



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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CDC Issues Phases 2B and 3 of the Conditional Sailing Order


Media Statement

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Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released guidance for cruise ships to undertake simulated voyages with volunteer passengers as part of its COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate application. With the issuance of these documents, cruise ship operators now have all the necessary requirements and recommendations they need to start simulated voyages before resuming restricted passenger voyages. In addition, this release includes the COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate application, which is the final step before restricted passenger voyages.

CDC released the CSO in October 2020 to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 on cruise ships, from cruise ships into communities, and to protect public health and safety. The order introduced a [phased approach](#)  for the resumption of passenger cruises to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 onboard.

Today's guidance provides [technical instructions](#) for *simulated voyages*. This includes:

- Eligibility and requirements for conducting a simulated (trial) voyage in preparation for restricted passenger voyages.
- Guidance for inspections of cruise ships conducted by CDC during simulated and restricted passenger voyages.
- Operational procedures to assist cruise ship operators in mitigating the risk of spreading COVID-19, including requirements and recommendations on prevention measures, surveillance for COVID-19 on board, laboratory testing, infection prevention and control, face mask use, social distancing, passenger interactive experiences, and embarkation and disembarkation procedures.


In the final phase of the CSO, cruise ships operators with an approved COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate application will be permitted to sail with passengers following the requirements of the CSO. CDC does not anticipate releasing any additional documents for Phase 4. Instead, CDC will be updating online documents to incorporate changes to quarantine, testing, color status, and lessons learned from simulated voyages.

CDC is committed to working with the cruise industry and seaport partners to resume cruising following the phased approach outlined in the CSO. This goal aligns with the prospective resumption of passenger operations in the United States by mid-summer, expressed by many major cruise ship operators and travelers.

Since April 12, 2021, CDC and senior leadership from other relevant federal agencies have engaged in twice-weekly meetings with representatives from various cruise lines. The objectives of these meetings have been to engage in dialogue and exchange information with individual cruise line representatives regarding the impact of vaccines and other scientific developments since the CSO was issued. Participants were also given opportunities to ask operational questions about the CSO and published technical instructions.

COVID-19 vaccines play a critical role in the safe resumption of passenger operations, but not all cruise ship operators have announced plans to mandate passenger vaccinations. As more people are fully vaccinated and more drug therapeutics are available, the phased approach allowed CDC to incorporate these advancements into planning for safe resumption of cruise ship travel. **CDC recommends that all port personnel and travelers (passengers and crew) get a COVID-19 vaccine when a vaccine is available to them.**

CDC acknowledges that it is not possible for cruising to be a zero-risk activity for spread of COVID-19. While cruising will always pose some risk of COVID-19 transmission, CDC is committed to ensuring that cruise ship passenger operations are conducted in a way that protects crew members, passengers, and port personnel, particularly with emerging COVID-19 variants of concern.

CDC will continue to update its guidance and recommendations to specify basic safety standards and public health interventions based on the best scientific evidence available. For more information about COVID-19 and cruise ships, please visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/cruise-ship/what-cdc-is-doing.html and www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise. For an infographic on our phased approach, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/pdf/CSO-Phased-Approach-Infographic-p.pdf> .

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