

Netherlands COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for Seafarers

GENERAL INFORMATION

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ROYAL
ASSOCIATION OF
NETHERLANDS
SHIPOWNERS

COLOPHON AND CONTACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME FOR SEAFARERS

No less than ninety per cent of everything is transported by sea. From raw materials to consumer products ready for direct sale, almost everything has been subjected to waterborne transport at some stage. In order to navigate the seagoing ships safely with that precious cargo from port to port across the globe, the work of seafarers is most essential. In today's world, their responsibilities are an irreplaceable part of the vital processes of waterborne transport, deep sea trawler fishing and dredging. Maintaining the global logistical processes, has proven to be of considerable significance during the SARS-CoV-2 (hereinafter: COVID-19) pandemic.

Seafarers work at sea and as such are confronted with very limited availability of immediate medical care at sea. In case of complications, a COVID-19 infection can ultimately and quickly cause severe problems for individual seafarers and can pose severe risk of infections to the remaining crew members aboard of the ship. Due to the characteristics of their occupation, seafarers are ashore (at home) only for a relative short period of time, while they work far from home for a relative long period of time. In addition, the world of shipowners and seafarers is strongly internationally oriented, and this is reflected on most ships as the crew composition involves a wide variety of nationalities. In the Dutch shipping industry, for example, a crew consisting of Dutch, Russian, Ukrainian, and Filipino seafarers is very common. COVID-19 vaccines are not yet widely available across the globe. This pertains, in particular, to developing nations. In some countries, vaccines are being administered, that have not (yet) been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Also, establishing a timely vaccination programme for seafarers must prevent their exclusion from international business travel. And indeed, permission to travel internationally only combined with a proof of vaccination is already in place in some countries. This illustrates the new reality with which the world is now confronted.

As flag state, the Netherlands is responsible for the safety and well-being of all seafarers aboard of ships flying the Dutch flag. In addition, shipowners and ship managers who are officially established in the Netherlands also manage ships flying other flags. In the Netherlands, employers are responsible for occupational health and safety at the workplace and are to strive for fair and just personnel policies. The Netherlands vaccination programme for seafarers enables these employers to live up to this duty of care.

In the European Union, only national governments have access to order and purchase COVID-19 vaccines. Thus, also in the Netherlands, maritime employers are dependent on the national COVID-19 vaccination programme. It is therefore justified that all seafarers, regardless of their nationality, working on board of seagoing ships flying the Dutch flag or under management of Dutch shipowners will get access to COVID-19 vaccination on Dutch territory (land side, ports, and coastal waters). In addition to this all seafarers visiting the port of Rotterdam will be given access to vaccination.

The above illustrates the need for an operable tailor-made programme to vaccinate said seafarers as a target audience that is difficult to reach. The complex characteristics of the industry have moved the Dutch government to outsource this vaccination programme to the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) as a parallel programme alongside the national vaccination strategy. This script for

employers outlines the details of the programme and facilitates a vaccination application procedure. As of September 1st 2021, and after initiating a successful pilot in Rotterdam expanding the vaccination programme, the Netherlands has expanded the vaccination programme for seafarers of seagoing ships regardless of their flag or ownership.

1.1 Reading guide

This instruction concerns the Netherlands COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for Seafarers and describes the required processes to successfully apply for a COVID-19 vaccination for eligible seafarers.

Although the vaccination programme is a national programme, it is a tailor-made solution for a highly internationalized sector, as set out above. Therefore, this instruction is published in English.

This part of the Handbook contains general information about the programme and how it was established. This contains inter alia a list of definitions and an outline about the practical details of the vaccination programme.

The parts I and II contain the instructions for applicants to set up their organizational process(es) and apply on behalf of the seafarers for vaccination under the Netherlands COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for Seafarers. Different procedures apply for vaccination in respectively the Dutch seaports and at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport.

