

Fourteenth Edition  
August 30, 2022  
Status: Final

Developed By: AMHS Staff  
DOT&PF/AMHS

## **PURPOSE**

To establish effective policies, procedures, and practices to help mitigate the transmission of Covid-19 aboard AMHS vessels.

## **SCOPE**

This mitigation plan was designed to address customized service needs under Covid-19 pandemic. The plan has been developed with input from both shore side and shipboard personnel. Covid-19 presents a unique challenge for AMHS operations. This Plan reflects an effort to strike a fine balance between the service expectations and observance of CDC guidelines.

## **PHASES**

1. Circulate this mitigation plan among the contributors for additional comments, suggestions – in revision.
2. Complete the action list, finalize and distribute the plan to all vessels – in revision.
3. Evaluate effectiveness of the plan and make adjustments as needed - ongoing

## **FEDERAL MASK MANDATE (4/18/22 update)**

As of 4/18/22 resulting from a court order, the CDC Mask Mandate is no longer in effect.

## **ACTION PLAN**

### **1. GENERAL POLICIES AND DEFINITIONS**

Below policies have been established to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus that causes Covid-19 onboard AMHS vessels. When testing is required it must be a RT-PCR or an Antigen test and not an antibody test.

#### **A. Prevention**

- i. Face masks will be provided to all the vessels and terminals for crew and passengers who wish to wear one. The CDC continues to recommend that people wear masks in indoor public transportation settings.
- ii. Only ticketed passengers will be allowed to board the vessel, no visitors or un-ticketed customers. (Members of DOT&PF staff and vendors approved for conducting work/business aboard the AMHS vessels are exempt from this requirement.)
- iii. Restriction to the vessel for all crewmembers has ended. When leaving the vessel normal protocol is in place for check-in check-out procedures per department heads and the vessel Master. Vessel crewmembers will observe community restrictions for going ashore if they are in place.
- iv. Passengers will be allowed ashore at all port calls if there are no community restrictions. Communities with restrictions will need to communicate restrictions to passengers via signage, media, or local enforcement personnel.
- v. Crewmembers assigned to vessels in yard status/layup are not permitted to board operational vessels without permission from both the Vessel Master and the Operations Manager.

**B. Screening***i. Screening Crew for COVID-19:*

- a) Crewmembers will have their temperature taken (vaccinated or not vaccinated) to ensure there is no fever of 100. 4° F / 38° C or greater. This procedure will apply to deadheading crew members traveling **to** an assignment prior to boarding the vessel they are deadheading on.
- b) The Purser will require crew members to fill out the AMHS Crew Reporting to Duty Form that is available on the AMHS Internal Resources site.
- c) The Purser will keep a list of those crew members asked to leave the vessel, these lists will be archived with dispatch in the crew list reports - [amhs.vessel.crewlist@alaska.gov](mailto:amhs.vessel.crewlist@alaska.gov).
- d) Quarantine for close contact exposure to COVID-19 positive people is no longer required regardless of vaccination status. CDCs guidelines are:
  - a. Wear a mask when around others for 10 days.
  - b. Take extra precautions to protect other people.
  - c. Watch for symptoms, if you develop symptoms, isolate immediately and get tested.
  - d. Otherwise test day 6, if negative continue masking and taking extra precautions through day 10.
  - e. If positive, isolate immediately.
- e) If a crewmember is showing symptoms while underway, the antigen test kit is authorized for use to quickly ascertain if isolation is needed. The Captain will contact the Port Captain and DHSS/Public Health if more widespread testing is needed using the supplied antigen test kits. There is no random antigen test program for the entire crew currently. When the vessel is in yard status or in port for long durations, use of our contracted testing facility (TSS) or community testing sites will be utilized if possible and when needed.

**C. Physical Distancing**

- i. All physical distancing protocols are followed where applicable, both onboard and while loading/unloading. Vessels will establish a clear and short announcement over the public address system for all departures emphasizing the importance of hand washing, face mask availability for anyone wishing to wear one, and physical distancing.
- ii. Minimize direct contact between employees and passengers, increase physical distancing.
- iii.
- iv. Place 6 feet apart markers/labels/direction signs on the deck where applicable.

