

COVID-19 FAQs

Last Updated 4 March 2020, 6:30AM EST

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

What is COVID-19?¹

COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. The virus at the center of the current outbreak is an example of a novel coronavirus, as the virus does not match any other known virus. This new virus is referred to by health authorities as COVID-19.

Which countries have been affected?

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus was first detected in Wuhan, China, where the vast majority of confirmed cases have occurred. According to global health authorities, additional cases have been confirmed around the world, including in North America and Europe, however the majority of confirmed cases remain in Asia.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, with some fatalities and symptoms including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties

Sources: [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#); [World Health Organization](#)

What steps can travelers take to protect themselves from COVID-19?

Leading health authorities are urging the same personal best practices that are standard for a typical flu season, such as the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who show signs of illness, including coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available

Sources: [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#); [World Health Organization](#)

¹ COVID-19 is the official name of the virus formerly known as 2019-Novel Coronavirus (as of 11 February 2020)

Are cruise lines changing their itineraries due to COVID-19?

CLIA Cruise Lines are continually assessing and modifying policies and procedures as developments emerge. This includes the modification of itineraries, where needed, in light of evolving circumstances in some cases. Cruise passengers are encouraged to consult with individual cruise lines and/or travel providers to be informed of the latest guidance available.

Are cruise lines denying embarkation to anyone who has traveled from or through China?

All persons who have traveled from, visited or transited via airports in South Korea, Iran, China, including Hong Kong or Macau, and any municipality in Italy subject to lockdown (quarantine) measures by the Italian Government, as designated by the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), within 14 days prior to embarkation are to be denied entry onboard any CLIA ocean-going cruise ship.

Are crewmembers and passengers subject to the same embarkation restrictions?

Yes. All persons who have traveled from, visited or transited via airports in South Korea, Iran, China, including Hong Kong or Macau, and any municipality in Italy subject to lockdown (quarantine) measures by the Italian Government, as designated by the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), within 14 days prior to embarkation are to be denied entry onboard a CLIA ocean-going cruise ship.

How are cruise lines screening passengers for illness?

As of 3 March 2020, CLIA Members are to conduct illness screening for all persons who have travelled from, visited or transited via airports in any destinations listed on the U.S. CDC "[Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#)" page within 14 days before embarkation. Illness screening includes symptom history checks for fever, cough and difficulty breathing in the 14 days before embarkation and taking of temperature.

Based on the latest available information about the illness, and in consultation with medical professionals from member lines, CLIA has updated its sample Travel and Health Declaration/Questionnaire, which is available for reference on www.cruising.org.

What guidance are cruise ships following when making determinations regarding route restrictions?

CLIA and its member lines maintain close contact with leading global health authorities, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the World Health Organization and others. Additionally, CLIA and its member lines remain in contact with port authorities and destinations around the world to help ensure alignment on guidance and procedures.

What measures are in place onboard cruise ships in the event of passenger or crew illness?

Importantly, the cruise industry is one of the most well-equipped and experienced when it comes to managing and monitoring health conditions of passengers and crew. Cruise lines take precautions to conduct passive as well as active screening of passengers and

crew for illness prior to boarding when circumstances demand. Furthermore, CLIA ocean-going members implement outbreak prevention and response measures and their ships must be fitted with medical facilities and shipboard medical professionals available around the clock, 24/7, to provide initial medical care in the event of illness and to help prevent disease transmission.

Are cruise lines offering refunds to passengers whose trips has been impacted by COVID-19?

Passengers are encouraged to consult with individual cruise lines and/or travel providers with regard to compensation policies.

Does the CLIA Health Policy and pre-board screening protocols apply to both passengers and crew?

Yes. Based on the agreed-upon protocols, CLIA cruise line members are to deny boarding to all persons who have traveled from, visited or transited via airports in South Korea, Iran, China, including Hong Kong or Macau, and any municipality in Italy subject to lockdown (quarantine) measures by the Italian Government, as designated by the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), within 14 days prior to embarkation, as well as to passengers or crew who within 14 days before embarkation, have had close contact with, or helped care for, anyone suspected or diagnosed as having COVID-19, or who is currently subject to health monitoring for possible exposure to COVID-19.

How are the CLIA policies and procedures developed as it relates to COVID-19?

CLIA has in place a longstanding member Health Policy that requires screening of all embarking passengers and crew to help prevent the spread of communicable disease. In coordination with cruise lines, medical experts and regulators around the world, CLIA and its member lines have agreed to adopt enhanced screening protocols with regard to the COVID-19 based on publicly available information and prevailing guidance from global health authorities, including the WHO.

Are these policies applicable to river cruises?

These policies apply to all ocean-going CLIA cruise line members. River operators are subject to the laws, regulations and dictates of local health authorities within the specific countries where they operate. These policies may serve as a guide for river cruise lines if they do not conflict with requirements of local authorities.

How will cruise lines determine if a passenger or crewmember has been in or through the affected areas and/or has come in contact with someone who has within the last 14 days?

To assist in implementation of the travel, contact and health screening for COVID-19, CLIA has circulated to member cruise lines a Sample Traveler's Health Declaration / Questionnaire which can be used in conjunction with the cruise lines' extensive experience in conducting pre-boarding health screening for guests and crew. Additionally, cruise lines receive detailed information from every passenger and crew including their residence and nationality. Passports contain information on recent travel history.

Do you think that COVID-19 will have a long-term impact on the cruise industry's growth?

COVID-19 is a challenge for many industries. Speaking for the cruise industry, we believe our members are well-equipped to respond, and we are confident the industry has the resilience and ability to address current challenges over the long-term.

What will be the financial impact of the virus on the cruise industry?

As always, the number one priority is the health and safety of passengers and crew. This is undoubtedly a challenging moment for the entire travel industry—and one we take very seriously. Cruise lines are constantly monitoring the situation as it rapidly- develops and will continue to adapt, as needed, to provide for the needs of guests and crew.

What are the requirements for a cruise line to become a member of CLIA?

Cruise lines are required to follow a comprehensive set of operational and other policies as a condition of continued membership in CLIA. These policies often exceed international and national laws and regulations. The member policies cover a wide array of practices, including environmental protection, safety, security, medical care and passenger and crew health, and of course guest care. These policies are constantly reviewed and adapted to facilitate and promote best practices in the cruise industry. Each year every member line CEO must verify, in writing, that all of the CLIA member policies have been implemented. Implementation of the environmental, safety, security and medical policies is also annually certified, in writing, after independent third-party audit. These policies must also be included in every member line's Safety Management System required by international law.

When can we expect additional updates from CLIA?

CLIA and its member lines are closely monitoring the ongoing outbreak and will continue to assess and modify policies and procedures as deemed necessary, with the upmost consideration for the health and safety of all onboard. Updates will be made available to the public on an ongoing basis at www.cruising.org.

Where can I find additional information about COVID-19?

Please visit the following websites for more information:

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](http://www.who.int)
- [WHO Travel Advice](http://www.who.int/travel-advice)
- [United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(U.S. CDC\)](http://www.cdc.gov)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\)](http://www.ecdc.europa.eu)