Vessel Sanitation Program

Cruise Ship Norovirus Surveillance and Control Strategies

National Center for Environmental Health
Vessel Sanitation Program

Mission

- Prevent the introduction, transmission, or spread of communicable diseases into the United States
- Assist cruise ship industry in developing and implementing comprehensive sanitation programs to minimize the risk for gastrointestinal illnesses

VSP Program Components

- Inspections
- Surveillance & Outbreak Investigations

Surveillance

- Report 24 hours before arrival at a U.S. port
- Submit a 4-hour update
- Submit a special report when gastrointestinal illness reaches 2% and again at 3%
- Use electronic reporting system

GISS reporting requirements

- Routine reporting
  - 24-36 hours before arrival
  - 4-hours before arrival
- Special reporting
  - Notification: ≥ 2% pax/crew
  - Outbreak: ≥ 3%
  - Any time during a cruise when within 15 days of US arrival
- Based on symptoms
- Data from the AGE log

What Is a Reportable Case?

A reportable case of GI illness is defined as…

Diarrhea (3 or more loose stools in a 24-hr period), or what is above normal for the individual

- or -

Vomiting + one other symptom (24-hr period):

- One or more loose stools
- Abdominal/stomach cramps
- Headache
- Muscle aches (myalgia)
- Fever (≥38°C or 100.4°F)

Why Are AGE Logs So Important?

- Passenger to crew case ratio
- Diarrhea to vomiting ratio
- Symptom type and duration
- Estimate percentage onboard truly ill
- Identify additional cases not reported
- Plot epidemic curve

Outbreak Management and Prevention

Ship's roles and responsibilities

- Written outbreak prevention and response protocols (OPRPs)
- Strict implementation of OPRP procedures
- Duties and responsibilities of each department and their staff
- Steps in outbreak management and control and the trigger required action at each step
- Disinfectant products used with concentrations and required contact times

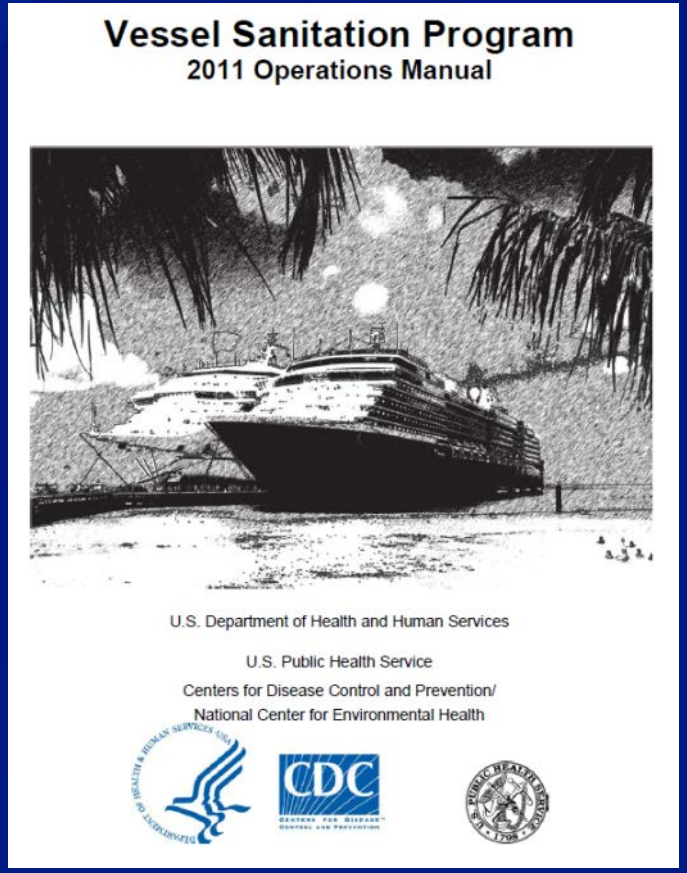
Outbreak Management and Prevention

Ship's roles and responsibilities -continued

- Procedures for informing passengers and crew members of the outbreak
- Procedures for returning the vessel to normal operating conditions after an outbreak
- Procedures to protect the passengers and crew from exposure to disinfectants
- When AGE of pax or crew members is $\geq 2\%$, disinfect all public areas, including handrails and restrooms, on a continuous basis

Example Lessons Learned

- Convert self-service to served buffets
- Vomit and diarrhea clean-up or 'hit squads'
- Large venue and ill cabin fogging
- No cross-contact with disembarking/embarking passengers (port terminal and bus transports)
- CDC to cruise lines notification of 2% GI ships
- Ill cabin laundry and dishware separately collected and cleaned



Know what's in the book

For more information please contact

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