



Enquiries: Office of the Chief Health
Officer and Deputy Director-
General, Queensland Health
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Queensland Health

Class exemption for vessel crew members to leave isolation for critical work onboard a vessel –*Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*.

I, Dr Lynne McKinlay, Deputy Chief Health Officer, provide this exemption for crew members onboard a vessel in Queensland as an exempt class of persons, from the requirements of the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction* or its successors (*the Direction*), on the conditions specified in this document.

The purpose of this exemption is to enable a **vessel** crew member, who is in **isolation** onboard the **vessel**, to leave **isolation** in order to perform **critical work** necessary for the safety and operation of the **vessel**.

Exemption

1. This exemption applies until the end of the public health emergency unless amended or revoked.
2. In this document, terms are as defined in **Schedule 1**.
3. A crew member who is classified as a **positive crew member** may leave the place where they are in **isolation** on board the **vessel** to perform **critical work** and may continue to perform **critical work** under this exemption where the conditions set out below are met.

Conditions for exemption for a positive crew member to leave isolation onboard a vessel in Queensland

4. A **positive crew member** may leave the **place of accommodation** where they are in **isolation** onboard a vessel to perform **critical work** under the following conditions:
 - (a) the **critical work** cannot be performed safely by another crew member;
 - (b) the **critical work** is essential to maintain safety onboard the **vessel**;
 - (c) the procedures and requirements for a **positive crew member** contained in the **Guidelines** have been followed and met;
 - (d) hand hygiene is undertaken regularly while performing the **critical work**;
 - (e) steps are actively taken to minimise direct interactions with other persons onboard as much as operationally possible;
 - (f) steps are taken to maintain physical distancing and minimise sharing of enclosed spaces with other persons onboard;
 - (g) the **positive crew member** returns immediately to their **place of accommodation** to **isolate** for rest periods or at the end of undertaking the **critical work**.

5. Under the **Direction** and the **Guidelines**, a **positive crew member** who starts experiencing **symptoms consistent with COVID-19** should be in **isolation**; this class exemption provides that they may continue to perform the **critical work** without returning to the place they are in **isolation** until they are no longer needed for the **critical work**.

*Note: wherever possible, a crew member who is a **diagnosed person** should only be permitted to leave their **place of accommodation** when not experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19. However, this class exemption is to ensure the safe operation of the vessel and safety concerns may require a symptomatic **positive crew member** to perform **critical work** onboard the vessel, in accordance with the **Guidelines**.*

6. The scope of this class exemption and any of its reference to the **Guidelines** is limited to the extent it applies only to a **diagnosed person**.

Requirements for the employer

7. An employer who requests a **positive crew member** to leave **isolation** to perform **critical work** must, as soon as practicable, inform port authorities.
8. Prior to a pilot, other shoreside personnel, or a non-crew maritime worker boarding the **vessel**, port authorities must be informed of the **critical work** being undertaken by a **positive crew member**.
9. The employer must take appropriate steps to prevent the risk of transmission to any other person that is authorised to board the vessel at the time the **critical work** was undertaken. The shipping agent is required to provide any PPE and equipment necessary to ensure the conditions for pilots and shoreside personnel specified in the **Guidelines** are fully met.
10. Breaches of any condition of this exemption must be rectified and reported immediately. Continued breaches will result in the withdrawal of exemption privileges for the **vessel**.

Authorisation of this exemption

11. This exemption has been approved based on the Public Health Directions in place at the time of approval.
12. The conditions for this class exemption are made having regard to the risk assessment undertaken and agreed to under the **Guidelines** and must be reviewed when changes are made to the **Guidelines**.

Yours sincerely



Dr Lynne McKinlay
Deputy Chief Health Officer
Queensland Health
11 May 2022

Schedule 1 Definitions

Close contact has the same meaning as in the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*.

COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test has the same meaning as in the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*.

COVID-19 PCR test has the same meaning as in the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*.

