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# COVID-19 Cargo Surveyor/Vessel Crew Interface: Minimum Contact Best Practices

## Introduction

As the COVID-19 situation has continued to escalate and impact more areas of the world, more and more questions have been raised about how to best manage surveyor access to the vessel. This document was developed with input from carrier, surveyor, and charterer perspectives. Its objective is to collect and highlight ways surveyors, vessels, and terminals can cooperate to make vessel boarding, sampling, gauging, etc. as safe and efficient as possible in a COVID-19 pandemic context.

All parties should leverage the latest PPE and safe practice guidance from the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC).

## Pre-Embarkation

If the carrier or surveyor has pre-embarkation procedures (i.e. pre-embarkation forms, temperature monitoring requirements, minimum PPE requirements, copy of health declaration, etc..) those procedures should be promptly communicated to the charterer. The charterer bears responsibility for communicating the applicable policy to its other affected logistics partners (For example, company terminals, applicable third-party logistics service providers, customers etc.).

Pre-embarkation policies should adhere to WHO, CDC, national/local laws. All reasonable efforts should be taken to comply. Where compliance is not possible, the issue/situation should be escalated as soon as possible to applicable management.

As soon as reasonably possible, for each berth call, efforts should be taken to assess acceptable shore and ship locations to conduct pre-transfer meetings, calculations, etc. Pre-transfer meetings are to be done in open air maintaining a minimum of 6ft. (2 meters) separation between participants.

## Embarkation

The surveyor time on board should be minimized. The accommodation and cargo control room (where it might be separate) on board should be treated as a restricted area. The surveyor should avoid entering the vessel accommodations and/or cargo control room at any time. If the surveyor needs to wait, do calculations, etc., he/she should do so in a safe area on shore or designated open air location on the ship.

For the duration of the surveyor vessel visit, maintain a minimum of 6 ft. (2 meters) of personal distance.

In order to maximize social distancing at the gangway, the gangway watch should step back from the gangway as the embarking surveyor joins the vessel. The surveyor should then leave his badge at the foot of the gangway and move back so the vessel's gangway watch can inspect the badge without touching it and complete the visitor logbook. When satisfied, the gangway watch can move back to allow the surveyor to reclaim his badge.

To minimize any contaminations, vessel badges should not utilize lanyards, and it is recommended that vessel visitor badges are not used at all in favor of a socially distanced escort for the limited time the surveyor will be onboard. Where vessel visitor badges must be used, they should be decontaminated prior to issuance and again after receipt.

Surveyor should not eat onboard. As environmental conditions require, the surveyor should carry on their own liquids to remain hydrated and carry off any garbage/waste created. If the vessel provides hydration, the packaging should be decontaminated prior to issuance.

### **Accommodations**

If entering the vessel accommodations is unavoidable/necessary, the surveyor should wear all WHO/ CDC recommended Personnel Protection Equipment (PPE) and minimize the duration to what is business critical/hygienically necessary. The ship should limit access to what is necessary and should decontaminate the applicable spaces after the visit.

Surveyors should not use restroom facilities on-board vessel if possible. If restroom facilities must be used while on-board, surveyors should ensure thorough washing of hands with soap and water and put on gloves after washing hands before continuing with work. The vessel should have processes to similarly ensure the bathroom is sanitized after use (ex. sanitizer sprays, disinfectants, and/or including potentially isolating the bathroom for the requisite WHO recommended time period).

### **Gauging**

If the vessel is equipped with electronic gauging, the vessel is to communicate gauge readings and associated tank strapping info to the surveyor electronically. Where the ship's capacity tables (strapping tables) info may not be electronic, the vessel should consider digitizing this information (scanning, converting to PDF or other non-alterable digital format, photograph, etc.) and providing this info prior to the vessel's arrival.

Due to terminal and vessel restrictions regarding non-intrinsically safe electronic devices, the surveyor will otherwise need to find a safe place to electronically receive information. Supplied electronic information should be included as part of the surveyor's documentation package. If digital photos are used, date and time stamp functionality should be enabled where available.

If the vessel is not equipped with electronic gauging, and/or where other equipment is needed, the surveyor will onboard and handle all applicable equipment. During any manual gauging activities, the surveyor and vessel crew are to keep a social distance of at least 6 ft (2 meters).

### **Tank Inspections and sampling**

Always maintain social distance (minimum 6 Ft. or 2 meters).

Surveyor is to handle all equipment, bottles, buckets, sample containers, sample boxes, ropes, etc.

Vessel should consider disinfecting sample cocks, handrails, and immediate areas where the surveyor may have touched during his/her visit. Recommend the surveyor avoid staircases. Vessels should consider allocating (and marking with signage) one stairwell for surveyors to use to limit the amount of disinfection needed and to facilitate a more regular disinfection frequency.

### **Documentation**

Use of electronic documents are to be maximized. Where paper is necessary, arrangements should be made to relax or eliminate requirements for signatures.

Vessel and surveyor personnel should not share pens, pencils, flashlights, computers, tablets, phones, etc.

### **Disembarkation**

Vessel crew escort the surveyor to the gangway maintaining a minimum of 6 ft. (2 meters) of social distance.

### **First aid**

In case of an accident or incident and the surveyor requires first aid, the crew members should wear all WHO / CDC recommended PPE whilst giving first aid and disinfect the area after use.