1.2 Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared by the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR). It is provided for information purposes only, and KVNR makes no express or implied warranties, and expressly disclaims all warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose or use with respect to any data included in this publication. Without limiting any of the foregoing and to the extent permitted by law, in no event shall KVNR, nor any of their respective directors or employees have any liability for (a) any special, punitive, indirect, or consequential damages; or (b) any lost profits, lost revenue, loss of anticipated savings or loss of opportunity or other financial loss, even if notified of the possibility of such damages, arising from any use of this publication or its contents. The information contained in this publication has been obtained from sources that KVNR believes to be reliable, but KVNR does not represent or warrant that it is accurate or complete. KVNR is not responsible for, and makes no warranties whatsoever as to, the content of any third-party web site accessed via a hyperlink in this publication and such information is not incorporated by reference.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 Definitions

Programme:	Netherlands COVID-19 Vaccination Programme for Seafarers.
Seafarer:	An individual who represents the primary target audience for receiving a COVID-19 vaccination under the programme, based on the principal qualifying criteria as specified for vaccination in Dutch seaports and Schiphol Airport respectively.
Employer:	A shipowner, ship manager or maritime recruitment and placement agency registered as a legal and operational entity in the Netherlands.
Applicant:	An employer or a ship agent (the latter regarding vaccination in a seaport only) who applies for a COVID-19 vaccination for one or more eligible seafarer(s) working aboard or traveling to/from a seagoing ship qualifying for the Netherlands COVID-19 vaccination programme for seafarers.
Medical services provider:	Private contractor that assumes the medical responsibility and execution of the vaccination programme for seafarers as commissioned by the Royal Association of the Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR).

2.2 Scope of programme and instruction

PART I – DUTCH SEAPORTS

The scope of this part of the programme concerns seafarers working on seagoing ships calling the Dutch seaports of Delfzijl-Eemshaven, Amsterdam-IJmuiden, Rotterdam-Dordrecht-Moerdijk and Flushing-Terneuzen. No limitations apply to the nationality of the seafarer or the registration of the ship or the ship manager. Excluded are fishing vessels (except trawlers), government ships, yachts and ships not engaged on international voyages.

PART II – AMSTERDAM SCHIPHOL AIRPORT

The scope of this part of the programme concerns seafarers working on seagoing ships registered in the Netherlands and on seagoing ships of which the ship manager is registered in the Netherlands. In exceptional cases, the programme may also apply to seafarers working on other seagoing ships with related significant ship management activities in the Netherlands. The assessment of whether a ship meets one or more of the aforementioned criteria is determined by the KVNR and the other industry associations involved, if needed in consultation with the competent authorities. Excluded from the vaccination programme are fishing vessels (except trawlers), government ships, yachts and ships not engaged on international voyages. The KVNR maintains a list of the qualifying seagoing ships, based on the aforementioned criteria and the registration of ships in the IHS/Fairplay database.

PART III – BOOSTER VACCINATION IN DUTCH SEAPORTS

The scope of this part of the programme concerns seafarers working on seagoing ships calling the Dutch seaports of Delfzijl-Eemshaven, Amsterdam-IJmuiden, Rotterdam-Dordrecht-Moerdijk and Flushing-Terneuzen. No limitations apply to the nationality of the seafarer or the registration of the ship or the ship manager. Excluded are fishing vessels (except trawlers), government ships, yachts and ships not engaged on international voyages. A seafarer is eligible for a booster vaccination only when he can attest to completion of a basic vaccination series or recovery from a COVID-19 infection.

This instruction and its application instruction is mandatory to successfully participate in the programme. The instruction has been carefully drafted for applicants of vaccinations under the programme. The instruction is subject to amendments. Future versions are published online, and the most recent version will always be available at www.kvnr.nl/vaccines4seafarers.

This instruction informs applicants about the programme and provides them with a concise instruction to set up a vaccination management and evaluation system.

2.3 Vaccination population

The programme is established with the purpose of providing a tailor-made approach to vaccinate eligible seafarers for whom participation in regular vaccination strategies is extremely challenging. This is caused by the extensive time spent at sea, the international composition of the crew aboard and the highly limited availability of immediate medical care at sea. The identified sub sectors for the programme are merchant shipping pertaining to waterborne transport of goods, activities related to marine contracting, dredging and maintenance and the pelagic fishing industry. Feasibility of an available vaccine

Considering that most seafarers will only spend a very limited amount of time in the Netherlands because of (tight) sailing schedules, a 'single shot' vaccine is strongly preferred. However, a 'duo shot' vaccine also offers protection after a single shot and the protective period might lead to an annual vaccination booster. A 'duo shot' vaccine must therefore not in general be excluded from the possibilities.

