



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health and Social Services

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

3601 C Street, Suite 902
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5924
Main: 907.269.7800
Fax: 907.269.0060

March 4, 2022

Dear Community, Industry, and Health Care Partners Interested in Alaska's 2022 Cruise Season,

The weather is warming and summer is just around the corner. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is sending this letter to communicate with you regarding the upcoming cruise ship season and COVID-19 mitigation efforts. We understand the immense economic benefits cruise ships bring to Alaska and also the challenges that moving larger numbers of people to remote locations can bring during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to fruitful ongoing partnerships with local municipalities, health care providers, and industry partners to ensure a safe and productive cruise season this year. For your convenience, below are answers to some of the common questions that we have been receiving so far.

In 2021 the cruise industry could not sail if they did not follow certain recommendations. Is that also true for 2022?

No, the Conditional Sail Order has ended. Instead, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that cruise ships operating in U.S. waters choose to participate in their [COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships](#). Cruise lines choosing to opt into this program on a voluntary basis will be required to follow all recommendations and guidance as a condition of their participation in the program (i.e., they will not be able to choose which recommendations to follow). These recommendations are aimed at reducing the introduction and spread of SARS-CoV-2 on board cruise ships and are aligned with current health and safety protocols. It should be noted there is no federal or state requirement to operate differently because of COVID. However, COVID-19 is a reportable condition ([7 AAC 27.005 see \(20\)](#)) and so cases must be reported to DHSS. COVID-19 reporting requirements have evolved from 2021 to 2022 to be less burdensome; please see the [Alaska Reporting Guidance](#) for further details.

What is CDC's jurisdiction over maritime vessels including cruise ships?

Under [42 U.S.C. § 264](#), the Secretary of Health and Human Services has broad authority for promulgating regulations to prevent the introduction, transmission, and spread of communicable diseases from foreign countries into the United States and between U.S. states and territories. The authority for carrying out these regulations has been delegated to the CDC Director. Regulations have been promulgated at 42 CFR parts [70](#) and [71](#). This includes specific regulations governing the reporting of deaths and illnesses ([§ 71.21](#)); inspection of vessels and the granting of controlled free pratique stipulating what measures must be met for entry into a U.S.

port ([§ 71.31](#)); authority to order the detention, disinfection, disinfestation, fumigation, or other related measures respecting an arriving vessel or article or thing onboard if necessary to prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases ([§ 71.32\(b\)](#)); sanitary inspection of vessels ([§ 71.41](#)); and inspection of vessels in intercoastal or in interstate traffic if on an international voyage ([§ 71.48](#)).

The master of a ship destined for a U.S. port of entry must immediately report any death or illness among the ship's passengers or crew. This includes persons who have disembarked or have been removed from the ship due to illness or death.

- For ships arriving in the United States, this includes all deaths or illnesses that occurred within 15 days prior to arrival.
- For ships that have left the United States and will be returning to a U.S. port during the same voyage, this includes all deaths or illnesses that occurred within 15 days of departure.
- Example: If an international voyage (such as a cargo ship porting in Canada while on a voyage from Washington to Alaska), then [DGMQ's federal reporting regulations/jurisdiction](#) apply (i.e., reportable to CDC Quarantine Station).
- Example: If an interstate voyage (such as a cargo ship porting in AK after porting in WA), the state/local health department has jurisdiction, regardless of any Canadian waters entered (i.e., not reportable to CDC Quarantine Station).

Who does the CDC cruise ship guidance apply to?

As outlined in the [Technical Instructions](#), for the purposes of CDC's voluntary COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships, "cruise ships" are defined as all commercial, non-cargo, foreign-flagged, passenger-carrying vessels subject to the jurisdiction of the United States with the capacity to carry 250 or more individuals (passengers and crew) with an itinerary anticipating an overnight stay on board or a 24 hour stay on board for either passengers or crew. This was also the standard under the now expired CSO.

Passenger vessels with a capacity of less than 250 individuals and an international itinerary are still under CDC's jurisdiction and must report cases ([Interim Guidance for Ships on Managing Suspected or Confirmed Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)). Additionally, these vessels may follow the COVID-19 Program for Cruise Ships at the cruise ship operator's discretion.

Are State or local entities involved in port agreements before cruise ships can dock?

Yes, port agreements need to be signed with a cruise ship operator before docking. This year, the State of Alaska is working with Alaska communities on multi-port agreements given the fact that many Alaska ports have limited medical and housing capacity and nearby ports may be able to supplement these capacities.

Cruise lines must continue to identify medical and housing facilities through port agreements and have port and local health authorities sign these agreements. However, cruise ship operators will not need to produce to CDC signed contracts between medical and housing facilities. CDC will evaluate this program component but foresees the continued need for cruise lines to pre-identify medical and housing facilities. Port agreements previously submitted to CDC by cruise ship operators before the expiration of the Conditional Sailing Order (CSO) do not

need to be resubmitted (see <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/instructions-local-agreements.html> for more information).

What is the cruise industries stance on the 2022 season?

The member lines of Cruise Lines International Association Alaska have stated that they remain committed to the prevention, detection and suppression of COVID-19 to protect their passengers and crew onboard, as well as the communities they visit. The cruise lines have been good stewards in protecting public health and their current practices have proven successful as they have been sailing in 80 countries around the world, and as evidenced by a successful 2021 Alaska season. The industry has demonstrated its desire to be transparent and good partners to our state and is excited to be back in 2022.

Who could I contact for more information?

- Questions about the CDC's Quarantine Stations: [Anchorage Quarantine Station](#)
- Concerns about my community: [Contact your local Public Health Center](#)
- Reporting of COVID results: [Reporting COVID testing to the State of Alaska](#)

We look forward to a healthy, beautiful, productive and inspiring 2022 cruise season.

Sincerely,



Adam Crum, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services



Dr. Anne Zink, MD, FAACP, Chief Medical Officer
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services