



# Process to transition the status of a vessel from exposed to unexposed in WA

This fact sheet provides information on the process of transitioning the status of a vessel from exposed vessel to an unexposed vessel within Western Australia (WA) under the [Maritime Crew Member Directions \(No2\)](#) ('the Directions').

## Process of transition

The company should develop and submit a detailed transition plan to the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) outlining adoption of either Option 1 or Option 2.

**PHEOC requires a minimum of 14 days to approve transition plans;** transition plans should be submitted allowing enough time for appropriate review and approval.

## Option 1 – Whole of vessel quarantine and approved testing regime

In this option, the COVID-19 risk is mitigated by placing the vessel into 14 days of quarantine on its arrival into WA and undertaking testing of the crew. As a minimum, depending on vessel travel history, testing would occur at day 0 (initial test) and on day 12 (12 days after the first test).

## General principles regarding testing

The testing component of the transition plan should outline how testing will be conducted, and how a positive result will be managed. The following general testing principles need to be adhered to:

- Asymptomatic testing in WA requires approval of the Chief Health Officer (CHO).
- Testing for COVID-19 should be via deep nasal and throat swab with polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing conducted by a WA laboratory that has National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) accreditation for that test.
- Swab collection must be by an Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) accredited health professional who is trained in obtaining COVID-19 swabs, or by a specimen collector from the NATA accredited laboratory. Self-collected swabs will *not* be accepted.
- Testing should be arranged through a private pathology company or contractor who should be informed of CHO approval once granted.
- The name and address of the doctor who will complete the request forms for testing must be provided in the application.
- Specimen collection and testing is the responsibility of the vessel's owner/s to arrange and finance.

Once the transition plan has been reviewed and approved, the CHO approval letter for asymptomatic testing will be obtained by PHEOC on behalf of the vessel agent.

## Option 2 – Whole of vessel clean

In this option, the COVID-19 risk is mitigated by undertaking an enhanced clean of the vessel. All persons who were on board the vessel when it arrived in waters adjacent to Western Australia must disembark the vessel.

**Note that Option 2 does not provide any assurance that persons disembarking the vessel are free of COVID-19.** Any ground staff in contact with those exposed maritime crew members e.g. transport and accommodation workers must comply with infection control measures.

The crew and vessel will need to be managed as follows:

- Enhanced cleaning of the exposed vessel occurs, so that the new crew embark onto cleaned areas of the vessel and the old crew disembark from areas of the vessel that are then cleaned after they leave.
- Any interactions between the disembarking crew and the new embarking crew must be minimised, with appropriate infection prevention and control (IPC) measures in place to mitigate any risk of transmission.
- Crew must still follow current state directions (including the [Transport and Accommodation Services \(Exposed Maritime Worker\) Directions](#)) when disembarking from the vessel, and quarantine in state hotel facilities for 14 days, if remaining within WA.

## General principles regarding infection prevention and control (Option 2)

A detailed cleaning plan will need to be provided to PHEOC outlining cleaning protocols to be used that mitigate risk of cross-contamination and infection, including how cleaning will occur as the last of the old crew disembark. The plan must be specific to the vessel type and number of crew on board and be a comprehensive plan that includes all areas of the vessel.

## Testing for entry requirements for overseas governments

Testing under this circumstance can occur at private pathology collection centres and should not occur at WA government COVID clinics. Prior to ordering the test, the requesting medical practitioner must sight written evidence of the requirement for a negative result as a condition of entry by the patient to that country. The evidence must consist of an official statement from the government of that country confirming that the patient requires a negative COVID-19 test. The requesting medical practitioner must document the reason for the test on the request form as: “Entry requirement by overseas country for immigration or travel.”

- Testing should be arranged by the Vessel Agent.
- Testing can be done at anchor or berth (or in hotel quarantine) and should not delay the transition process.
- Agents should communicate with the laboratory to ascertain when the test results will be available.

Testing for this purpose is not a requirement for the transition process, but shipping agents should inform PHEOC if testing has been arranged.

# Appendix 1: MARITIME CREW MEMBER DIRECTIONS

## SCHEDULE 2

### Vessel Protocols

#### Option 1: Full vessel quarantine with approved testing regime

1. In order for a vessel to return to unexposed vessel status pursuant to this Option 1, the vessel must undertake a 14 day at sea quarantine period, all persons on board the vessel must be subject to a COVID-19 testing regime that has been approved by an authorised PHEOC officer, and a negative test result must be returned for each test undertaken.
2. The 14 day at sea quarantine must occur either within the coastal waters of Western Australia or in waters adjacent to the coastal waters of Western Australia, and at a location that facilitates access for COVID-19 testing. During the 14 day at sea quarantine period no person may embark the vessel without the approval of an authorised PHEOC officer. For the avoidance of doubt this extends to maritime pilots. The 14 day at sea quarantine period will commence when the on-vessel component of the first round of COVID-19 testing is completed. By way of example, if the first round of COVID-19 testing for a hypothetical vessel was completed at 3.30pm on Tuesday 1 June 2021, the at sea quarantine period for that vessel would conclude at 3.30pm on Tuesday 15 June 2021.
3. The specific COVID-19 testing regime applicable to the vessel must be approved by an authorised PHEOC officer. An approved COVID-19 testing regime will include the following particulars:
  - the number of rounds of COVID-19 testing that must be undertaken (typically, and depending on vessel travel history, two or three rounds of COVID-19 testing will be required);
  - the timing of each round of testing;
  - the manner in which testing will be undertaken (including who will take the samples);
  - the testing facility that will analyse the samples.
4. During each round of COVID-19 testing every person on board the vessel must be tested for COVID-19. For the vessel to return to unexposed vessel status, a negative test result must be returned for each COVID-19 test undertaken during each round of testing.
5. On conclusion of testing, the approved testing facility must provide a letter of notification, summarising the test results to:
  - PHEOC at the following address: [PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au) (marked attention PHEOC Planning); and
  - police at the following email address: [industryentry@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:industryentry@police.wa.gov.au)
6. On conclusion of the 14 day at sea quarantine period, and provided that a negative test result has been returned for each COVID-19 test undertaken during each round of testing, the vessel will be deemed to be an 'unexposed vessel' for the purposes of these directions
7. Note that, in respect of this Option 1:
  - it is not necessary to clean the vessel for it to return to unexposed vessel status; and

