



Testing seafarers on Covid-19

- Testing a person with no symptoms by a throat swab (PCR)* is never indicated. Even if a person tests negative on day one, he/she may feel sick on day two and test positive.
- Testing asymptomatic people is a waste of valuable resources.
- For the same reasons, health certificates that declare an asymptomatic person “Corona-free” cannot be trusted and should not be accepted**.
- A ship is a form of collective housing and therefore any person on board with respiratory symptoms has to be isolated*** in his cabin, use separate sanitary facilities and food should be put in front of cabin door, strictly avoiding any personal contact.
- The condition of the patient should be followed up every day, and twice a day the body temperature has to be taken.
- If possible test every seafarer with respiratory symptoms with a throat swab (PCR) to identify if they have Covid-19. If however it is clear that seafarers on board have had covid-19 or tested positive with it, caution should be exercised.
- The asymptomatic part of the crew have to be followed up as “near contacts”, this means that they can continue their normal duties as long as they are asymptomatic but should exercise social distancing. Asymptomatic near contacts should pay extra attention to basic hygiene and should follow their health closely for two weeks, thereby avoiding unnecessary social interaction and wearing PPE in contact with outsiders for two weeks.

* PCR: polymerase chain reaction, where small quantities of genetic material of the virus (or other germs) can be detected, proving that a person has been in contact with...

** antibody tests (IgG) that allow to determine if a person has antibodies against the virus, may suggest that someone is immune, but little is known of the duration and effectiveness of that immunity, yet.

*** Isolation means: to separate the sick from the healthy. Quarantine means to put all contacts of a sick person in isolation as well.

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