

COVID-19 FAQs

Last Updated 13 February 2020, 9:00AM 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 confined to Asia.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly experienced mild to severe respiratory illness with 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](#)

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

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

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 China, including Hong Kong and Macau, within 14 days before embarkation, will be denied entry onboard a 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 China, including Hong Kong and Macau, within 14 days before embarkation, will be denied entry onboard a CLIA ocean-going cruise ship.

How are cruise lines screening passengers for illness?

CLIA Cruise Lines conduct passenger screenings—including, in some cases, non-touch temperature readings—where appropriate, for guests and crew who have recently traveled from or through the affected areas consistent with prevailing guidance from global health authorities. Screening protocols allow for informed decisions on a case-by-case basis whether a guest or crewmember will be denied boarding.

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 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.

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://ecdc.europa.eu)