

Checklist for Port and Local Health Authorities: Cruise Ship Operator Agreements

Checklist for Port and Local Health Authorities: Cruise Ship Operator Agreements under CDC’s Framework for Conditional Sailing Order (CSO)



Background

This checklist is intended to assist U.S. port and local health authorities in their deliberations with cruise ship operators seeking to enter into agreements with port and local health authorities with jurisdiction where a ship intends to dock or make port during one or more simulated voyages and commence restricted passenger voyages under CDC’s [Framework for Conditional Sailing Order](#) (CSO).

As required under the CSO, a cruise ship operator’s agreement with U.S. port authorities and local health authorities must include the following elements: (1) a port component (including a vaccination component) between the cruise ship operator and port authority to determine the number of cruise ships operating out of any single port in order to not overburden the public health response resources of any single jurisdiction in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak; (2) a medical care component between the cruise ship operator and health care entities, addressing evacuation and medical transport to onshore hospitals for passengers and crew in need of medical care, in accordance with CDC technical instructions and orders; and (3) a housing component between the cruise ship operator and one or more shoreside facilities for isolation and quarantine of passengers or crew members with COVID-19 and close contacts, identified from the day of embarkation through disembarkation for each voyage.

This checklist is not intended as, and does not constitute, a comprehensive statement regarding a cruise ship operator’s duties and obligations under the CSO. This checklist reflects CDC’s reasoned judgement based on the best available current science regarding the subject areas covered in this document. U.S. port, and local public health authorities should carefully consider each item within this checklist in developing their own jurisdiction’s health and safety protocols.

In deliberating with cruise ship operators, U.S. port and local health authorities consistent with their own jurisdiction’s legal authorities, needs, and local considerations may impose additional requirements that reflect a higher level of public health protection than in this checklist and do not otherwise conflict with CDC’s exercise of federal authority. Additionally, U.S. port authorities and local health authorities should take into consideration CDC’s [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#). For purposes of these instructions, CDC considers cruise ships to constitute a residential congregate setting.

For the purpose of this checklist, and the Technical Instructions for a Cruise Ship Operator’s Agreement with Port and Local Health Authorities under CDC’s Framework for Conditional Sailing Order only, the following definitions apply:

- “[local health authorities](#)” refers to all health departments responsible for implementing state, territorial, and local laws relating to public health (e.g., city, county, territorial, and/or state health departments) and exercising jurisdiction over the U.S. port where the cruise ship operator intends to conduct one or more simulated voyages and commence restricted passenger operations.
- “U.S. port authorities” refers to officials responsible for exercising oversight and control over the U.S. port where the cruise ship operator intends to conduct one or more simulated voyages and commence restricted passenger operations.

Cruise Ship Operator and Ship Information

Name of Cruise Ship Operator:
Name of Cruise Ship(s):
Port of Embarkation/Debarcation:

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General Terms and Conditions		
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes contact information for all parties to the agreement, including the cruise ship operator, U.S. port authority where the cruise ship operator intends to conduct one or more simulated voyages and commence restricted passenger operations, and all health departments exercising jurisdiction over the port. The signatories to the agreement must include the following:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) The cruise ship operator’s responsible officials, meaning the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) of the operating cruise company and all parent companies, the Chief Compliance Officer (or equivalent) of the operating cruise company and all parent companies, and the highest-ranking Medical Officer of the operating cruise company and all parent companies.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) The highest-ranking officials for all relevant local public health authorities, except that such officials may delegate at their own discretion.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) The U.S. port authority’s highest-ranking official. This individual will typically be designated as the Port Director/Chief Executive Officer.
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lists the cruise ship operator’s ships covered by the terms of the agreement. Only those cruise ships specifically listed by name in the agreement are covered by its terms.
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes total number of ships (including maximum number of travelers [passengers and crew]) permitted to operate, make port, embark, or disembark. The parties to the agreement should jointly consider the number of ships (including maximum number of travelers [passengers and crew]) that can safely operate, make port, embark, or disembark at any one time without exceeding the ability of local public health, port authority, hospital, and other emergency response personnel to respond to an onboard outbreak of COVID-19.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Includes a brief explanation of the factors relied upon by all parties in determining these numbers, including the potential for COVID-19 variants, which could undermine vaccine efficacy.
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specifies the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of ships that will be permitted to make port, embark, and disembark, • hours of the day and days of the week during which these activities will occur, and • maximum number of travelers permitted during those hours and on those days.
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes a clause maintaining the right of the parties to the agreement to modify, amend, or rescind the agreement. The parties should also maintain the right to temporarily suspend or rescind an agreement if resources in the local community (e.g., local public health, port authorities, hospital, or emergency response personnel) become insufficient to adequately respond to an onboard outbreak of COVID-19 on a cruise ship.
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes a plan to monitor and enforce compliance with the agreement.
7.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes requirements for reporting of cases identified during a voyage to the local health authorities, including thresholds for reporting, timelines, reporting mechanisms, and points of contact. Such reporting requirements, if any, should be incorporated into the agreement and may be in addition to, but not replace, CDC-mandated reporting by cruise ship operators.
Vaccination Components		