**D. Sanitation**

- i. Place hand sanitizers/wipes at the entrance of service locations, elevators, rails, public restrooms/showers etc.
- ii. Daily touch-point sanitization (workstations, equipment, screens, doorknobs, restrooms).
- iii. Use only EPA approved disinfectants and sanitizers and follow instructions provided by the manufacturer; consult with Chief Steward or Passenger Services shore side office for chemicals approved to use on vessels.
- iv. Continue following previously established Enhanced Sanitation Protocols; refer to Passenger Services SOP 04.09 for specifics.

**E. Food Service**

- i. Continue following FDA regulations regarding Food Safety.
- ii. Install sneeze guards at service counters; hot/cold food lines, cashier counter, purser counter etc.
- iii. Post signage encouraging passengers to wash hands often, especially before and after entering food service areas.

- iv. Salad bars/buffets are allowed if hand sanitizers are used before touching shared utensils. Place a hand sanitizer dispenser on each end of the food line. Place signage to require passengers and crew use the sanitizer before touching the shared utensils.
- v. Use suitable utensils when dispensing ready-to-eat food such a spatula, tongs etc. (Food Code Section 3-301.11). Gloves are not a substitute for hand washing or hand hygiene.
- vi. Passengers will be allowed to consume their food in their cabins, if requested.
- vii. Food will be available for take away, using to-go boxes, if requested.

**F. Accommodations**

- i. AMHS will return to double occupancy crew berthing on applicable vessels. Crew rooms must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized at the end of an assignment and ready for the next occupants(s).
- ii. On mainline ferries two passenger cabins will be reserved as quarantine cabins and left vacant for emergencies
- iii. Each room will be disinfected after vacated by the occupant(s). Used beds will be stripped and re-made. All hard surfaces will be cleaned with disinfectant(s).
- iv. Foggers designed for room cleaning can be used to speed up this process. EPA approved disinfectants and sanitizers must be used when utilizing a fogger.
- v. A team of two crew members will clean each state room.
- vi. Place a cover sheet over the upper bunk beds to minimize excess use, replace the cover sheets each time after cleaning the cabin.

**G. While Underway**

- i. Vessels will refer the Passenger Services Infection Control Plan Version 5 located at the Purser Office for responding to Covid-19 symptoms while underway. At the beginning of the operating season and at each crew change;
  - a) The Purser will remind crew that a copy of the Alaska Marine Highway Passenger Services Infection Control Plan version 4 dated August 2022 is in the Desk Reference located in the Purser's Office.
  - b) Inform the crew of the location of the specific isolation area/stateroom identified by Chief Engineer.
- ii. A passenger who presents Covid-19 like symptoms while the vessel is underway will be isolated in the predetermined location and follow the Pandemic Response section (pages 13 – 17) of the Alaska Marine Highway Passenger Services Infection Control Plan Version 5 dated August 2022 and Coast Guard directions.
- iii. A crew member who develops any COVID like symptoms during a voyage is to isolate in their room, if they have one. If not, they should isolate in the vessel's predesignated location and follow the Pandemic Response section (pages 13 – 17) of the Alaska Marine Highway Passenger Services Infection Control Plan Version 5 dated August 2022 and Coast Guard directions.
- iv. The Master of the vessel will notify the Coast Guard as required of any potential Covid-19 cases and follow their directions along with the directions in the Pandemic Response section (pages 13 – 17) of the Alaska Marine Highway Passenger Services Infection Control Plan Version 5 dated August 2022. Master will also inform shore side managers once USCG is notified about the potential Covid-19 case(s).

**2. LOCATION SPECIFIC PROCEDURES**

Below is the list of location specific procedures that include but not limited to;

**A. Food Courts or Cafeterias**

- i. Install/place hand sanitizer/wipes dispenser at the entrance and exit of the food court/cafeteria.
- ii. Passengers order their food which is served by the cook and/or server as usual. Salad bars/buffets are allowed if hand sanitizers used before touching shared utensils. Place a hand sanitizer dispenser on

each end of the food line. Place signage to require passengers and crew use the sanitizer before touching the shared utensils.

- iii. Coffee and soda can be self-served by the customer but one customer in line at a time and equipment is wiped/sanitized often or a hand sanitizer dispenser is available by the coffee/soda station.
- iv. Daily touch-point sanitization (counters, equipment, reach-in coolers etc.)
- v. Condiments in single-use disposable packets only.
- vi. Fully sanitize tables and chairs after each group.

