

COVID-19 related actions and measures – information from the Swedish Transport Agency as regards shipping (2020-07-08)

This information note has been reissued in a revised version on 8th July 2020 to incorporate recent developments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. It replaces the information note dated 3rd April 2020.

There is an ongoing outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Swedish Transport Agency (STA) is following developments carefully and is in continuous contact with other responsible authorities – nationally within Sweden, within the EU and internationally.

The Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten) is leading the Swedish Government response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The STA wants to underline that it is essential for everyone to stay up to date on information and adhering to the most recent advice and guidance from the Swedish Government, in particular the Public Health Agency of Sweden as well as other government agencies. Specific guidance on e.g. travel may also be given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

General information

Decision to temporary restrict non-essential travel to Sweden from countries outside of the European Union

On 17 March 2020, the Swedish Government decided to temporary restrict non-essential travel to Sweden from countries outside of the European Union, the United Kingdom, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

The entry ban applies essentially to foreign citizens attempting to enter Sweden from all countries except European Union Member States, members of the European Economic Area and Switzerland. The European Economic Area includes all European Union Member States, as well as Iceland,

Liechtenstein and Norway. The United Kingdom is still regarded as part of the European Economic Area according to the withdrawal agreement between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

This means entry to Sweden is still allowed from the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The entry ban does not apply to Swedish citizens.

The temporary entry ban entered into force on 19 March 2020. It is continuously assessed and extended in intervals – as are the exemptions from the entry ban.

Entry is also allowed for EEA citizens and citizens of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland or the Vatican City, as well as people with Swedish residence permits and their family members regardless of the purpose of travel. People who live in certain specified countries are also allowed to enter Sweden. Foreign citizens with an essential need or function in Sweden may also enter the country. These people include health care professionals, transport personnel engaged in haulage of goods, or passengers travelling for imperative family reasons.

Seafarers, of any nationality, are considered by Sweden to be “key workers” and to have an essential need to enter the country, if the purpose of their travel is to join or leave a ship or transit through Sweden for repatriation.¹

For information on the application of the temporary restriction of non-essential travel to Sweden, see:

<https://www.government.se/articles/2020/04/faqs--entry-to-the-eu-via-sweden-banned/>

Ships calling at Swedish ports

Regular routines/procedures are in place and still appropriate. Also, if a ship, arriving to a Swedish port from a foreign port, is carrying or suspects it is carrying an infectious disease onboard, a declaration on the state of health onboard (corresponding to the Maritime Declaration of Health (MDH)) shall be submitted to the relevant authorities (Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen) or the Swedish Customs (Tullverket)). Such a declaration, containing three general questions on the health status onboard, is to be

¹ It is a matter for the enforcing authorities (primarily the Swedish Police Authority) to determine in each individual case how the exemptions are to be interpreted and which decisions are to be made.

fulfilled in the Swedish Maritime Single Window (MSW) together with other reporting formalities for ships before entry into port. For more information on MSW, see: <http://www.sjofartsverket.se/en/e-Services/Maritime-Single-Window/>.

Please observe that local requirements on submitting the state of health onboard for the MDH may exist for e.g. ports.

The Swedish law provides the possibility for the Public Health Agency of Sweden to designate “certain areas” as especially affected (by hazards such as the COVID-19). However, no such decision has been made at this time, but this is continuously under review.

Furthermore, the Public Health Agency of Sweden has issued detailed instructions to personnel working in ports and airports, in regards to hygiene and disinfection measures. Please note that the English webpage might not contain the most up to date information:

<https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se/the-public-health-agency-of-sweden/communicable-disease-control/covid-19/>

Quarantine ports in Sweden

Information that a ship has a suspected communicable disease outbreak onboard will be handled by the Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen), the County Medical Officer and other relevant authorities, as appropriate.

The County Medical Officer decides what action needs to be taken. One measure may be to place the ship in quarantine, or in other words limit the ability to get on or off the ship.

There are eight quarantine ports in Sweden. A quarantine port has an obligation to accept a ship that has declared a suspected communicable disease outbreak aboard. To be able to deal with this there are defined procedures and the relevant authorities work together.

The eight quarantine ports in Sweden are:

- Gävle
- Göteborg
- Helsingborg
- Luleå
- Malmö
- Stockholm
- Sundsvall
- Umeå

Ship sanitation certificates

Ship Sanitation Certificate (SSC) is a document that verifies a ship's compliance with maritime sanitation and quarantine rules specified in Article 39 of the International Health Regulations (IHR). The certificate serves as proof that the ship is free of clear sources of contagion and may be a requirement for permission of entry into port in some jurisdictions.

In Sweden, it is the municipalities (kommuner) that issue SSCs. Those municipalities that has authority to issue SSC are listed in annex 2 to regulation HSLF-FS 2015:8 adopted by the Public Health Agency of Sweden. The municipalities has designated ports where SSCs can be issued. WHO maintains a list of ports where SSCs can be issued:

https://www.who.int/ihr/ports_airports/IHR-list-of-Authorized-ports-to-issue-Ship-Sanitation-Certificates.pdf?ua=1

The Master should, through MSW, certify that a valid ship sanitation certificate exists onboard. In case a ship requests an SSC at a Swedish port that is not on the list, the ship will be referred to a port where one can be issued.

Information on services provided by the Swedish Transport Agency

The Swedish Transport Agency (STA) will continuously provide information about all relevant guidelines published to date – such as the recommendations published by the EU Health Gateways and by the IMO. This information can be found on the Swedish Transport Agency's website:

<https://www.transportstyrelsen.se/en/About-us/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Extension of statutory supervision, issuance/endorsement of statutory certificates and certification of seafarers due to COVID-19

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19), the STA has received inquiries from seafarers, shipowners, Recognized Organizations (RO) and others, regarding the postponement of supervision and extension of validity of mandatory certificates. This includes an extension of statutory certificates or postponement of hull surveys as a result of unavailable dry-dock facilities.

The STA has also received several indications that seafarers will have problems with completing refresher courses etc., required for the renewal of

personal certificates. This could be caused by cancelled courses, quarantine or travel bans at the venue.

For the STA, the main focus at this time, is to take all possible measures to ensure that ships registered in Sweden and Swedish seafarers, to the greatest extent possible, will not be negatively affected due to the expiration of certificates because of the current COVID-19 situation.

The Swedish Government and the STA has adopted a wide range of measures in order to mitigate disruption to the maritime sector caused by the worldwide coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19 outbreak) and to protect the health and well-being of employees in the sector. Detailed information about these measures can be found and downloaded from the Swedish Transport Agency's website:

<https://transportstyrelsen.se/en/About-us/coronaviruscovid-19/>

Contact

Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters, Owners' Representatives, Recognised Organisations and seafarers may encounter a range of difficulties, as many States are closing borders and/or ports. The STA will continuously work, within our mandate, to provide assistance to those affected and endeavour to help minimize disruption.

Further information on the measures taken by the Swedish Transport Agency to mitigate disruption to the maritime sector caused by the worldwide coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19 outbreak) and to protect the health and well-being of employees in the sector can be found downloaded from the Swedish Transport Agency's website:

<https://transportstyrelsen.se/en/About-us/coronaviruscovid-19/>

Please use the specific email address below to get in contact with the STA on Covid-19 issues, to discuss possible solutions.

Questions regarding ship:

sjofartstillsyn@transportstyrelsen.se

Questions regarding seafarers and manning:

sjofart.behorighet@transportstyrelsen.se

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