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1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes a plan and timeline for vaccination of cruise ship crew prior to resuming passenger operations. Due to the international representation of cruise travelers, cruise operators must use either FDA-authorized vaccines or a vaccine product that has received emergency use listing from the World Health Organization (WHO).
		The vaccination component of the agreement must also include:
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Presentation of proposals regarding how the cruise ship operator intends to incorporate vaccination strategies to maximally protect passengers and crew from introduction, amplification, and spread of COVID-19 in the maritime environment and land-based communities.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Designation of a cruise ship operator vaccine coordinator to oversee implementation and maintenance.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) Processes for vaccination of crew currently onboard as well as newly embarking crew, including reporting side effects to appropriate public health agency.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	d) Education component for port personnel and travelers about the importance of getting the COVID-19 vaccine.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	e) Processes for vaccination of port personnel who are expected to interact with travelers.
Port Components		
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specifies embarkation procedures that the cruise ship operator intends to use during simulated voyages and restricted passenger voyages. These embarkation procedures must be designed insofar as possible to minimize contact between travelers and port personnel. CDC may request that the parties modify or amend the agreement to reflect changes to embarkation procedures based on “lessons learned” from the cruise ship operator’s simulated voyage(s) as described in the after-action report for each voyage.
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specifies procedures for day-of-embarkation screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 , laboratory testing of travelers, including testing locations and management of individuals who test positive and their close contacts.
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes emergency response plans in the event of a “worst case” scenario of multiple ships’ experiencing simultaneous outbreaks of COVID-19. If the port authority intends to allow more than one cruise ship operator to operate at its port facilities, then the port authority and local public health authorities should jointly consider emergency response plans involving a “worst case” scenario of multiple ships from multiple cruise ship operators experiencing simultaneous outbreaks of COVID-19.
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes clear protocols for contacting emergency medical services while at port for exigent circumstances not covered by the hospital component of the agreement (e.g., a medical emergency not related to COVID-19, such as a heart attack).
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes clear protocols that avoid medical evacuations at sea to the greatest extent possible for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 related medical reasons. Protocols rely on commercial resources (e.g., ship tender, chartered standby vessel, chartered airlift) for unavoidable medical evacuation at sea and are designed to minimize the burden to the greatest extent possible on Federal, State, and Local government resources, including U.S. Coast Guard resources. All medical evacuations at sea must be coordinated with the U.S. Coast Guard.
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Specifies disembarkation procedures that will be implemented in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19, and that the cruise ship operator intends to use during simulated

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		voyages and restricted passenger voyages. CDC may request that the parties modify or amend the agreement to reflect changes to disembarkation procedures based on “lessons learned” from the cruise ship operator’s simulated voyage(s) as described in the after-action report for each voyage.
7.		Specifies procedures to:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Avoid congregating of embarking and disembarking travelers (passengers and/or crew).
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Ensure disembarking and embarking travelers (from the same ship but different voyages) do not occupy the same enclosed or semi-enclosed areas (e.g., gangways, terminal waiting spaces, check-in areas) within the same 12-hour period.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) Ensure disembarking and embarking travelers from different ships do not occupy the same enclosed or semi-enclosed areas (e.g., gangways, terminal waiting spaces, check-in areas) within the same 12-hour period.
8.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes procedures for informing port personnel who are expected to interact with travelers (passengers and/or crew) of the risks of COVID-19 and how to prevent exposure .
9.		Considers incorporating specific procedures for routine testing and symptom monitoring of port personnel who are expected to interact with travelers (passengers and/or crew). Additionally, employers should encourage employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine when eligible and the vaccine is available. This includes but is not limited to the following personnel:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Port agents/greeters
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Security personnel
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) Transportation staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	d) Baggage handlers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	e) Check-in staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	f) Cleaners/janitorial staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	g) Longshoremen
	<input type="checkbox"/>	h) Maritime pilots
10.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes routine and outbreak-level cleaning procedures for areas where travelers are reasonably expected to gather or otherwise make use of, including terminals and restrooms. In addition, includes routine and outbreak-level cleaning procedures for transportation vehicles under a cruise lines’ control (e.g., buses, shuttle vans). For more information about cleaning and disinfection, please refer to CDC’s Detailed Disinfecting Guidance for Facilities and Cleaning and Disinfection for Non-emergency Transport Vehicles .
		a) It is recommended that commercial transportation companies/drivers be provided with information on cleaning procedures (taxi, ride share services, parking lot shuttle vans). For this industry, please refer to CDC’s COVID-19 webpage for Specific Industries .

