



Infection prevention and control management of international maritime crew medical transfers

This document provides information on the infection prevention and control (IP&C) management of international maritime crew that require medical transfer from their vessel to any port within Western Australia (WA). Port staff, flight staff, transportation staff, WA Health, police, defence, emergency services, Australian Border Force (ABF) and other agency staff will be referred to as WA agency staff.

Information relating to the transfer of maritime crew that are well can be found [here](#).

A frequently asked questions fact sheet for maritime workers can be found [here](#).

Standard IP&C principles must be adhered to by all staff during the transfer. These principles include not attending work if unwell, frequent hand hygiene, physical distancing, correct PPE use, enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high touch areas/equipment and limiting the amount of time spent with the international maritime crew members.

Transfer from an international vessel at sea

The following IP&C practices must be implemented during the transfer:

- Hand hygiene facilities must be available during the medical transfer and hand hygiene should be performed regularly.
- Hand hygiene facilities should include hand washing stations that have running water, hand soap, paper towels and a rubbish bin or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains 60-80% alcohol.
- The maritime crew member should be wearing a single use disposable surgical mask (if their medical condition will allow it).
- Urgent transfers should be managed as per the IP&C practices of the retrieving organisations
- WA agency staff assisting in a medical transfer should wear PPE appropriate to the severity of symptoms. The WA agency staff must be trained in appropriate PPE donning and doffing.
- At a minimum, PPE should protect the WA agency staff against contact and droplet transmission of infections. This includes a fluid repellent gown or coverall, surgical mask, eye protection (face shield or goggles - prescription glasses are not considered protective eyewear) and gloves.

- If there is the potential for an aerosol generating procedure (AGP) (such as suctioning, CPR or intubation) to occur, then a P2 or N95 mask should be worn instead of a surgical mask.
- Staff wearing a P2 or N95 mask must be deemed competent in the wearing of these items and perform a fit check every time a mask is donned.
- PPE must be donned and doffed correctly. Correct donning and doffing information can be found [here](#).
- Donning of PPE must occur prior to boarding the international vessel.
- Doffing of PPE must be performed in an area that will not pose a contamination risk to other equipment or staff. Climatic conditions will need to be considered (eg excessive wind) and a buddy system to assist in safe removal of PPE may be required.
- Other PPE may be required for work safe practices during the medical transfer.
- Staff assisting with the medical transfer must be trained in medical evacuations and all other non-essential staff (WA agency staff and maritime crew) must be removed from the area.
- Waste generated during the medical transfer should be managed as per appropriate waste streams. Items with heavy contamination of body fluids will need to be disposed of as clinical waste, sharps waste must be managed as per sharp safety requirements (into a secure sharps safety container) and general waste can be disposed of in the general waste stream.
- Single use items should be used where possible.
- Following the medical transfer, all reusable equipment and vehicles used must be cleaned and disinfected. Any items that require high level disinfection or sterilisation must be safely transported to a facility that can perform this reprocessing procedure.
- The details of the medical transfer must be communicated to the receiving healthcare facility to allow the facility to prepare to manage the incoming maritime crew member safely under transmission-based precautions (contact and droplet precautions at a minimum).

Transfer from the port to the medical facility

Urgent transfers should be managed as per the IP&C practices of the retrieving organisations (e.g. St John Ambulance or Royal Flying Doctor Service).

For non-urgent medical transfers other vehicles may be used. The following IP&C advice should be followed for non-urgent medical transfers:

- Use the largest possible size bus/vehicle.
- Avoid mixing maritime crew from different ships/vessels on the same bus/vehicle where possible. If this is not possible, then crew from different vessels should be seated away from each other, all crew are required to wear a mask, and perform hand hygiene frequently.
- Where possible, use buses that have 2 doors for access: a front door for the driver and back door for the maritime crew.
- Buses/vehicles where the driver has their own separated area/cab are preferred.
- All maritime crew are to perform hand hygiene prior to boarding the bus/vehicle

- The maritime crew member must wear a disposable surgical mask at all times during the transfer. If the maritime crew member cannot wear a disposable surgical mask due to their medical condition, other medical transport should be arranged.
- The driver must wear a disposable surgical mask at all times during the transfer. The mask should be donned before the maritime crew board the bus/vehicle and remain on until all maritime crew have left the bus/vehicle. Information on donning and doffing PPE can be found [here](#).
- Gloves are not recommended for drivers as they can be a hazard when driving, creating an OSH issue, and prevent hand hygiene.
- The driver must always have access to 60-80% alcohol-based hand sanitiser. The hand sanitiser should be taken onto the bus and off the bus with each journey.
- If transferring more than one crew member, maritime crew are to board the bus/vehicle one at a time, preferably through the back door.
- Maritime crew should sit towards the back first and distance themselves as much as possible. Maritime crew should not sit in the front half of the bus/vehicle.
- If the crew member has luggage/belongings, these should be placed on the floor of the bus/vehicle near the maritime crew. The crew member is responsible for handling and managing their own belongings.
- The maritime crew must not have any contact with the driver.
- Air-conditioning is to be set to fresh air and not return air, with the driver window open if possible.
- All maritime crew must remain seated for the entire journey (unless there is an emergency and they are required to disembark/evacuate immediately).
- When the maritime crew have disembarked the bus/vehicle, the driver can remove their PPE (mask), dispose of it immediately into a suitable bin (a secure general rubbish bin or rubbish bag where it cannot fall out) and perform hand hygiene.
- The bus/vehicle can then be taken back to depot/base for cleaning and disinfection.
- All areas of the bus/vehicle will need to be cleaned and disinfected starting with the driver's area and then moving towards the rear of the bus/vehicle to clean the passenger areas.
- All rubbish may be disposed of into general waste.
- Hand hygiene should be performed after handling rubbish.

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