## **B. Dining Rooms**

- i. Salad bars/buffets are allowed if hand sanitizers are used before touching shared utensils. Place a hand sanitizer dispenser on each end of the food line. Place signage to require passengers and crew use the sanitizer before touching the shared utensils. Encourage passengers not to sit at the same table unless household members, companions, friends etc.
- ii. Waiter or the cashier will serve condiments, coffee, soda etc. unless there is a coffee/soda station available. Place a hand sanitizer dispenser on each end of the food line.
- iii. Sanitize or provide disposable menus or menu board.
- iv. Fully sanitize tables and chairs after each group.
- v. Daily touch-point sanitization (counters, equipment, reach-in coolers etc.)
- vi. Do not use tablecloths.

## **C. POS Stations (Cash Registers)**

- i. Install/place a hand sanitizer/wipes at the cashier counter.
- ii. Clean/sanitize hands after handling cash.
- iii. Daily touch-point sanitization (counters, equipment, screens etc.)
- iv. Clean/sanitize the credit/debit cards prior to handling and swiping.

## **D. Crew and Officer Messes**

- i. Stagger meal hours for crew when and where possible.
- ii. Establish distance between crew as much as possible; sharing the same table is OK.
- iii. Crew should be allowed to consume their food in their cabin if they must but not in public areas.
- iv. Food safety regulations and sanitation protocols must be followed.
- v. Salad bars/buffets are allowed if hand sanitizers used before touching shared utensils. Place a hand sanitizer dispenser at each end of the food line. Place signage to require passengers and crew use the sanitizer before touching the shared utensils.

## **E. Car Decks**

- i. Place 6ft distance markers on the car deck if possible.
- ii. Stagger car deck calls in order to spread the number of people on the car deck each time.
- iii. On all vessels, pets must remain on the car deck until their owner(s) disembark the vessel at their final destination.

## **F. Purser Foyers**

- i. Place markers on the floor for 6 feet of distancing.
- ii. Install/place hand sanitizers/wipes around the Purser counter.
- iii. Discourage forming lines at the Purser foyer, serve to a single cluster of passengers at a time.
- iv. Encourage only one member of a group to approach the counter where possible.

## **G. On the Ramp**

- i. Place 6ft distance markers on loading areas where possible.
- ii. Discourage forming lines on the ramp, serve to a single cluster of passengers at a time.

**PROVISIONS**

This section will be used to inventory the provisions used for this plan. Information in this section will be updated periodically by Passenger Services. **All cleaning supplies and PPE for COVID19 will be ordered through the Passenger Services Department.**

Provision	Purchased	Distributed	In-Stock	Source
Face Masks (disposable)	75500	41000	34500	Open Market/State Inventory
Respirators (N95 or KN95)	10000	1000	9000	Open Market/State Inventory
Handmade Face Mask	560	560	0	Local Producer
Cloth Face Mask	4000	4000	0	MARAD and EOC

**METRICS AND EVALUATION**

This section will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this plan. Adjustments will be made as necessary.

Vessel	Action Item	Effective (Yes/No)	Reason(s) (if not effective)	Suggestions (if not effective)
MAT/KEN	BEL Departures	No	Procedural Inconsistencies	Vessel personnel help with screening inside the terminal
ALL	Deadheading Crew	No	Clarification Needed	Test prior to deadheading to an assignment
ALL	5 Day Crew Testing	No	Results not timely	Expand to 7 Day Testing
ALL	Contractors/Vendors	No	Clarification Needed	Temperature Checks
KEN	PPE/Cleaning/Social Distancing	Yes		
ALL	Added tents to prevention	No	Passenger in tents are isolated from others	Face masks not required in tents
MAT/KEN	BEL Departures	No	COVID19 Testing Vouchers Must Be Distributed To Passengers	Bellingham Terminal will distribute the vouchers at check in
ALL	Passenger Age Requirements for Testing	No	Update to State Mandate 10 relaxes testing requirements for passengers under the age of 11	Align AMHS Mitigation Plan with State Mandate 10