For this programme, the Dutch government has allocated the COVID-19 vaccine of the 'single shot' type Johnson & Johnson's Janssen. The delivery of the initial batch of vaccines is scheduled for mid-June 2021. Additional future deliveries may be subjected to possible delayed delivery.

2.4 Vaccination sites

The aim of the programme is that it runs for several months and fits the regular crew change schedules of shipowners, ship managers and seafarers. Considering the composition of the fleet and estimated eligible number of eligible seafarers, the possibilities for a Dutch 'land side' vaccination programme is limited. A closer look unveils the importance of regular travel itineraries of seafarers. The following five general types of travel itineraries can be identified:

- Travel to the ship in a Dutch seaport (signing-on);
- Travel from the ship in a Dutch seaport (signing-off);
- Working aboard a ship visiting a Dutch seaport (port call);
- Transit to a foreign destination via a Dutch airport (transiting through the Netherlands);
- On leave within the Netherlands or traveling to the Netherlands for such purpose.

Regarding seafarers on leave within the Netherlands, in practice they will be confronted with several possibilities. An invitation from the regular national vaccination strategy could very well provide a better alternative, as stressed before. They will also, at some point, travel again to a ship, qualifying under this programme. Lastly, they might also opt as a 'back bencher' standing by to receive a vaccine in order to prevent spillage, for example after vaccination of a crew aboard a ship in a Dutch sea port.

Based on the various types of travel itineraries, the employer is presented with a number of options regarding the sites of vaccination. Following an inventory of preferred vaccination locations among shipowners and based on the consultations mentioned above, the distribution of vaccines has been determined. The following locations/regions will be served (north to south):

- Groningen Seaports: port clinic and in case of Dutch ships** also on board the ship (tailor made)
- Port of Amsterdam: port clinic and in case of Dutch ships** also on board the ship (tailor made)
- Schiphol Amsterdam Airport: Transit zone (air side) and Oost (land side, **Schengen visa required for visa nationals**)*
- Port of Rotterdam: port clinic and in case of Dutch ships** also on board the ship (tailor made)
- North Sea Port (Flushing-Terneuzen): port clinic and in case of Dutch ships** also on board the ship (tailor made)

*Following consultations between the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) and medical services providers about available capacity and facilities, this instruction calls on employers to primarily schedule vaccination in Dutch seaports and only secondary look to Schiphol Amsterdam Airport (in particular the TRANSIT zone) if it is the only feasible option.

** Ship and/or ship manager registered in the Netherlands.

2.5 Costs and Medical services providers

Regulations pertaining to medical care aboard of the ship and ashore state- that a shipowner must warrant that the seafarer has access to medical care that is comparable to that of personnel ashore. The implementation of this norm differs from company to company. The norm also states that the medical care is not limited to the treatment of an ill or injured seafarer, but must also encompass measures of preventative nature. This includes vaccination in general.

Not every organization is sufficiently equipped for vaccination of seafarers in transit zones of airports or aboard ships in seaports. For this programme, agreements have been made with two private medical service providers. One will take charge of vaccination sites at Schiphol Amsterdam Airport and the other will take charge of the Dutch sea ports regions.

The Dutch government allocates the vaccines to the programme free of charge via a covenant with the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR). Private medical services providers contracted by the KVNR will take charge of vaccine management, administration, and registration. They will charge either a fee per vaccination or an hourly fee for a tailor-made appointment. The fees are published in their respective terms and conditions on dedicated pages within this instruction. The costs will be invoiced directly to the company applying for the vaccination on behalf of the seafarer. The private medical

services providers execute the medical responsibilities under this programme according to the implementation guideline of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM LCI-Uitvoeringsrichtlijn). The applicant will be required to schedule an appointment with the medical service provider of choice, as set forth in the procedure in chapter five.

