



# NAVIGATING THROUGH THE CDC'S FRAMEWORK FOR CONDITIONAL SAILING REQUIREMENTS

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

## Abstract

*CDC has announced a framework for a phased resumption of cruise ship passenger operations. Considering the continued spread of Covid-19 worldwide and increased risk of Covid-19 on cruise ships, a careful approach is needed to safely resume operations...GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES offers this step by step guide for the cruise line industry.*

**Global Public Health Services**

[www.gphsconsulting.com](http://www.gphsconsulting.com)

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## OVERVIEW

The United States - Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has announced a framework for a phased resumption of cruise ship passenger operations. Considering the continued spread of COVID-19 worldwide and increased risk of COVID-19 on cruise ships, a careful approach is needed to safely resume operations. Hence, *Global Public Health Services* (GPHS) ([www.gphsconsulting.com](http://www.gphsconsulting.com)) is offering a step by step guide to assist the global cruise industry with compliance to CDC requirements.

## UPDATES - IMPORTANT NOTICE

The CDC Conditional Order introduces a phased approach for the resumption of passenger cruises and provides a basis for the issuance of additional technical instructions and orders. The initial Order describes requirements for testing crew and developing onboard testing capacity.

Future updated orders will address additional activities to help cruise lines prepare for and return to passenger operations in a way that mitigates the risk of spreading COVID-19.

CDC will continue to update the *Technical Instructions for Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Cruise Ship Crew* webpage, previously called *Interim Guidance for the Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Crew During the Period of the No Sail Order*. You can find the update webpage at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html>.

**Recommend that you check this webpage frequently for any updates.**

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## AUTHORSHIP

GPHS's *A.L. (Gus) Skinner*, former Health Canada & Public Health Agency of Canada and National Lead Manager for the Cruise Ship – Public Health Inspection Program and now consultant for cruise line public health operations, has developed the document "UNDERSTANDING CDC'S FRAMEWORK FOR CONDITIONAL SAILING REQUIREMENTS - A STEP BY STEP GUIDE".

GPHS's *Ben Hirschenfang*, former Lockheed Martin Program Director and now consultant for USPH VSP Construction Guidelines, extracted the key schedule related tasks and developed the "Framework for Sailing Critical Path" Gantt chart as a generic project plan for the cruise line industry. The Gantt chart extracts the latest information from the referenced Framework document for return to sailing.

Both documents will be continually updated in tandem and posted on the GPHS website, [https://www.gphsconsulting.com](http://www.gphsconsulting.com), as the CDC releases additional guidance for return to sailing. The Gantt chart generic sample is depicted below, with the critical path automatically highlighted in red. The Framework and Gantt chart can be tailored for each cruise lines/cruise ship in support of the project plans and steps required for return to sailing.

## DISCLAIMER

*Global Public Health Services (GPHS)* has taken all reasonable precautions necessary to ensure that the information in this guidance document is accurate and to the best of our knowledge, up to date. GPHS has many years of experience in working with the U.S. CDC and this document is our interpretation of the latest technical document. GPHS makes public health resources available to all segments of the cruise industry but is not responsible for the completeness or timeliness of requirements.

U.S. CDC will continue to update its *Technical Instructions for Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Cruise Ship Crew* webpage, previously called *Interim Guidance for the Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Crew During the Period of the No Sail Order* at the following website. Users should refer to the following webpage for updates and new content:

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html>

The U.S. CDC online technical document shall take precedence over the GPHS guidance document if there are any inconsistencies.

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## UNDERSTANDING THE US CDC'S FRAMEWORK FOR CONDITIONAL SAILING

The purpose of the U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Conditional Order / Framework is to prevent the further introduction, transmission and spread of COVID-19 into and throughout the United States via cruise ships; by

- a. preserving human life;
- b. preserving the health and safety of cruise ship crew members, port personnel and communities;
- c. preventing the further introduction, transmission and spread of COVID-19 into and throughout the United States;
- d. preserving the public health and other critical resources of Federal, State, and local governments;
- e. preserving hospital, healthcare, and emergency response resources within the United States; and,
- f. Maintaining the safety of shipping and harbor conditions.

As a condition of obtaining or retaining permission to conduct any cruise ship operations in U.S. waters, the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order, published in the Federal Register on November 4, 2020, requires that cruise ship operators take adequate safeguards for crew, as demonstrated through laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 infection and other measures, to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the risk of COVID-19 on board cruise ships.

