



# EBOLA STAYING SAFE

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# **EBOLA - STAYING SAFE**

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**PRINT AUTHOR:** Sheila Brownlee

**WRITER/DIRECTOR:** Julian Grant

**PRODUCER:** James Cleave

# CONTENTS

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	Page
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. WHAT IS EBOLA?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. REDUCING YOUR RISK OF BECOMING INFECTED</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. IF SOMEONE ON BOARD SHOWS SYMPTOMS</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. WHAT MASTERS CAN DO TO HELP</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>7. WHAT SHIPOWNERS AND MANAGERS CAN DO TO HELP</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>8. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>9. ASSESSMENT ANSWERS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>10. FURTHER RESOURCES</b>	<b>19</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## **Ebola – a serious maritime security issue**

Ebola is a severe, often fatal illness. It is thought to have originated in East and Central Africa, but recently shifted focus to West Africa, where it triggered the largest Ebola outbreak in history. In August 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a ‘Public Health Emergency of International Concern’ (PHEIC).

Even though the risk of contracting Ebola during a visit to affected countries is very low, and infected people usually feel so unwell that they cannot travel, the fact that the illness has a long incubation period and is difficult to diagnose in the early stages means that people who have contracted the virus could carry it to other countries. International transport is therefore under the spotlight, as it could enable this highly contagious and potentially fatal disease to spread.

Ebola therefore represents a serious maritime security issue, and shipowners, managers and Masters have a responsibility for taking measures to prevent the illness from being passed on by crew or passengers, as well as a duty of care for protecting everyone on board.

## **About this programme**

*Ebola – Staying Safe* is intended as a timely introduction to the dangers of Ebola, and how it could affect ships scheduled to visit ports where the disease has been reported.

The programme is aimed at crew, shipowners and managers. By doing this training, they will understand:

- the nature of the disease: its symptoms, how it is treated, and how it spreads
- the steps they can take to avoid becoming infected with Ebola
- what to do if someone on board starts to develop symptoms
- what Masters can do to protect everyone on board
- what shipowners and managers can do to help
- the importance of everyone playing their part in helping to keep themselves and others safe from infection

This workbook summarises the key points made in the video and includes recommendations for further reading, websites of organisations that have issued guidance on Ebola or may be of assistance, and assessment questions that can be used to reinforce the learning.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO TRAINERS**

### **Preparation for group sessions**

#### ***Think about the group***

How familiar is everyone with the topic of Ebola? What questions might they ask you? What do you want this session to achieve?

### ***Watch the video***

It is important to familiarise yourself with the video in advance, so that you can anticipate possible questions from the group and research your answers.

### ***Read the workbook***

This short workbook reinforces the key points from the video and contains further resources and assessment questions.

### **Tips for running an effective training session**

#### ***Begin with an overview***

Tell the group what the objectives of the session are, what you are going to cover, what they will know by the end of the session, and how long it will take.

#### ***Make the best use of the video and workbook***

Show the video and open up the session to general questions and discussion. If anyone was unclear about a particular point, or you would like to reinforce a message, you can re-play the relevant section(s) of the video.

#### ***Ask questions throughout***

Ask your trainees questions from the start, and encourage them to take an active part in the session. You can use the questions in this workbook to test understanding and raise awareness of the issues in trainees' minds.

#### ***Start discussions***

Encouraging discussions in a small group will help each individual to make a contribution to the session. But remember that some people are reluctant to speak up, so try and bring them in.

#### ***Sum up what the session has achieved***

At the end, briefly bring together everything you have covered. Make sure that you have asked for any other questions, and answered them. Ask the group what they found most useful about the session. Summarise and highlight the key learning points and draw conclusions.

#### ***Afterwards***

When the session is over, spend a few minutes thinking about how it went, and how you might want to change it next time. Write down lessons learned.

## 2. WHAT IS EBOLA?

### About the virus

Ebola is one of the world's most dangerous diseases. It is a virus which belongs to the group of illnesses known as viral haemorrhagic fever.

Ebola used to be referred to as Ebola Haemorrhagic Fever (EHF) but is now commonly called Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).



### Symptoms and progress of the disease

The Ebola virus can incubate for a long period. Someone who has been infected may not display symptoms for up to three weeks.

When symptoms do develop, they are often similar to influenza ('flu):

- Fever
- Headache
- Aching limbs
- A sore throat

The World Health Organization reports other symptoms associated with Ebola, including rash, red eyes, lethargy, stomach pain, difficulty swallowing, breathing difficulties and hiccups.

