

Notice to ships, shipowners and agents

Vaccination of seafarers in Belgian Ports

The Belgian Shipowner Association, the Taskforce Vaccination and the Directorate General Shipping has launched a full scale COVID-19 vaccination campaign for all seafarers calling with a ship in a Belgian Port.

To facilitate the accessibility of the seafarers to the vaccination campaign, mobile medical vaccination teams will be sent to the ships at berth, to provide the vaccinations directly on board. The mobile medical vaccination teams will operate from two maritime medical centers in Antwerp and Zeebrugge, covering the ports of Antwerp, Ghent and Zeebrugge.

The vaccine provided will be the Johnson & Johnson single jab vaccine.

The vaccination campaign is expected to start on Monday 26 July 2021.

Scope

The Belgian Shipowner Association, the Taskforce Vaccination and the Directorate General Shipping has launched a full scale COVID-19 vaccination campaign for all seafarers calling with a ship in a Belgian Port.

1. The campaign is applicable to the following category of maritime workers:

- Seafarers, of all nationalities serving on board any type or category of seagoing ship calling in the ports of Antwerp, Ghent or Zeebrugge.

And,

- who have not yet received a doses of an European Medicines Agency (EMA) approved COVID-19 vaccine in the last 12 months.

2. The campaign is not applicable to the following category of persons:

Persons sailing on board any ship not considered as seafarer, such as special personnel, industrial personnel, superintendents, technicians, passengers

Or

Seafarers who have received at least one doses of a EMA approved COVID-19 vaccine in the last 12 months.

3. A seafarer mentioned under (2) should be able to provide proof of the following:
 - a. A seafarer's employment agreement, issued under the national law
 - b. A seamen's book or similar proof of identification as seafarer.

Procedure of application

1. Any shipping company, captain or agent (mentioned as “applicant”), may apply for the vaccination of crew on board a ship, scheduled to call at the Belgian Ports of Antwerp, Ghent or Zeebrugge.
2. Any application shall be made at least 48 hours prior expected arrival at berth of the vessel
3. The application shall be send to the following maritime medical centers:

Port of Antwerp and Port of Ghent:

Mediport

Italiëlei 51

2000 Antwerpen

mediport@online.be

+32 474 25 05 09

Port of Zeebrugge:

Dr Thomas Vandamme

Noordzeestraat 14

8380 Zeebrugge

thomas.vandamme@attentia.be

+32 50 54 46 46

4. The application must contain at least the following information:
 - a. The list of seafarers or crewmembers to be vaccinated, containing name(s), surname, date of birth and nationality
 - b. Details of the ship
 - i. Name of the ship
 - ii. IMO number
 - iii. Expected date/time of berthing
 - iv. Expected date/time of departure (or shifting)
 - v. Port and location of berth
 - c. Requested date/time of vaccination mentioned as date + am/pm
 - d. Contact details of applying party (shipping company, captain or agent)
 - e. Any other relevant information related to COVID-19 (any previous vaccinations, health conditions)
 - f. Any other logistic information (accessibility of the ship)
5. On receiving an application, the maritime medical center will confirm (or refuse) the vaccination request to the applicant. In addition, it will either confirm the proposed date/time (4c) or it will propose an alternative date/time taking into account the expected time of berthing and departure.

Very important additional information

1. The applicant may request a vaccination, but may not claim a vaccination. The vaccination team will do the utmost to honor any application for vaccination, however this may not always be guaranteed. The vaccination remains subject to the vaccines availability and logistic issues. The vaccination may be prioritized based on objective reasons and remains non-discriminatory at all times.
2. The vaccination shall be on a voluntary basis, meaning that a vaccine will only be given to a seafarer based on his free will. Furthermore, based on the voluntary nature of the vaccination, the seafarer agrees on the health risks and side effects related to the vaccination, which will be notified in a separate leaflet.
3. In respect of the information to be provided in 4.a, it is the decision and responsibility of the master of the ship to indicate the number of crewmembers and whom to be vaccinated, taking into account possible side effects and by assessing the operational requirements of his ship.
4. Further in respect of 4.a. the mobile vaccination on board the ship is only applicable for 5 or more crewmembers. In case an application is send for 4 or less crewmembers, the applicant shall make own arrangements to send the crew members for vaccination at one of the above mentioned medical centers.
5. The number of crewmembers mentioned in 4.a. shall be very precise and specific. The mobile medical teams will carry the exact number of vaccines as per the submitted list, and will therefore not honor any additional last minute vaccination when on board. Also the vaccines will only be given to the persons mentioned on the submitted list. The mobile medical team has the right to suspend any vaccination in case of noncompliance with the submitted information or false information.
6. The applicant shall ensure that the relevant crewmembers to be vaccinated are available on board and free from any immediate duty at the date and time confirmed by the medical center. The applicant shall facilitate the vaccination process on board, by providing access to the ship and accommodation (space) suitable to receive the medical team and crewmembers.

Process of vaccination

The mobile medical vaccination team will consist of medical trained staff composed of 1 medical doctor and 1 or 2 nurses.

The mobile medical vaccination team will proceed to the indicated location/berth of the ship as mentioned in 4.b.v above on the reconfirmed date and time. There may be variation in the time due to traffic conditions and access to the port/terminal

The medical vaccination team will carry sufficient credentials to access the terminal and the ship.

The medical vaccination teams will carry the exact number of requested vaccines in a cooled container. These must be applied within a determined timeframe without delay. The shipboard shall grant sufficient priority to the vaccination by preparing the vaccination and mustering the concerned crewmembers to a dedicated accommodation space.

The vaccination process on board will be according to following steps:

- 1) Anamneses and medical enquiry of each individual crewmember prior vaccination
- 2) Application of the vaccination
- 3) Registration of vaccination
- 4) 15 minutes observation for possible anaphylaxis reaction

The process should take on average 1 hour depending of the number of crewmembers, language and logistical issues.

During the whole process on board the medical vaccination team will strictly adhere to the medical secrecy and will not disclose any medical information to any third person or party.

Registration of vaccination

Any COVID-19 vaccination, carried out, shall be registered in a personal vaccination booklet of the seafarer concerned. This registration or endorsement shall serve as proof of COVID-19 vaccination.

The applicable vaccination booklet is the “WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis” (Yellow booklet).

In principle the COVID-19 vaccination will be registered or endorsed in an existing WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, of the seafarer if available on board.

Alternatively a new WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis booklet will be issued at the name of the seafarer.

In the WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis booklet, the type and date of vaccination will be mentioned and signed/stamped by a duly authorized physician.

If a duly authorized physician is accompanying the medical vaccination team, all relevant WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis booklet will be endorsed or issued accordingly on board.

If no duly authorized physician is accompanying the medical vaccination team, the existing and relevant WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis booklets will be collected by the medical vaccination team and taken to the medical center. In the medical center a duly authorized physician will endorse or issue the WHO International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis booklets for all crewmembers. The agent shall collect the booklets from the medical center and send these on board the ship.

Costs

The administered vaccines are provided free of charge. However a fixed fee of per ship is applicable for the administration of the vaccines by the medical vaccination team. This fee is independent to the number of crewmembers to be vaccinated (5 or more).

The fee is non profit and is intended to cover following costs:

- Transportation cost of the medical vaccination team
- Labour costs
- Administration cost (registration and certification)
- Medical equipment and protection equipment
- Overhead costs (at cost)

This fee will be invoiced to the applicant, following the vaccination carried out.