WHOI Ship Operations COVID-19 Policy

For Science Party and Marine Crew Members

Prior to boarding, all individuals sailing on WHOI vessels must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including applicable booster shots.

WHOI Ship Operations Guidelines are developed from CDC updates, GWMMA and UNOLS Guidance. These may be updated or modified as needed

Definitions

**Fully Vaccinated**: The definition of "fully" vaccinated includes the original single/double dose vaccination (depending on which vaccine was used {J&J, Pfizer, or Moderna J&J}), plus an initial booster and the period of two weeks after the booster. Or by taking one bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine shot.

If participants are foreign based, any World Health Organization approved vaccination is acceptable. In addition, WHOI strongly recommends if age 50+, once eligible [4 months after 1st booster] to receive a 2nd booster.

The second booster is recommended by the CDC for people 50 or older 1) with underlying health conditions; 2) who live with others that are elevated risk and 3) whose jobs put them at risk for severe COVID, including those who travel or must gather in larger groups.


**GWMMA**: George Washington Maritime Medical Access. This is the vessels 24/7 medical care provider while at sea. All medical treatment can be provided via phone, email, telemedicine, or video when needed.

**SSPI**: Shipboard Scientific Personnel Information is a secure and confidential notification source for Ship Operations. [sspi@whoi.edu](mailto:sspi@whoi.edu)

Pre-Embarkation

All crew, marine technicians and scientists who are embarking our vessels must:

- Be fully vaccinated no less than 2 weeks prior to embarking vessel. Please see CDC vaccination timetable. [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html#table-01](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html#table-01)

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• 2 weeks pre-cruise, follow general best practices to remain COVID-free (ex: increased handwashing, avoiding crowds when possible, wearing a mask when traveling, etc.)
• Within 3 days of boarding, take a home antigen test or PCR test and send a picture of proof negative to sspi@whoi.edu.
• If you have tested positive for COVID within 90 days of boarding, contact sspi@whoi.edu with the details surrounding those positive results. Next steps will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
• Science parties are expected to bring personal masks. If science runs out of masks, there is a supply aboard the vessel.

Symptom Awareness and Reporting
At least 7 days prior to travel or boarding all participants and crew should:

• Self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and report symptoms to sspi@whoi.edu and to your or immediate supervisor (Chief Scientist / PI (Principal Investigator) / Master / Director of Ship Operations).
• Report to the same supervisor immediately if a co-habiting household member tests positive for COVID-19 or if an individual experiences close contact with someone that tests positive.
• If conditions warrant, a PCR test and/or 5-day isolation may be required. Case-by-case basis only and to be coordinated by sspi@whoi.edu.

Embarkation

• If conditions warrant, at the gangway upon arrival, everyone will receive an antigen test administered by the ship’s officers.
• If a person tests positive, outcomes will be situationally dependent and determined by Captain and shore support (ex: isolation ashore, isolation aboard, denial of boarding, etc.)

Underway

• For high-risk cruises that are very remote and or lack reasonable shoreside medical support, that mission should plan to keep one science stateroom empty to accommodate a COVID case.
• Antigen testing may continue daily on board depending on the cruise operational area, number of personnel on board and other risk factors.
• If a person tests positive but is asymptomatic After 5 days isolation on board, that person may return to work if they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days. That person must wear a mask for 5 days after isolation.
• If a person tests positive and has moderate to severe symptoms, the ship’s medical officer will consult with GWMMA on best treatment and evacuation or port call options if required.
• If all hands onboard have tested negative and are healthy, masks may not be required to be worn after a 5-day period or when Master and Chief Scientist agree on a time limit.
• COVID-19 tests may be required if conditions change or are warranted. Vessel will have Rapid COVID-19 antigen and PCR testing capability for all hands.
• If tests become required and you have submitted proof of previous COVID infection within 90 days of cruise date, you may be exempt from testing.
• Shipboard crew will perform extensive cleaning and disinfecting of all areas of the ship if a case develops on board, Clorox 360 electrostatic sprayers are to be used.
Vessel Tours

- Tours on WHOI vessels will be allowed on a case-by-case basis. Tours permitted may be limited in scope and may be required to stay on exterior decks only or asked to avoid specific spaces with a high crew/science presence.