2.6 Registration of vaccination

After the eligible seafarer receives an injection of the vaccine, the seafarer receives the official Dutch registration card in English. The card will state personal details and contain information about the batch delivery of the vaccine. In addition, the medical services provider will also register the vaccination in the International certificate of vaccination or prophylaxis (WHO, International Health Regulations 2005), commonly known as 'yellow vaccination passport', if the booklet contains space to include the registration. National formats may vary. The registration will also be added into the administration of the medical services provider that administers the vaccine. In case of arising issues with a specific batch of the vaccine, registration beforehand allows for follow up possibilities.

NOTE that upon their consent to receive a vaccine, seafarers with a Dutch social security number (BSN) can additionally opt for registering their vaccination in the national database (Covid vaccination Information and Monitoring System CISM) of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM). This registration will enable them to obtain the European Union Digital Covid Certificate (vaccination passport). Seafarers vaccinated under this programme and not holding a Dutch social security number may apply for the DCC QR code by following the **subject procedure** published on the www.kvnr.nl/vaccines4seafarers.

2.7 Data collection and privacy

For purposes of executing the programme, the programme requires to collect and share data of applicants and personal details of eligible seafarers under the programme. The contracted company GCO B.V. has developed a portal for the verification of eligibility of seafarers under the programme. The application requires the collection of the following personal details of the seafarer: Name, travel documentation, date of birth and nationality. All medical services providers will have access to this data for vaccination planning and related purposes. The seafarer will be made aware of this data collection and sharing via a general consent form to express willingness to receive a vaccination. This does not apply to seafarers denying a vaccination under the programme, their personal details will not be required by the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) and contracted third parties to register under this programme. GCO B.V. is ISO 27001:2013 (Information Security Management) and ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management) certified.

2.8 Communications

This instruction is a stand-alone document allowing for execution of the programme, as the programme is not based on membership of a branch association. A publicly accessible website is published in English and Dutch at www.kvnr.nl/vaccines4seafarers. This instruction (and its future versions) will be published on the website, alongside all other information about the programme. The Royal Association of

Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) and its partners will coordinate public communication accordingly for the duration of the programme.

2.9 Evaluation

This instruction is subjected to periodical evaluation during the programme. The Royal Association of Netherlands Shipowners (KVNR) has established an evaluation taskforce to periodically assess the implementation programme. This taskforce consists of representatives from the government, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, the branch associations, and private medical services providers. Periodical evaluation will inter alia focus on elements regarding delivery of vaccines, use and abuse of the procedures and instructions and systems attached, operability of the programme in practice and client satisfaction in general. In the long run this evaluation serves two major purposes. Firstly, better preparation for future similar scenarios and, secondly, internationally sharing a 'Dutch best practice and lessons learned'.

2.10 List of useful documents

ROYAL ASSOCIATION OF NETHERLANDS SHIPOWNERS (KVNR)

- [DOWNLOAD TEMPLATE INVITATION LETTER FOR SEAFARER VACCINATION \(WORD\)](#)
- [DOWNLOAD CONSENT FORM TO ADMINISTER VACCINE TO SEAFARER \(PDF FORM\)](#)
- [DOWNLOAD LEAFLET VACCINATION PROGRAMME FOR SEAFARERS \(PDF\)](#)
- [DOWNLOAD SIMPLIFIED POSTER ON VACCINATION PROGRAMME FOR SEAFARERS \(PDF\)](#)

NETHERLANDS GOVERNMENT

- [Coronavirus jab: will there be side effects?](#)
- [RIVM – Information on side effects](#)
- [RIVM – Data registration and privacy](#)
- [NL GOVERNMENT – brochure Vaccination / Print version](#)
- [NL GOVERNMENT – all communications materials in different languages](#)

OTHER

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccination for Seafarers and Shipping Companies: A Practical Guide](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Seafarers – ICMA](#)

2.11 Vaccination locations and application procedures

- Dutch seaports : [download](#) **PART I** and follow procedure
- Amsterdam Schiphol Airport : [download](#) **PART II** and follow procedure
- **Booster vaccination** : [download](#) **PART III** and follow procedure