PRESS RELEASE
March 3, 2020

PROTOCOLS AND PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE FOR CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS DISEMBARKING IN SANTA BARBARA

(SANTA BARBARA, Calif.) – Currently, there are no cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Santa Barbara County. The health risk from COVID-19 to the public remains low at this time. However, with the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. and California, the public has expressed concern in regards to the health and screening of cruise ship passengers disembarking in Santa Barbara Harbor.

Santa Barbara County officials have been planning and preparing should COVID-19 be identified in the county. The County Public Health Department (PHD) is working closely with its healthcare partners and providing ongoing guidance and alerts in close coordination with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To address concerns about arriving cruise ships, the PHD has assessed the situation and collaborated with the City of Santa Barbara, Waterfront Department to compile the following frequently asked questions.

Q. What measures are being taken to ensure the safety of community members when cruise ships arrive in Santa Barbara?

A. Cruise ships are subject to federal and global regulations as outlined below. When sailing in U.S. waters and calling in U.S. ports, cruise vessels are subject to rules and regulations set by the (CDC), Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and the U.S. Coast Guard. In addition to this, Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) sets standards for membership, including medical care and public health. CLIA has recently set cruise ship standards in response to COVID-19 for companies that belong to their organization. This includes denying boarding to passengers who have traveled from countries of concern, as well as increased screening procedures.

-MORE-
COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE FOR CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS
ADD 1-1-1

Additionally, a number vessels arriving in the Santa Barbara Harbor meet healthcare standards set by the International Standards Organization (ISO), whose stringent standards focus on a variety topics, including public health and infection control methods. **NOTE:** travel restrictions and healthcare standards applied for guests are also applied to crew members.

### Practices used by cruise ships to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Point of Origin: Domestic &amp; Global</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health screening of passengers and crew prior to boarding cruise ship to Santa Barbara</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guests and crew prohibited from boarding cruise ship traveling to Santa Barbara if there is a suspect travel history</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation measures taken during journey</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting of communicable diseases to relevant agencies prior to arrival in Santa Barbara</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q.** What additional screening is done prior to guest and crew disembarking?

**A.** Many cruise lines have mechanisms in place to prevent the disembarkation of guests and crew who are being actively monitored for infectious illnesses. Increased screening protocols prior to boarding the vessel reduces the risk of infection onboard.

**Q.** Should I wear a mask when cruise passengers are in Santa Barbara?

**A.** Masks are not recommended when a cruise ship arrives in Santa Barbara. **CDC recommendations** state that masks are not an effective method for the public to protect themselves from a respiratory illness such as COVID-19. Public health officials remind the public to stay vigilant and continue to practice routine hygiene methods to prevent the spread of any virus, such as:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough with your arm or tissue (discard tissue)
- Stay home if you are sick

**Q.** Could the situation that occurred on the Diamond Princess Cruise ship occur again?

**A.** The extraordinary situation that occurred on the Diamond Princess is unlikely to repeat. At the time of the Diamond Princess situation, COVID-19 was fairly new and screening procedures were not fully developed. Since then, many of the cruise lines stopping in Santa Barbara have developed robust screening protocols for crew and guests, increased sanitization procedures, and developed protocols for refusing guest and crew based on their travel history. Additionally, new government restrictions and advisories are in place to help mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

-MORE-
COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE FOR CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS
ADD 2-2-2

Q. How does the City of Santa Barbara handle concerns with COVID-19 and other infectious diseases on cruise ships?

A. The City relies on direction from the County PHD, CDC, CBP, and USCG with regards to infection control. CBP has jurisdiction and decision-making authority with regards to vessel clearance, quarantine and other requirements. USCG and CBP, with guidance from the CDC, are responsible for tracking cruise ship and cargo vessel arrival. Additionally, they have increased the Notice of Arrival requirements for inbound vessels from 4 days to 14 days. CBP and USCG are actively tracking vessel arrivals based upon crew demographics and recent ports of call and will evaluate every vessel arrival for potential exposure and/or infection.

Q. What happens if a cruise ship bound for Santa Barbara has someone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms?

A. In the event a passenger or crew member tests positive for COVID-19, the ship would be diverted to one of three West Coast quarantine stations (San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Diego). The CDC guidelines and response procedures related to cruise ships passengers and crew are posted online at: https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/maritime/recommendations-for-ships.html

Q. Does the City plan to halt cruise ships coming to Santa Barbara?

A. As of now, the City has not cancelled any scheduled cruise ship visits, but will continue to monitor the situation and take actions based on recommendations from the PHD, CDC and CBP. The CDC and CBP evaluate each incoming cruise ship and will not allow it to port/desembark in Santa Barbara unless it is deemed safe to do so. To date, no instances of COVID-19 have been identified at the nearby ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach or Hueneme. If there is a concern about any vessel arriving in Southern California ports, the Coast Guard will share all relevant information to appropriate agencies to ensure public health concerns are addressed.

Q. How many cruise ships port in Santa Barbara per year? Where are most cruise ships from and what routes do they take?

A. The City typically receives around 30 cruise ships per year scheduled during the spring and fall. The majority of the cruises originate in San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Diego travelling on West Coast routes. The vast majority of passengers are from the United States and Canada.

Q. What cruise ships are scheduled to port in Santa Barbara?

A. The cruise ship schedule is posted on the City’s website at www.santabarbaraca.gov/gov/depts/waterfront/events/cruiseship.asp.

For additional reliable information on COVID-19, please visit the following websites.
Santa Barbara County Public Health Department
California Department of Public Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
World Health Organization

-30-

Follow us on Twitter: @SBCPublicHealth Facebook: @SBCountyPublicHealth Instagram: @SBCPublicHealth