



LOSS PREVENTION UPDATE

MPOX Update: Overview, Symptoms and Precautionary Measures for Seafarers

MPOX, formerly known as monkeypox, is a **viral zoonotic disease**, meaning it can be transmitted from animals to humans.

Caused by the monkeypox virus, MPOX shares similarities with smallpox but is generally milder in nature. The virus spreads primarily through close contact with an infected person, including exposure to their bodily fluids, respiratory droplets, or materials contaminated by the virus, such as bedding or clothing. Additionally, animal-to-human transmission can occur through direct contact with the blood, bodily fluids or skin/mucosal lesions of infected animals, often via bites or scratches.

AREAS CURRENTLY AFFECTED

As of the latest reports, MPOX cases have been identified in several regions globally, with particular concern in areas where the virus was not previously endemic. These include parts of Central and West Africa, where the virus is more commonly found, and sporadic cases have been reported in North and South America, Europe and Asia due to international travel. Continued vigilance and monitoring are essential as the situation continues to evolve.

SYMPTOMS

Most people with MPOX fully recover, though some may experience severe illness. The symptoms of MPOX typically include:

- Fever
- Headache

- Swelling of the lymph nodes
- Back pain
- Muscle aches
- Lack of energy
- A distinctive rash that often begins on the face and then spreads to other parts of the body.

A distinctive rash often begins on the face before spreading to other parts of the body, including the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. This rash progresses through several stages: it starts as macules, then develops into papules, vesicles, pustules and finally scabs, which eventually fall off. Individuals with MPOX are contagious and can transmit the virus to others until all the sores have healed and a new layer of skin has formed.

WHEN SYMPTOMS APPEAR

If infected with MPOX, symptoms typically emerge after an incubation period of 6 to 13 days, although the incubation period can range from 5 to 21 days. In some cases, a shorter incubation period of 2 to 4 days has been observed. During this incubation period, the virus replicates in the body without causing any noticeable symptoms.



PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

To effectively prevent the spread of MPOX and protect yourself and others from infection, it is important to take the following precautionary measures when within affected areas:

- Avoid close contact with individuals who have a suspected or confirmed MPOX infection
- Practice good hygiene by washing hands regularly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves, when caring for or coming into contact with someone who is infected
- Avoid contact with wild animals, especially those that may carry the virus, such as rodents and primates
- Be aware of food containing animal parts or meat in affected areas. These should be cooked thoroughly before eating
- Isolate infected individuals from others to prevent the spread of the virus.

IF YOU GET INFECTED

If a crew member is suspected of having contracted MPOX, seek medical attention immediately. Inform shipowners and the relevant parties about your symptoms and potential exposure to the virus for them to advise on the appropriate follow-up arrangements. The suspected crew member should be isolated to prevent further spread and contact tracing should be initiated promptly. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms, as there is no specific antiviral treatment approved for MPOX.

In some cases, smallpox vaccines may be administered under healthcare guidance. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) vaccination

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please visit WHO's website on [MPOX](#) or email lossprevention@tindallriley.com

DISCLAIMER

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can help prevent infection for people at risk.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR SEAFARERS

It is therefore important that Members monitor the current situation closely and always contact their local agent/representative prior to arrival to seek advice on the latest situation and any applicable health requirements relating to MPOX. This includes port not affected by MPOX by where whether the port has implemented specific health protocols to monitor and manage the potential spread of MPOX among incoming seafarers and travelers.

Given elevating the risk of potential exposure, seafarers must remain vigilant and informed about the latest health advisories in the regions they are visiting. It is important to strictly adhere to all local health regulations and best precautionary practices, especially in areas where MPOX cases have been reported. These measures may include health screenings upon arrival, mandatory reporting of symptoms and isolation protocols if an infection is suspected.

Shipowners should consult their company doctor and are encouraged to actively raise awareness and stay informed about the latest recommendations for containment measures, precautionary practices and hygiene standards from credible sources and recognised health organisations. Additionally, it is recommended to regularly review and update internal operating procedures to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

SOURCES

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC): Monkeypox Factsheet for Health Professionals

World Health Organization (WHO): Monkeypox Fact Sheet

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): About MPOX