box 2181
CANBERRA ACT 2601

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