

Information provided by the Swedish authorities on 16/03/2020

In regard to national Swedish measures taken to deal with the implications for ports, and ships calling Sweden – no additional measures are at this time deemed necessary. Normal routines/procedures are in place and are assessed to still be appropriate. In short, a Marine Declaration of Health (MDH) is mandatory in Swedish law – and obliges the Master to make such a declaration before calling on a Swedish port (usually through MSW). The law also provides the possibility for the Swedish Health Authorities to designate areas of “certain areas” as especially affected (by such threats as the COVID-19 virus). However, no such decision has been made by the Swedish Health Authorities at this time (this is continuously under review). In conclusion; if a ship is carrying disease – normal routines for handling the issue are followed. No case/decision of restricting the free movement of goods or persons has yet been made.

Furthermore, the Swedish Health Authorities have issued more 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/>

The Swedish Transport Agency (STA) is continuously informing ships owners and the ships owners association on all relevant guidelines published to date – such as the recommendations published by the EU Health Gateways and by the IMO. The STA is also currently working on a circular letter similar to the good example provided by Denmark.

The STA has provided for more detailed instructions to its employees, especially personnel involved in ships survey and flag/port state inspections. These instructions specify specific precautionary and hygiene measures to be taken before boarding a ship. No decision has yet been made *not* to board a ship, however this is under constant review and under the scrutiny of the respective head of section for inspectorate and is therefore subject to change at any time.

Pilotage in Sweden follows the instructions and recommendations of the Public Health Authority as well as local infection control doctors. In cases where we have identified that, via ship registration or the maritime declaration of health of the port and the like, that a ship has suspected contamination on board, this question is repeated when asking for pilot. An examples of these assignments are voluntary pilotage such as Öppensjö (RedCard) and sound passage piloting. If an affirmative response is given, a new risk assessment is made and we seek advice and instructions from local infection control physicians before boarding.

No additional measures (such as PPE) are taken at this time.

Repatriation of seafarers: in multiple cases when a seafarer is scheduled for leave, it has not been possible due to restrictions in the port. Until today, this has been handled by the ship owners/operators/crew management company themselves by extending or shortening crews contracts until a suitable port is available. However, the problem is growing, so the STA (as flag state representative) and affected parties are meeting this week to discuss the issue and possible solutions.