

NPFC HIGH SEAS BOARDING AND INSPECTION IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT – BEST PRACTICES

SUBJECT:

Sharing of domestic COVID-19 Mitigation Measures applicable to High Seas Boarding and Inspections (HSBI)

BACKGROUND:

On 31 August, the TCC Chair circulated a letter to TCC Focal Points and the co-leads for the Small Working Group for Operations requesting the collation and comparison of domestic COVID-19 mitigation strategies and policies as they relate to High Seas Boarding and Inspection (HSBI).

SUMMARY:

This summary outlines baseline standards for Authorized Inspection Vessels and Authorized Inspectors derived from aligned requirements and best practices of all Members. Any protocols drafted by the NPFC should not unduly burden Members by creating additional requirements, monetary obligations, or contravene domestic policy or procedures. Any protocols should also be time bound to ensure they are revisited, modified, or cancelled as the COVID-19 situation changes.

Overall, mitigation measures currently in place by Members follow similar standards and are all in alignment with WHO guidelines, keeping the crews of Authorized Inspection Vessels and Fishing Vessels safe to the greatest extent possible. The following categories were the most widely similar and could be considered as minimal HSBI COVID-19 mitigation measures:

- Protective gear/equipment: All members have specifications for Authorized Inspectors performing HSBI to wear, at a minimum:
 - Masks
 - Gloves
 - Protective Clothing
 - Eye/Face Protection
- Health screening procedures:
 - There are variances on timing, quarantine periods, and number of tests; however, most Members have assurances in place to medically clear crews prior to embarking or departure as well as the duration of the patrol period.
 - All members have provisions for consistent health checks/monitoring of crew while underway.
- Inspection vessel disinfection:
 - All members have stringent requirements for disinfection of the Inspection Vessel on a daily basis.
- Equipment and gear disinfection:
 - Post-HSBI, all members have detailed procedures to disinfect gear and equipment used during HSBI.

Areas of variances include:

- Detailed provisions and requirements for fishing vessels and their crews subject to the NPFC HSBI CMM.

- Directing fishing vessel masters to subject Authorized Inspectors to medical inspections prior to embarking for HSBI.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the consolidated review of all mitigation strategies and policies in place by Members, the following methods could be used as baseline procedures and considerations by all Members when executing HSBI and for masters of Authorized Fishing Vessels while operating within the NPFC Convention Area.

Pre-Patrol	During Patrol	During HSBI	Post HSBI/Patrol	For Fishing Vessels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-monitoring of symptoms, and daily health checks for defined period prior to getting underway. • COVID-19 training for crew. • Stocking up on PPE/Supplies. • COVID-19 testing if available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-monitoring of symptoms, and daily health checks • Increased sanitation protocols onboard ship. • Increase social distancing as able amongst crew. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory use of PPE to include masks, gloves, protective clothing, and eye protection. • Pre-boarding questions to ascertain health of crew and Authorized Inspectors. • Maximize social distancing and contact of surfaces while on HSBI. • Minimum number of inspectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation of gear, equipment, and Authorized Inspectors prior to contact with Authorized Inspection Vessel crew. • Self-monitoring of symptoms, and daily health checks post HSBI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-monitoring of symptoms, and daily health checks for defined period prior to getting underway. • Vessel is required to carry masks, gloves, glasses, disinfectant and medicine. • Avoid direct contact with non-crew during operations or port calls • Increase social distancing as able amongst crew.