After eight or ten days, the person may have:

- severe diarrhoea and vomiting
- bleeding from their internal organs

In up to 90% of cases the fluid loss is followed by multiple organ failure, shock and finally death within two weeks.

### **How is Ebola treated?**

Although there is no cure, the disease is survivable if it is diagnosed and treated early enough.

**Currently there is no vaccination and no cure for Ebola.**

Infusions of fluid and antibiotics to help prevent secondary infections are the only treatments available.

### **Prevention is better than cure**

It only takes the kind of basic health protection measures set out in international regulations and World Health Organization guidance, strictly applied, to avoid contracting the disease, and to limit its spread.

# 3. HOW THE VIRUS SPREADS

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## How do people contract the disease?

Unlike infections such as influenza and tuberculosis, the Ebola virus does not travel through the air, so it cannot pass from an infected person to another person who is simply nearby.

The major risk is through direct physical contact with an infected person, in particular with any of their bodily fluids:

- Blood
- Vomit
- Faeces
- Saliva
- Sweat
- Mucus
- Semen
- Tears
- Urine

Even when the person is dead, the virus can still be transmitted through direct physical contact with their corpse

- One of the ways in which the virus can be transmitted is through sexual activity with an infected person
- Ebola can also spread through unsafe medical procedures that use contaminated needles and syringes, including tattoo equipment
- Wild animals can carry the disease, and eating meat from an infected animal which has not been adequately cooked can also result in infection
- People are only infectious when they have started displaying symptoms, not during the incubation period

**Ebola is highly contagious.**

## 4. REDUCING YOUR RISK OF BECOMING INFECTED

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### Visiting a port in an affected area

If a ship has to visit a port in an affected area, there are a number of steps everyone on board must take:

- Where at all possible, stay on board the ship
- Avoid shaking hands with anyone who comes on board, e.g. local authorities, agents and stevedores

### If you must go ashore

**The most important precaution you should take is to avoid close physical contact with anyone who has, or may have, the disease.**

- Avoid all sexual activity. Using a condom is not going to prevent infection with the Ebola virus
- Avoid contact with wild animals, whether alive or dead. Many can carry the disease, and the virus does not die with the animal
- Do not handle or eat bush meat
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, wherever you are
- Protect areas of your body that have cuts or damaged skin

## 5. IF SOMEONE ON BOARD SHOWS SYMPTOMS

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### **Act immediately**

If anyone on board develops symptoms which resemble Ebola, it should be reported immediately to the shipowner or manager, and expert advice should be sought from a shore-based medical facility.

The port health authority should be notified immediately. Under ‘free pratique’ regulations (quarantine clearance from the port health authority), it may be possible to transport the person to a shore-based facility for treatment, or to airlift someone out to the ship to provide medical assistance.

If the ship carries testing kits for other diseases with similar symptoms, such as malaria, it may be possible to identify the illness, and react appropriately.

Wherever the patient is, if Ebola is recognised and treated early enough, it can be survived. The giving of intravenous fluids, at an early stage, to combat the severe fluid loss that sufferers often experience is vital.

### **Isolate the infected person on board**

The person receiving treatment must be kept totally isolated from the moment the symptoms are recognised. This might mean keeping their cabin door closed, or placing them in an isolation room.

A log should be kept of all people who enter the cabin or isolation room.

Anyone who is to care for the person or to go into the cabin or isolation room should first be fully briefed about the risks of Ebola and about the precautions they must take.

The precautions include:

- minimising contact with the patient
- wearing very full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):
  - ◆ a medical mask
  - ◆ eye protection (eye visor or goggles or face shield)
  - ◆ non-sterile examination gloves or surgical gloves
  - ◆ a disposable long-sleeved waterproof apron to cover clothing and exposed skin
- rubber boots or closed, puncture and fluid-resistant shoes with overshoes