Medical Care Components

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1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of contractual arrangements to provide for the emergency medical transportation of critically ill persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 from the ship to a shoreside medical facility in such a manner as to minimize potential for exposure.
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of contractual arrangements with a shoreside medical facility or healthcare system or multiple shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems with redundant capacities to ensure that travelers receive appropriate clinical evaluation, including testing, and medical care when needed.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>a) This requirement is to reduce the need to divert patients to other medical facilities or healthcare systems that do not have such a contractual arrangement with the cruise ship operator.</p> <p>b) If the cruise ship operator intends to rely on the services of a single medical facility or healthcare system, it must document that it has made contractual arrangements with a second medical facility or healthcare system if its primary medical facility or healthcare system is unable to accept additional patients or provide the necessary level of care.</p>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of contractual shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems that either singularly or collectively have enough medical capacity, in the judgement of the local health authorities, to care for travelers if an unanticipated outbreak of COVID-19 occurs on board the cruise ship operator's ships. The cruise ship operator's contractual shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems should have enough bed capacity for both potential intensive care and non-intensive care needs, as well as enough capacity to isolate patients with COVID-19.
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Considers the potential medical care needs of travelers including the capacity of local public health, port authority, hospital, and other emergency response personnel to respond to an onboard outbreak of COVID-19.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Includes a brief explanation of the factors relied upon by all parties in determining the capacity of the cruise ship operator's contractual shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems.
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluates the need for further contingency planning to provide medical care to travelers in the event of limited hospital beds, medical personnel, or other factors potentially limiting the capacity of the cruise ship operator's designated shoreside medical facilities or healthcare systems.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Includes a brief explanation of the outcome of these deliberations.

Housing Components

1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of contractual arrangements (or corporate-owned shoreside housing facilities) in sufficient quantities to meet the shoreside housing needs of travelers (passengers and crew) for isolation and quarantine identified from the day of embarkation through disembarkation for each voyage. In determining sufficient quantities of shoreside housing for isolation and quarantine, the parties should consider the potential for COVID-19 variants, which could undermine vaccine efficacy. The parties may consider the following options for crew who are considered close contacts but have tested negative for COVID-19:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) All crew quarantine on board the ship provided that all crew can be housed in single-occupancy cabins with private bathrooms. Essential crew may have a

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		working quarantine (i.e., continue working with appropriate public health measures such as social distancing and face masks).
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Essential crew stay on board the ship for a working quarantine (i.e., continue working with appropriate public health measures such as social distancing and face masks) while nonessential crew quarantine shoreside.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) All crew quarantine shoreside and essential crew are replaced with a contingent of alternate personnel.
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Considers where the ship will be physically located during the isolation and quarantine period (i.e., at the pier or at anchor). In addition, considers the potential housing needs of travelers including the capacity of local public health, port authorities, hospital, and other emergency response personnel to oversee and monitor the housing needs of travelers under isolation and quarantine.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Includes a brief explanation of the factors relied upon by all parties in determining the sufficiency of the cruise ship operator's contractual or corporate-owned shoreside housing facilities.
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of contractual arrangements (or has corporate-owned shoreside housing facilities) in sufficient quantities as determined by the local health authorities to meet the housing needs of travelers until they meet CDC's criteria to discontinue isolation or for the CDC-recommended quarantine period .
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Includes documentation of arrangements (or has corporate-owned vehicles) in sufficient quantities to meet the transportation needs of all travelers from the ship to the shoreside housing facilities and from the shoreside housing facility to the contractual medical facilities or healthcare systems if needed with precautions in place to avoid exposure of vehicle operators.
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoreside housing meets CDC guidelines for isolation or quarantine including separate bedrooms, bathrooms, and no shared living spaces for individuals who are not part of the same household, and the ability to separate infected persons within households from those not known to be infected.
6.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shoreside housing provides separate ventilation systems for all travelers who are not part of the same household.
7.		Considers the following needs of travelers (passengers and crew) under quarantine and isolation and includes a brief explanation of the outcome of these deliberations in the agreement:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	a) Availability and frequency of testing including the logistics of specimen collection and transportation of specimens to laboratories for testing.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	b) Availability of mental health services, pharmacy delivery, and other essential services.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	c) Availability of security, including legal considerations, to prevent travelers from violating the terms of any mandatory isolation or quarantine, and a mechanism to notify public health authorities immediately in the event that a traveler attempts to violate such terms.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	d) A check-in process, including delivery of luggage, designed insofar as possible to minimize contact between exposed travelers and unexposed persons.
<input type="checkbox"/>	e) Procedures to ensure the daily monitoring of travelers in quarantine, including points of contact for travelers to notify if symptoms develop in between symptom checks.	

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	f) Procedures to minimize contact between travelers in quarantine and/or isolation and support staff, while still ensuring the delivery of essential services:
	<input type="checkbox"/>	i. Food delivery
	<input type="checkbox"/>	ii. Laundry services
	<input type="checkbox"/>	iii. Cleaning and linen change
	<input type="checkbox"/>	iv. Garbage pick up
	<input type="checkbox"/>	v. Post-quarantine cleaning and disinfection procedures
	<input type="checkbox"/>	g) Post-isolation and post-quarantine procedures to allow travelers to safely return to their home communities.

Signatures & Execution

1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	The agreement is signed and executed, and the cruise ship operator provides a copy (including all attachments, exhibits, and annexes) to CDC, prior to CDC approving a cruise ship operator's request to embark non-essential crew. The agreement must be emailed to CDC at eoevent349@cdc.gov .
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