



Government of the Republic of Vanuatu

National Disaster Management Office

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Date: 23rd March 2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

ADVISORY # 2

Note: This advisory #2 supersedes all previous advisories and is effective until the next advisory is issued

SITUATION UPDATE

At present, there are suspected cases of COVID-19 in Vanuatu but no confirmed case(s). In the mean time we confirm that there are cases now in French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Guam, Fiji and PNG. Should a case be detected 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, state-owned and private 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 11th March 2020.

The Ministry of Health under National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) Coordination will continue to revise the surveillance program for COVID-19 in Vanuatu.

Health Cluster Operations 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.

Vanuatu continues to enhance surveillance response measures have been further updated as follows:

GENERAL NOTICE TO ALL TRAVELLERS INTENDED TO COME TO VANUATU

- 1.1. As of today 20th March 2020, all Vanuatu international ports of entry are now closed until further notice. This measure is taken to minimize the risks of importing COVID-19 into the country and to keep Vanuatu free from the virus.
- 1.2. All ports of entry in **Aneityum Island** in Tafea Province are temporarily closed until further notice. This measure is taken to minimize the risks of any possible outbreak of COVID-19 on the Island or elsewhere after a cruise ship visit where there was possible contact with Covid 19 positive passengers.
- 1.3. We advise that all people on Aneityum to cease travels by sea to other islands on Tafea Province or Vanuatu. This includes all flights in and out of Aneityum
- 1.4. Special consideration will be applied to Foreign Diplomatic Missions and International Organizations in Vanuatu on a case to case basis in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Vanuatu).
- 1.5. Special considerations will be provided for any medivac and evacuation on a one to one basis with consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (Vanuatu)

Social Gatherings

- 1.6. Social and special gatherings such as church services, schools, weddings, bars, kava bars and night clubs are advised to reconsider the need for their activities until further notice. This is to allow for social distancing measures.

FOR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AND CITIZENS OF VANUATU ONLY

- 1.7. Vanuatu citizens will be allowed to return but will be quarantined for 14 days upon arrival before they can be allowed back to their families and community.
- 1.8. Any traveller on a Permanent Resident or Resident visa will be allowed to board subject to the

following criteria and in consultation with the Department of Immigration and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation:

- 1.8.1. They have their whole family living in Vanuatu
- 1.8.2. The person has left Vanuatu for business and needs to return
- 1.8.3. The person has a business investment and resides in Vanuatu permanently
- 1.8.4. Child of a resident who is studying overseas
- 1.8.5. The resident is transiting less than 8hrs through Australia or New Zealand and lives in Vanuatu permanently

1.9. As of today only general cargo boats, oil, gas and fuel tankers will continue to function as usual but with strict requirements. Fishing boats are exempt as long as they remain within the Vanuatu waters and will be monitored by the Department of Fisheries (Vanuatu).

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

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

1.12. 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 COVID-19 related missions.

1.13. All pre-loaded inbound air cargos destined to Port Vila are allowed subject to pre-screening by the Department of Customs in Vanuatu.

School Closures

1.14 Government Schools in Port Vila, Luganville, and Shefa, Sanma and Tafea Provinces have been temporality closed in order for teaching staff to create remote learning options for students.

CONTACTS

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

Alternatively:

Doctor in charge: Dr.Vincent Atua who maybe contact on 22100 or 112 (Emergency) or Mobile: +678 771 6135

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

Director National Disaster Management Operation (NDMO): Mr. Abraham Nasak;
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Media Focal Person: Mr Russel Tamata email: rtamata@vanuatu.gov.vu Mobile: +678 710 8442

Sign:



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 $\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$ 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-2019*

A. Patients with severe acute respiratory infection (fever, cough, and requiring admission to hospital), AND with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation¹ **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 contact² 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.

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

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

2. Close contact² 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.