AMHS COVID-19 MITIGATION PLAN FOR ONBOARD SERVICES

Vessel	Action Item	Effective (Yes/No)	Reason(s) (if not effective)	Suggestions (if not effective)
ALL	Traveler Declaration Form repository for Bellingham departures.  Traveler Declaration Forms for the different travel categories	No	Clarification Needed	Traveler Declaration forms need to be delivered to the Ketchikan Terminal. Hyperlinks inserted in the Mitigation Plan to identify which declaration form needs to be used for the different categories of travel
ALL	Passengers not required to wear face mask in vehicle while loading	No	Passenger not socially distanced between Purser when showing ID and Boarding Pass	Add requirement for passengers to wear face masks while boarding and while in vehicle showing paperwork to the Purser
ALL	Negative test results for all crewmembers before starting an assignment	No	Per DHSS - Previously positive crew will not shed virus for 90 days but may test positive for a number of days after being released to return to work from Public Health	Modify crew testing requirements to reflect accommodation to previously positive
ALL	Yard/layup crew going aboard operational ferries for business or personal reasons	No	Increased risk to Operational ferries	Restrict unless special permission is granted from Vessel Master and Ops Manager
ALL	ACTION PLAN 1. B) iv not clear	No	Confusion with selecting proper passenger screening form	Modify header for clarity
ALL	Test types	No	Antibody Tests Unreliable	Define Test Type on page 1
ALL	Crew and Pax not allowed to go ashore	Yes, but changes requested	Need to address crew morale and car deck cleanliness	Allow crew and pet owners to go ashore on terminal property in KTN and JNU
ALL	2/1/21 Mask Policy for Passengers, Crew, and in Terminals	No	Mitigation Plan needs augmented Mask Policy to comply with Federal Mandate	Federal Mask Mandate 2/1/21 integrated into the AMHS Mitigation Plan
ALL	4/13/21 Screening procedures include only testing, quarantine, and symptoms	No	With the introduction of vaccines - screening procedures for passengers and crew should additionally include proof of vaccination as an acceptable mitigation.	Expand screening procedures to include the CDC issued COVID19 Vaccination Record Card

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<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Effective (Yes/No)</b>	<b>Reason(s) (if not effective)</b>	<b>Suggestions (if not effective)</b>
ALL	4/13/21 Touch point sanitation procedures	No	New CDC guidance and advancements in cleaning agents diminish the need for hourly touchpoint sanitation.	Change hourly touch point sanitation to daily touch point sanitation to fall in line with the current science and guidance
SW Vessels	4/14/21 Terminal Property Crew breaks in the SW system	No	Crew assigned to vessels that operate in SW have no option for approved breaks on terminal property	Add options for crew to take approved terminal property breaks in Cordova, Homer, and Kodiak
ALL	5/20/21 PRC Testing only accepted	No	Antigen tests are now widely accepted as a means of effectively detecting the virus	Add Antigen testing to the approved screening test types for crew.
ALL	5/20/21 Passenger screening	No	Advances in vaccines and loosening of CDC restrictions warrant changes	Remove screening procedures for passengers
ALL	5/20/21 Crew restrictions	No	Restrictions need to be updated and loosened to conform to success with the Pandemic decline	Lift restrictions for crew per the MOU signed with the unions. 5/17/21
All	6/8/21 Crew restrictions	No	Restrictions need to be updated and loosened to conform to success with the Pandemic decline	Lift going ashore restrictions for all crew.
Mainliners	1/11/2022	No	Allowances for single occupancy crew berthing need to be adjusted to align with previous eases in restrictions	Return to double occupancy berthing that was in place prior to the onset of the pandemic
All	1/11/2022 Federal Mask Mandate updates	No	Updates to Federal Mask Mandate 6/10/21 required in Mitigation Plan	Updates made

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<b>Vessel</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Effective (Yes/No)</b>	<b>Reason(s) (if not effective)</b>	<b>Suggestions (if not effective)</b>
All	1/11/22 Reinstating salad bar and buffet options.	No	Restrictions need to be adjusted to help improve life onboard while caring for safety.	Reinstitute salad bar and buffet services using protocol for safely handling shared utensils.
ALL	3/24/22 Changes in Public Health procedure and AMHS use of antigen testing	No	Update screening section to reflect changes in DHSS paperwork and limited use of antigen testing onboard.	Updates made
ALL	3/24/22Vigor Shipyard Employees			Remove Mask Requirements for Vigor Employees
ALL	4/19/22 Court Order Ending the Federal Mask Mandate			Remove Mask Requirements for All Employees and Customers. Provide masks for those who wish to wear one.
All	8/19/22 Overall revision to adjust to updated CDC COVID guidelines			



**CONTRIBUTORS**

This plan has been developed and updated by many staff, crew and officers who contributed time and expertise. A list of contributors is kept on file.