COVID-19 test means a **COVID-19 PCR test** or a **COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test** approved for use in Australia by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Critical work means work on the vessel which is essential for the safety and operation of the vessel, where there are no other crew members able to safely perform that function and the **positive crew member** will not disembark the vessel during the performance of the critical work.

Direction means the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction* or its successor.

Diagnosed person has the same meaning as in the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*.

Guidelines means the *Guidelines for the management of COVID-19 onboard ships in Queensland (version 2.0 dated 29 April 2022)* as endorsed by the Deputy Chief Health Officer, a copy of which is attached as Schedule 2.

Informed means given oral or written notice, irrespective of whether that oral or written notice is correct or becomes aware by other ways than oral or written notice.

Isolation or **isolating** has the same meaning as in the *Management of Diagnosed Cases of COVID-19 and Close Contacts Direction*, noting that a crew member required to **isolate** under the **Direction** will be managed as a **positive crew member** under the **Guidelines** and required to **isolate** on board the **vessel**.

Place of accommodation means any accommodation, including temporary accommodation where the person is residing or staying, including for a holiday, when they become a **diagnosed person** or **close contact**.

*Note: This includes crew quarters onboard a vessel where crew members are staying when they become a **diagnosed person** or **close contact**.*

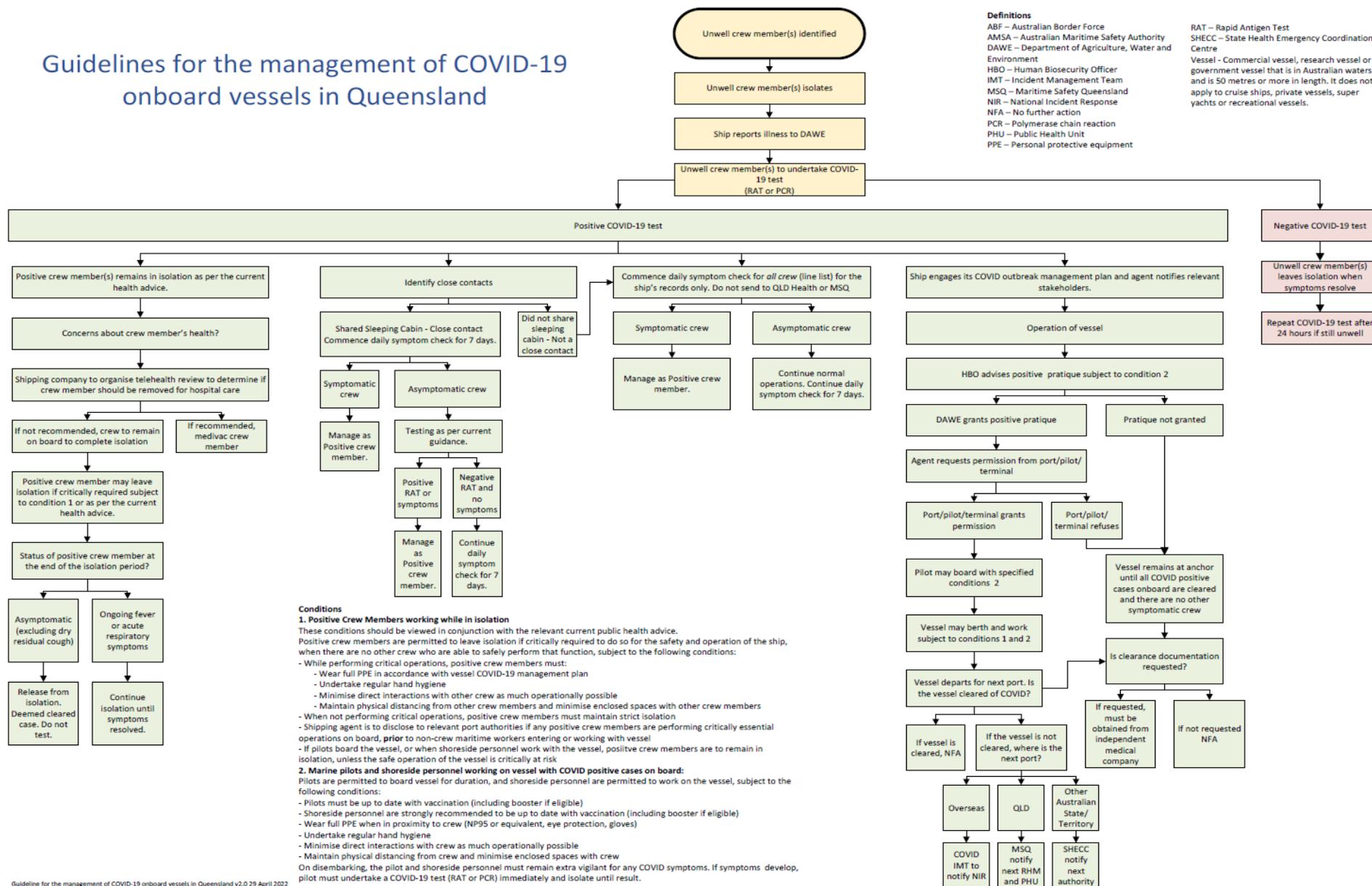
Positive crew member means a crew member who has tested positive for COVID-19 onboard a vessel, or a crew member who is being treated as if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in accordance with the **Guidelines**.

Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 means fever or history of fever, symptoms of acute respiratory infection (cough, shortness of breath, sore throat), headache, loss of smell, loss of taste, runny nose, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting or fatigue.

Vessel means a commercial vessel, research vessel or government vessel that is in Queensland waters and is 50 metres or more in length. It does not apply to cruise ships, private vessels, super yachts or recreational vessels.

Schedule 2 - Management of COVID-19 onboard ships in Queensland

Guidelines for the management of COVID-19 onboard vessels in Queensland



- Conditions**
- 1. Positive Crew Members working while in isolation**
 These conditions should be viewed in conjunction with the relevant current public health advice. Positive crew members are permitted to leave isolation if critically required to do so for the safety and operation of the ship, when there are no other crew who are able to safely perform that function, subject to the following conditions:
- While performing critical operations, positive crew members must:
 - Wear full PPE in accordance with vessel COVID-19 management plan
 - Undertake regular hand hygiene
 - Minimise direct interactions with other crew as much operationally possible
 - Maintain physical distancing from other crew members and minimise enclosed spaces with other crew members
 - When not performing critical operations, positive crew members must maintain strict isolation
 - Shipping agent is to disclose to relevant port authorities if any positive crew members are performing critically essential operations on board, prior to non-crew maritime workers entering or working with vessel
 - If pilots board the vessel, or when shoreside personnel work with the vessel, positive crew members are to remain in isolation, unless the safe operation of the vessel is critically at risk
- 2. Marine pilots and shoreside personnel working on vessel with COVID positive cases on board:**
 Pilots are permitted to board vessel for duration, and shoreside personnel are permitted to work on the vessel, subject to the following conditions:
- Pilots must be up to date with vaccination (including booster if eligible)
 - Shoreside personnel are strongly recommended to be up to date with vaccination (including booster if eligible)
 - Wear full PPE when in proximity to crew (N95 or equivalent, eye protection, gloves)
 - Undertake regular hand hygiene
 - Minimise direct interactions with crew as much operationally possible
 - Maintain physical distancing from crew and minimise enclosed spaces with crew
- On disembarking, the pilot and shoreside personnel must remain extra vigilant for any COVID symptoms. If symptoms develop, pilot must undertake a COVID-19 test (RAT or PCR) immediately and isolate until result.

Guideline for the management of COVID-19 onboard vessels in Queensland v2.0 29 April 2022