- persons who disembark the vessel after it has returned to unexposed vessel status pursuant to this Option 1 will not be subject to further quarantine obligations under these directions.
8. A person intending to use this Option 1 must provide 14 days' written notice of their intention to use this Option 1 by contacting PHEOC at the following email address: [PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au) (marked attention PHEOC Planning).

## Option 2: Whole of vessel clean

9. In order for a vessel to return to unexposed vessel status pursuant to this Option 2, the vessel must be cleaned pursuant to a vessel cleaning plan that has been approved by an authorised PHEOC officer, and all persons who were on board the vessel when it arrived in waters adjacent to Western Australia must disembark the vessel.
10. Cleaning plans must be submitted to PHEOC at the following email address at least 14 days prior to the proposed commencement of the proposed cleaning activities: [PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au) (marked attention PHEOC Planning).
11. PHEOC hold the following expectations for vessel cleaning plans (and draft vessel cleaning plans submitted for approval by an authorised PHEOC officer should clearly document the matters below):
- A professional cleaning company should be used, with the identity of the proposed cleaning company documented.
  - Enough cleaners should be used so that the cleaning can be accomplished within 72 hours, with each cleaner only conducting shifts that are 8-10 hours (maximum 12 hours).
  - Cleaning should be carried out in such a manner that disembarking persons are vacated from areas for cleaning, and as areas of the vessel are cleaned, disembarking persons are not able to re-access the cleaned areas; similarly, embarking persons only enter cleaned areas.
  - If disembarking persons access areas that have been cleaned and disinfected, these areas must be re-cleaned.
  - Vessels must be cleaned using a two-step cleaning process involving cleaning (using a detergent with a neutral pH) followed by disinfection (using a suitable disinfectant).
  - Suitable disinfectant must have viricidal properties which is TGA approved for use against COVID-19.
  - All areas of the vessel must be cleaned and disinfected (including but not limited to accommodation rooms, internal passageways, internal stairways, elevator, mess room/galley, recreation rooms, offices, meeting rooms, the bridge, helipad, change rooms, laundry, engine room and storage spaces).
  - All surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected including horizontal and vertical surfaces. Particular attention must be paid to high touch surfaces.
  - Disinfection solutions must always be made up and applied in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines.
  - An area must be designated for cleaning staff to don (apply) and doff (remove) their PPE.
  - An area must be designated for cleaners to take breaks/use bathroom facilities and this area must be cleaned and disinfected prior to use.
  - Multiple disposable cleaning cloths are preferred to reusable types.

- The process for cleaning and disinfection of sensitive electrical equipment (e.g. computers, phones, and control panels) should also be specifically considered and documented, as choice of detergent and/or disinfectant may vary between surfaces.
  - The order of cleaning must be clearly documented and followed by cleaners to ensure no cross contamination or re-use of clean spaces by disembarking persons and include how cleaning will be conducted as disembarking persons leave the vessel. This process should be clearly marked out on a map of the vessel and clear to cleaning staff and persons on board the vessel.
  - A process must be documented to ensure that embarking crew only access those areas that have been cleaned and disinfected with enough time to allow all surfaces to be touch dry.
  - Appropriate PPE to be used by cleaners (surgical mask, protective eyewear, gloves, coveralls or gowns) is to be documented.
  - Staff conducting the clean must have undertaken PPE training, particularly with regards to donning and doffing of PPE.
  - Access to changes of PPE and hand hygiene facilities/hand sanitiser onboard is required.
  - A process must be documented for cleaning and disinfecting of equipment brought on board the vessel by the cleaning team at the conclusion of the clean.
  - A process must be documented for the handling of waste and linen.
12. Following approval of a cleaning plan by an authorised PHEOC officer, PHEOC will provide an unsigned assurance certificate. At the end of the cleaning process, the assurance certificate must be signed by both the cleaning contractor and the Captain (Master) of the vessel. The assurance certificate must contain:
- a full list of the areas that were cleaned;
  - confirmation that re-contamination of the clean areas did not occur;
  - confirmation that the vessel has been cleaned in accordance with the approved vessel cleaning plan; and
  - confirmation that all persons who were on board the vessel when it arrived in or adjacent to Western Australia have disembarked.
13. The completed assurance certificate must be forwarded to:
- PHEOC at the following address: [PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:PHEOC@health.wa.gov.au) (marked attention PHEOC Planning); and
  - police at the following email address: [industryentry@police.wa.gov.au](mailto:industryentry@police.wa.gov.au)
14. Once the original crew of the vessel have been disembarked, and the vessel has been cleaned, in accordance with the approved vessel cleaning plan, the vessel will be deemed to be an 'unexposed vessel' for the purposes of these directions.

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