- removing the PPE before leaving the cabin or isolation room in a way that avoids contact with the soiled items and any area of the face
- after removing PPE, and after any direct contact with the affected person or their belongings or any objects that might be contaminated with their blood or body fluids, they should rub their hands with an alcohol-based hand-rub solution for 20-30 seconds or wash their hands with soap and water for about 40-60 seconds
- disposing of this PPE and all waste produced in the isolation area afterwards with extreme care, following the ship's procedure for the disposal of clinical waste
- disinfecting used linen, cloths, eating utensils, laundry and any other items that have been in contact with the infected person's body fluids
- first, cleaning surfaces or objects that could be contaminated (in order to prevent disinfectants being inactivated by organic matter), then disinfecting them using standard detergents, e.g. a 0.5% chlorine solution or a solution containing 1,000 ppm available free chlorine

### **What to do if you start to feel ill**

If you develop a fever, sore throat, aching limbs, diarrhoea, vomiting or stomach pain and have recently had close physical contact with someone in a port in an affected area, do not panic – your symptoms could be due to another fever-related illness.

However, you must **report it immediately to the Master or onboard medical officer**. It is for your own protection, and the protection of everyone else on board.

# 6. WHAT MASTERS CAN DO TO HELP

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## Responsibilities

The Master should make sure that the crew are aware of:

- the risks of Ebola
- how it spreads
- how to mitigate the risks

When the ship is visiting a port in an affected area, the Master should gather as much information as possible about the local situation from the local port agent and the type of controls that may be exercised as regards people boarding the ship.

## Protective measures

The Master should not allow on board anyone with an illness that could be Ebola or who has been confirmed as having Ebola.

Measures should be put in place to protect against the risk of bringing the disease on board:

### 1. Discourage shore leave

- Shore leave should be discouraged, and crewmembers should not be sent ashore (e.g. to purchase supplies) unless it is absolutely necessary

### 2. Minimise the number of people coming on board

- It is important to control and minimise the number of people coming on board, their level of access to the ship, and the amount of physical contact they have with crew members
- International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) Code procedures to prevent unauthorised persons coming on board while the ship is in port should be strictly enforced

### 3. Make arrangements for those coming on board

- If stevedores are to come on board, arrangements should be agreed with the stevedores' company, or their foreman, for comfort breaks and meals. Where possible, these breaks should be taken off the ship. The aim should be to minimise stevedore access to the ship's accommodation
- A bucket or wash station with chlorinated water and soap or hand sanitizer should be provided at the base of the gangway for stevedores' (or other visitors') use before boarding the ship

- Stevedores should be provided with latrine facilities on board. Any areas that they use, including latrines, gangway railings and cargo handling gear such as the ship's winch and hatch controls, should be cleaned afterwards with disinfectant or bleach. (Bleach should not be used in the latrine pans as it could cause an explosive reaction in the ship's treatment plant. A standard disinfectant should be used instead.)

**In the event of a delay or diversion**

- the ship's supplies of fuel, water, food and other critical supplies should be sufficient for any delays or diversions.

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# 7. WHAT SHIPOWNERS AND MANAGERS CAN DO TO HELP

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## Minimise the crew's exposure to the virus

When the ship is to visit a port in an affected area, shipowners and managers have a responsibility to minimise the crew's exposure to the risk of contracting and spreading the Ebola virus.

## Measures to mitigate the risks

Shipowners and managers are receiving advice from the World Health Organisation, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and from the various P&I (Protection and Indemnity Insurance) clubs within the international group.

That information and advice will evolve as the scope of the Ebola threat becomes clear, but there are measures that owners and managers can put immediately into place:

- Crew changes should not be made in affected ports unless it is absolutely unavoidable
- Managers (as well as Masters) should make sure that a ship's supplies of fuel, water, food and other critical supplies are sufficient for any delays or diversions
- Every ship should have adequate stocks of appropriate PPE, sanitation and medical supplies, e.g. face masks, gloves, disposable gowns and testing kits for diseases such as malaria that have Ebola-like symptoms
- Crew medical records, vaccinations etc. must be kept up to date to show to medical professionals or port state officials
- Ships must be ready to meet any other port state requirements, such as:
  - ◆ completing and delivering a Maritime Declaration of Health or Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate, either in affected ports or other ports that the ship may visit after calling at an affected port
  - ◆ providing information about the itineraries and contact details of people who may have been exposed to infection on the ship
- It is the responsibility of ship managers and Masters to understand the threat, so that everything they do on board mitigates the likelihood of infection

### REMEMBER

Ebola is a deadly disease. Everyone involved with a ship – from the owners and managers to the Master and every single member of the crew – must play their part to make sure that everyone on board stays safe.

