

VANUATU NATIONAL NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TASKFORCE



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

ADVISORY #8

20 March 2020

SITUATION UPDATE

At present, **there no suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu**. Should a case be confirmed in Vanuatu, the Ministry of Health Emergency Medical Team are on standby with dedicated quarantine facilities in Port Vila and Luganville, and a thorough response plan is ready should it be required.

All cross-border government agencies and state-owned enterprises operating within Vanuatu's international port of entries (seaports and airports) have been advised about the current World Health Organization declaration of a Global Pandemic of COVID-19 on 11 March 2020.

The Ministry of Health and the COVID-19 Taskforce continues to revise the surveillance program for COVID-19 in Vanuatu.

The Taskforce has adopted the WHO's revised definitions for suspected, probable and confirmed cases of COVID-19 as the basis for Vanuatu's response to this disease. These definitions can be found on [WHO's website](#).

As of 20 March 2020, Vanuatu continue to enhance surveillance response measures have been further updated as follows:

GENERAL NOTICE TO ALL TRAVELLERS INTENDING TO COME TO VANUATU

- 1.1** As of 20 March 2020, all Vanuatu ports of entry are now closed until further notice. This measure is taken to minimize the risks of importing COVID-19 into the country.
- 1.2** Special consideration will be applied to foreign diplomatic missions and international organizations in Vanuatu on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with Vanuatu's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
- 1.3** Special consideration will be provided for medical evacuations on a case-by-case basis in consultation with Vanuatu's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND CITIZENS OF VANUATU ONLY

1.4 Returning permanent residents and citizens of Vanuatu are permitted to enter but must self-quarantine for 14 days on arrival before they can be allowed back to their families and communities.

1.5 As of 20 March 2020, only general cargo boats, oil, gas and fuel tankers will continue to function as usual, with strict requirements. Fishing boats are excepted as long as they remain within the Vanuatu waters and will be monitored by the Fisheries department.

The master of all foreign going vessels coming into Vanuatu MUST provide the following documentation to the harbour Master and the Health Surveillance Team within 24 hours prior to arrival.

a. Voyage Memo (outlining all ports visited during the past 14 days)

b. Maritime Health Declaration (certifying health condition of crew and captain on board)

c. Vaccination List (outlining any case of outbreak on board).

1.5.1 The Harbour master upon recommendation from the Health Surveillance Team will provide clearance to all incoming vessels, prior to berthing alongside the seaport.

1.5.2 Crews and captains showing symptoms of respiratory illness (flu, running nose, fever, headache, chest pain, or difficulty in breathing) or any other illness must report their conditions to the shipping Authorities and health Authorities and must not leave the ship at any time while in Vanuatu.

1.6 All private, naval and scientific research vessels are suspended from entering Vanuatu waters with the exception for vessels entering our waters for the purposes of the COVI D-19 related missions.

Note: This travel advisory #8 supersedes all previous advisories and is effective until the next travel advisory is issued.

CONTACTS

For all queries regarding COVID-19, call our toll-free number 119.

Alternatively:

Doctor in charge, National Taskforce: Dr. Vincent Atua: 22100 or 112 (Emergency) or Mobile: +678 771 6135

Health Surveillance Monitoring – Mr Vanua Sikon Mobile: +678 572 4903

Signed,

Mr. Abraham NASAK

Director

National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)

Ministry of Climate Change Republic of Vanuatu

ANNEX 1

Definition:

Definitions of patients with Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI), suspected of COVID-19 infection*

An ARI with history of fever or measured temperature $\geq 38\text{ C}^\circ$ and cough; onset within the last ~10 days; and requiring hospitalization. However, the absence of fever does NOT exclude viral infection.

Surveillance case definitions for COVID-2019¹

A. Patients with severe acute respiratory infection (fever, cough, and requiring admission to hospital), AND with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation² **AND** at least one of the following:

- a history of travel to or residence in the city of Wuhan, Hubei Province, China and Italy in the 14 days prior to symptom onset, or
- patient is a health care worker who has been working in an environment where severe acute respiratory infections of unknown etiology are being cared for.

B. Patients with any acute respiratory illness **AND** at least one of the following:

- close contact³ with a confirmed or probable case of COVID -19 in the 14 days prior to illness onset, *or*
- visiting or working in a live animal market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in the 14 days prior to symptom onset, or worked or attended a health care facility in the 14 days prior to onset of symptoms where patients with hospital associated COVID-19 infections have been reported.

¹ see <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus> for latest case definitions

² Clinicians should also be alert to the possibility of atypical presentations in patients who are immunocompromised.

- ³ Close contact' is defined as:
 - Health care associated exposure, including providing direct care for COVID-19 patients, working with health care workers infected with novel coronavirus, visiting patients or staying in the same close environment as a COVID-19 patient.
 - Working together in close proximity or sharing the same classroom environment with a COVID-19 patient
 - Traveling together with a COVID-19 patient in any kind of conveyance
 - Living in the same household as a COVID-19 patient. The epidemiological link may have occurred within a 14-day period from onset of illness in the case under consideration.