

MCA Guidance to Internationally Plying RO-RO Passenger and Freight Operators

The following three considerations have been discussed; however, the list is not exhaustive, and discussions should be made with the flag and relevant host State(s).

The ultimate choice of how an operator protects their crew and passengers remains with the operator. If an option, similar to Option 3 below, which is only considered where freight alone is carried, is chosen then a full and thorough risk assessment, including control measures, would need to be submitted to the MCA for consideration. The attached document identifies those areas the MCA proposes are considered by the operator in their risk assessment for Option 3, this is the absolute minimum that the MCA would accept.

Option 1 - Onboard barrier measures

- Distribution of information at the ticket office, at boarding and in the lounges (displays, flyers and audio/video broadcasts).
- Timing of boarding to be co-ordinated to avoid contact between drivers, passengers and crew.
- Orientation of passengers to open lounges by limiting the number of lounges and ensuring a minimum distance of more than 1 metre between each person (PAX/ground surface area ratio to be defined).
- Closure of restaurants/bars/shops.
- Display on the ground of the minimum distances for access to the sanitary facilities.
- Disinfection / cleaning measures on board.
- On disembarkation, access to the car-decks is timed (for example, by zone according to vertical fire zones or ticket numbers).
- In the event of an emergency ensuring that any control measures in place do not interfere with the normal emergency preparedness onboard.

Option 2 - Vessels with cabins

- Distribution of information at the ticket office, at boarding and in the lounges (displays, flyers and audio/video broadcasts).
- Timing of boarding to avoid contact between drivers and crew.
- Orientation of the PAX to the cabins for containment.
- Closing of restaurants/bars/shops.

- Display on the ground of the distances for access to the sanitary facilities.
- Disinfection/cleaning measures on board.
- On disembarkation, timing of access to car-decks (for example, by zone according to vertical fire zones or ticket numbers).
- In the event of an emergency ensuring that any control measures in place do not interfere with the normal emergency preparedness onboard.

Option 3 - Where only freight is being shipped the drivers of freight vehicles can remain in their cabs

(see risk assessment proforma as per attached ANNEX)

RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FOR ACCOMPANIED FREIGHT ON VEHICLE DECKS

Ship Name:

IMO number:

Area of Operation:

As part of pandemic response plan and to ensure that the key services are maintained, the [###] Maritime authority would consider accepting alternative criteria for compliance with SOLAS chapter II-1 regulation 23.9 with respect to allowing access to passengers (drivers) on enclosed Ro-Ro car decks during Navigation. This is in order to reduce the risk of passing the virus between Freight drivers and ship's crew.

In order to mitigate the increased risks associated with the above, the following should be taken into account:

PRIOR TO BOARDING

Distribution of information on Coronavirus (Covid 19) placed at the ticket office for drivers of freight vehicles (displays, flyers and audio/video broadcasts). Drivers should also be issued with an adapted script of the safety tape and layout of evacuation routes from vehicle decks. Any printed material should be available in English as a minimum.

Boarding arranged to ensure segregation of drivers from vessel's crew.

Freight drivers of accompanied freight can remain in their cab units. Strictly, no other passengers to remain with their vehicles for the duration of the crossing.

RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

Ensure adequate arrangements are in place for the safe mustering and evacuation of drivers carried on the vehicle deck. This will include appropriate contingencies for evacuating from the vehicle decks which, under normal operation, would not have any drivers on them.

Additional Fire Fighting Equipment to be provided for vehicle decks where passengers will remain with their vehicles.

TANNOY ANOUNCEMENT

All drivers on vehicle decks must be able to hear the passenger safety announcements. This will require windows to remain open for the duration of the voyage. To ensure the announcement is clearly heard, above normal operational noises, the announcements should be played whilst the vessel is alongside.

An adapted script of the safety tape should be given on cards issued on arrival.

ENGINE

All vehicle engines and ignitions must be switched off when the vessel is on passage.

VENTILATION OF VEHICLE DECKS

Slow vehicle deck ventilation shall remain on for the duration of the crossing.

STOWAGE AND LASHING OF FREIGHT UNITS

Freight should be loaded so that drivers have free movement to and from their vehicles and be in sufficient reach and have accessibility to fire-fighting equipment. The load should be staggered according to the layout of vehicle decks and should be clear of any doors.

Extra lashings, in addition to those required by a Cargo Securing Manual, should be considered to avoid movement of the freight units. Where units are lashed, it should be ensured that only proper securing points are used, and lashing remain tight through the voyage. Shippers should be asked to ensure cargoes are properly secured to avoid cargo spillage and so reduce the likelihood of any accidents to people on deck in the event of excessive rolling.

WEATHER LIMITATION

Parameters to be defined by weather dependent lashing available on the vessel. The cut off limit should be defined by wave height. (Suggest max 2.5 metre wave height)

SMOKING/COOKING POLICY

'No smoking policy' to be strictly implemented. Drivers will not be allowed to use their cooking equipment in their units or other forms of portable heating. This should be verified by rounds of the vehicle decks.

DISINFECTION/CLEANING MEASURES ON BOARD

If any PPE is used during the course of the crossing and comes into contact with a passenger this would need to be classed as medical waste. One yellow bin to be provided on each vehicle deck to be disposed of via approved medical waste contractor.

DANGEROUS GOODS

Carriage of Dangerous Goods requires special consideration. Where possible, additional segregation away from other cargoes should be implemented including the possibility of carrying on separate deck to other freight/vehicles.

SAFETY ROUNDS BY CREW

Permanent presence of personnel (roundabout) in the garage deck allowing visual control of all the spaces of the car decks.

USE OF ENCLOSED AND MEZZANINE DECKS

No accompanied freight will be loaded on enclosed holds or on mezzanine decks.

SANITARY FACILITIES

Permanent presence of personnel at each access to the sanitary facilities. Drivers shall be escorted to the facilities by a crew member. Cleaning regime to be followed as per pandemic procedure.

ADDITIONAL SIGNAGE ON VEHICLE DECKS

Markings of the deck to identify escape/evacuation routes and also distances for sanitary facilities.

LIGHTING

Additional emergency lighting (torches) to be provided on vehicle decks in the event of a black out situation developing

DRIVERS WITH RESTRICTED MOBILITY

Additional crew to be allocated for drivers with restricted mobility in the event of any emergency.