## 8. ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

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1. **The Ebola virus can incubate for up to:**
  - a) 3 hours.
  - b) 3 days.
  - c) 3 weeks.
  - d) 3 months.
  
2. **How long after contracting the Ebola virus does severe diarrhoea and vomiting tend to occur?**
  - a) After 24 hours
  - b) After 8-10 days
  - c) After 4-5 weeks
  - d) After 2-3 months
  
3. **After how long does death occur in up to 90% of cases, following the fluid loss from diarrhoea, vomiting and bleeding?**
  - a) A few hours
  - b) 24 hours
  - c) 2 days
  - d) 2 weeks
  
4. **The major risk of contracting Ebola is when someone sneezes close to you.**

**TRUE OR FALSE?**
  
5. **Using a condom will protect you from infection with Ebola.**

**TRUE OR FALSE?**
  
6. **It is recommended that you wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, wherever you are, if you go ashore in an affected area.**

**TRUE OR FALSE?**

- 7. What should be done if someone on board shows symptoms of Ebola?**
- a) They should be isolated
  - b) A blood sample should be taken
  - c) A urine sample should be taken
  - d) They should be discouraged from drinking any liquids
- 8. Whose responsibility is it to make sure that the crew are aware of the risks of Ebola?**
- a) The affected port's
  - b) The individual crewmember's
  - c) The Master's
  - d) The charterer's
- 9. Where possible, the Master should discourage shore leave.**  
**TRUE OR FALSE?**
- 10. Chlorinated water and soap or hand sanitizer should be provided at the base of the gangway for people's use before they board the ship.**  
**TRUE OR FALSE?**
- 11. Crew changes can be made as normal in ports affected by Ebola.**  
**TRUE OR FALSE?**
- 12. Which of the supplies in this list is it NOT necessary to have on board, when visiting an area affected by Ebola?**
- a) Fuel
  - b) Water
  - c) Food
  - d) Mosquito nets
  - e) Appropriate PPE
  - f) Sanitation and medical supplies

## 9. ASSESSMENT ANSWERS

Question	Correct answer	Found in section
1	c	2
2	b	2
3	d	2
4	False	3 <i>The major risk is physical contact with an infected person, in particular with any of their bodily fluids.</i>
5	False	4 <i>Using a condom will not prevent infection with the Ebola virus.</i>
6	True	4
7	a	5
8	c	6
9	True	6
10	True	6
11	False	7 <i>Crew changes should not be made in affected ports unless it is absolutely unavoidable.</i>
12	d	7

# 10. FURTHER RESOURCES

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## Legislation, guidelines and publications

International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) Code, as amended

World Health Organization (WHO) guidance:

- Factsheet on Ebola: [www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs103/en/)
- Ebola guidelines: [www.who.int/csr/don/2014\\_08\\_28 Ebola/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2014_08_28 Ebola/en/)

*Ebola Virus Disease, West Africa, Overview* 10 September 2014, published by Risk Intelligence ([www.riskintelligence.eu](http://www.riskintelligence.eu))

Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEP) have issued the *Memorandum Circular No. 7* dated 11 August 2014 which provides guidelines to be implemented on all ships carrying Filipino seafarers travelling within any Ebola affected areas.

## Useful organisations

Centre for Disease Control (United States)	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC)	<a href="http://www.imec.org.uk">www.imec.org.uk</a>
International Maritime Organization	<a href="http://www.imo.org">www.imo.org</a>
International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)	<a href="http://www.ics.org.uk">www.ics.org.uk</a>
International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN)	<a href="http://www.seafarerswelfare.org">www.seafarerswelfare.org</a>
International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)	<a href="http://www.itfglobal.org">www.itfglobal.org</a>
World Health Organization (WHO)	<a href="http://www.who.int">www.who.int</a>

## Related Videotel programmes

- Avoid the Bite – Malaria Prevention for Seafarers (Code 1154)
- Dead Ahead – An Introduction to AIDS for Seafarers (Code 319)
- Elementary First Aid, Edition 2 (Code 989)
- Health and Welfare Advice for Seafarers (Code 510)
- Well Travelled? – Staying Healthy on Working Trips (Code 599)











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84 NEWMAN STREET  
LONDON  
W1T 3EU, UK

| T : +44 (0) 20 7299 1800  
| F : +44 (0) 20 7299 1818  
| E : [mail@videotel.com](mailto:mail@videotel.com)  
| W : [www.videotel.com](http://www.videotel.com)

