



NEWS RELEASE

Ships will Sound their Horns in Canada to support urgent need to vaccinate seafarers

June 22, 2021 – Ships will sound their horns at ports across Canada at 12 noon (local time) on June 25 — the Day of the Seafarer — as part of a worldwide effort to recognize the critical role marine workers have played during the pandemic and to urge governments to prioritize vaccinations for crews aboard ships.

Throughout the pandemic, seafarers have delivered essential PPE and medicines to protect Canadians, and transported the country's trade to and from domestic and international markets to keep the economy moving.

Canada's marine industry associations, including the Chamber of Marine Commerce, the Chamber of Shipping, the Shipping Federation of Canada, the Association of Canadian Port Authorities, the St. Lawrence Economic Development Council, and the International Ship-owners Alliance of Canada are now calling for all levels of government to ensure these men and women do not get left behind in vaccination efforts.

Many Canadian ship crews have struggled to receive their first vaccine dose due to ongoing logistical and vaccine supply issues at all levels of government. International seafarers, many of whom come from developing countries, are still unable to access vaccines at most Canadian ports.

Seafarers face particular risks of COVID-19 exposure and transmission, which include living and working on board their vessels in close contact with their fellow crew members, interacting with non-crew individuals who must periodically board the ship, and engaging in extensive work-related travel (often crossing multiple provincial and international borders) in order to join a ship.

It is also extremely challenging for seafarers to access vaccines, even when they are Canadian. Laws require that a minimum contingent of crew remains on operating vessels at all times, and crews are on board for weeks or months at a time as part of their contracts — which makes it difficult to schedule vaccine appointments. In the U.S., which has a surplus of vaccines, these hurdles have been overcome by having nurses board ships at locks or at port vaccination clinics — no matter their home country, including Canadian crew members returning to this country.

The marine sector urges the following actions:

- That all levels of government continue to work with the Canadian marine sector and unions to accelerate providing vaccines (first and second doses) to facilitate mobile clinics at ports and onboard ships. The marine industry already has a contract with private nurses to carry out this initiative for domestic seafarers.

- That the Canadian federal government take a leadership role in ensuring that international seafarers calling Canadian ports are prioritized for vaccination as our domestic supply increases.

The above measures will not only contribute to the health and welfare of seafarers in Canada but also serve as a bulwark against any serious health-related and COVID disruptions to Canada's transportation system and supply chain overall – which Canada can ill-afford as it seeks to position itself for an effective post-COVID economic recovery.

QUOTES

“Our Canadian crews desperately want their first and second vaccines. Let's not forget the sacrifice they've made during this pandemic to ensure our lives could carry on as normally as possible. We want to continue to partner with our unions and all levels of government to ensure marine workers also get the two-dose summer that has been promised to all Canadians.”

— **Bruce Burrows, President and CEO of the [Chamber of Marine Commerce](#).**

"Canada has been a global leader in supporting crew changes for ships trading at Canadian ports through the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada should continue its leadership in supporting people and provide vaccinations to seafarers who have endured considerable suffering while keeping vital supply chains moving."

— **Robert Lewis-Manning, President and CEO of the [Chamber of Shipping](#).**

“Our global supply chains don't function if international seafarers are not healthy. Vaccinating seafarers is the best way we can protect them against COVID-19 and ensure the continued, uninterrupted movement of goods, both at home and abroad. Canada has established safe shore leave protocols and facilitated crew changes to support the welfare of international seafarers; it should now take the next step and ensure all seafarers calling at Canadian ports are vaccinated.”

— **Wendy Zatylny, President, [Association of Canadian Port Authorities](#)**

The 2021 edition of Day of the Seafarer provides a perfect opportunity to reflect on the extraordinary work that seafarers around the world have done to keep trade moving under incredibly challenging conditions. Despite these efforts, many seafarers are now facing significant health risks due to their inability to access COVID-19 vaccines. Given that this is a growing humanitarian issue, we call on Canada to play a leadership role in prioritizing seafarers calling Canadian ports for vaccinations, and to do so on an urgent basis.

— **Michael Broad, President, [Shipping Federation of Canada](#)**

As Quebec paused to limit the spread of COVID-19 and land borders closed, the marine industry ensured that the supply chain was never broken. The efforts made must be recognized. In solidarity with our community partners, we recognize the resilience, courage and teamwork of all industry stakeholders who have made this happen.

— Mathieu St-Pierre, President and CEO, [St. Lawrence Economic Development Council](#)

“We need the leadership of the Canadian and Provincial governments to partner up today and include seafarers as critical to receiving the COVID vaccine in each province across Canada as seafarers continue to keep us provisioned with critical and essential supplies. Not to vaccinate or cause a delay will place the seafarer’s life at risk while on duty in Canada.”

— Lanna Hodgson, Secretary-General, [International Ship-owners Alliance of Canada](#)

NOTE TO EDITORS:

A video/audio sample of ships in Canadian waters sounding the Horn (from last year to provide you an example of what will happen)

EN: https://twitter.com/ACPA_AAPC/status/1258768873039581186

FR : https://twitter.com/ACPA_AAPC/status/1258772167157743617

Video clips on the day from ships/port (taken on phones) may be available by media request.

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