[https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/pdf/CDC-Conditional-Sail-Order\\_10\\_30\\_2020-p.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/pdf/CDC-Conditional-Sail-Order_10_30_2020-p.pdf)

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/11/04/2020-24477/framework-for-conditional-sailing-and-initial-phase-covid-19-testing-requirements-for-protection-of>

## BACKGROUND

Several cruise ship operators have taken steps to improve their public health response to COVID-19 on their vessels. While the actions taken are encouraging, ongoing public health oversight is needed to ensure uniform standards for mitigating the communicable disease risk to crew and prospective passengers.

The public health measures in the CDC Conditional Order (*aka: Framework*) reflects CDC's considered views as to the minimum standards that must be in place prior to resuming passenger operations in a way that will mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

CDC intends to take a phased approach to resuming passenger operations. These phases include:

1. establishment of laboratory testing of crew onboard cruise ships in US waters;
2. simulated voyages designed to test a cruise ship operators' ability to mitigate COVID-19 on cruise ships;
3. certification process; and
4. a return to passenger voyages in a manner that mitigates the risk of COVID-10 introduction, transmission, or spread among passenger and crew onboard ships and ashore to communities.

These phases will be further determined based on public health considerations including the trajectory of COVID-19 transmission and the demonstrated ability of cruise ship operators to successfully employ measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

**CRITICAL PATH FORWARD**

#	Action to be taken	Comment	Reference
1	Prior to collecting specimens and conducting testing: Cruise ship operators must contact CDC at <a href="mailto:eocevent349@cdc.gov">eocevent349@cdc.gov</a> at <b>least 7 calendar days</b> prior to collecting specimens.	<b>7 days prior</b> to collecting specimens	Phase 1 – E1:3
2	Cruise ship operators must collect clinical specimens from all crew currently onboard.	<b>By 29<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020</b>	Phase 1 – E1:1
3	For vessels not in US waters, the <b>60-day period</b> will begin upon CDC confirming in writing that the operator has completed the No Sail Order (NSO) response plan		
4	Submission of the “ <i>Acknowledgement of No Sail Order Response Plan Completeness and Accuracy</i> ” to CDC	<b>28 days preceding arrival</b> in US waters	Phase 1 – E1: 2
5	After the 60-day period, every crew member must be tested on a <b>weekly basis</b>	<b>Every week</b>	Phase 1 – E2: 2
6	On the day of crew member’s embarkation, all embarking land-based crew must be tested...	<b>Day of embarkation</b>	Phase 1 – E3: 1
7	All embarking land-based crew must be quarantined for 14 days...	Upon embarkation – <b>14 days quarantine</b>	Phase 1 – E3: 5
8	Receive written approval (agreement) between the operator and (1) state healthcare entities for the ports that the cruise ship will berth at; (2) housing agreement and one or more shoreside facilities for isolation and quarantine and (3) port agreement for every US port that the operator plans to do a port of call at.	<b>Prior to simulated voyages</b>	Section D – 1a - c
9	30 days prior to simulated voyages, receive approval from CDC	<b>30 days prior</b> to simulated voyages	Phase 2: G: 2 - 3
10	Receive written consent from <u>all</u> volunteers (over 18+) that they are participating in a simulation...	<b>Prior to simulated voyage</b>	Phase 2 G: 9a - b
11	Receive written certification from <u>all</u> volunteer’s healthcare provider	<b>Prior to simulated voyage</b>	Phase 2 G: 9c
12	Mandatory specimen testing of <u>all</u> volunteers (passengers) and crew prior to embarkation	<b>Prior to embarkation</b>	Phase 2 G: l
13	Mandatory specimen testing of <u>all</u> volunteers (passengers) and crew prior to disembarkation	<b>Prior to disembarkation</b>	Phase 2 G: m
14	Document <u>all</u> deficiencies of the simulated voyages in an “after-action report”. Submit report to CDC for review.	<b>As soon as practicable</b> after the simulation voyage	Phase 2 G: s – t
15	Application for the Conditional Sailing Certificate – submit <u>all</u> required documentations to CDC	At <b>least 60 days prior</b> to the date of commencement of passenger operations.	Phase 3 H – 1 a-e

The Gantt chart, below, shows an example of one theoretical schedule to comply with the Order. A **Gantt chart is a depiction of project tasks scheduled on a timeline** and is a useful way of showing what work is scheduled to be done on a specific day. It shows the start and end dates of a project in one simple view and allows you to input which tasks are related, or in other words, dependent upon the completion of a previous task.

When you add this task relationship it allows you to see the “critical path” of the project. In project management, a critical path is the sequence of project activities that add up to the longest overall duration. This determines the shortest time possible to complete the project and allows the project management team to focus on those items associated critical tasks that must be kept on schedule to achieve the original plan.

Non-critical path tasks can “float” (or slip) to a certain extent without impacting the critical path. This allows the project management team to allocate assets (manpower, equipment, oversight, etc.) to achieve the project goals.

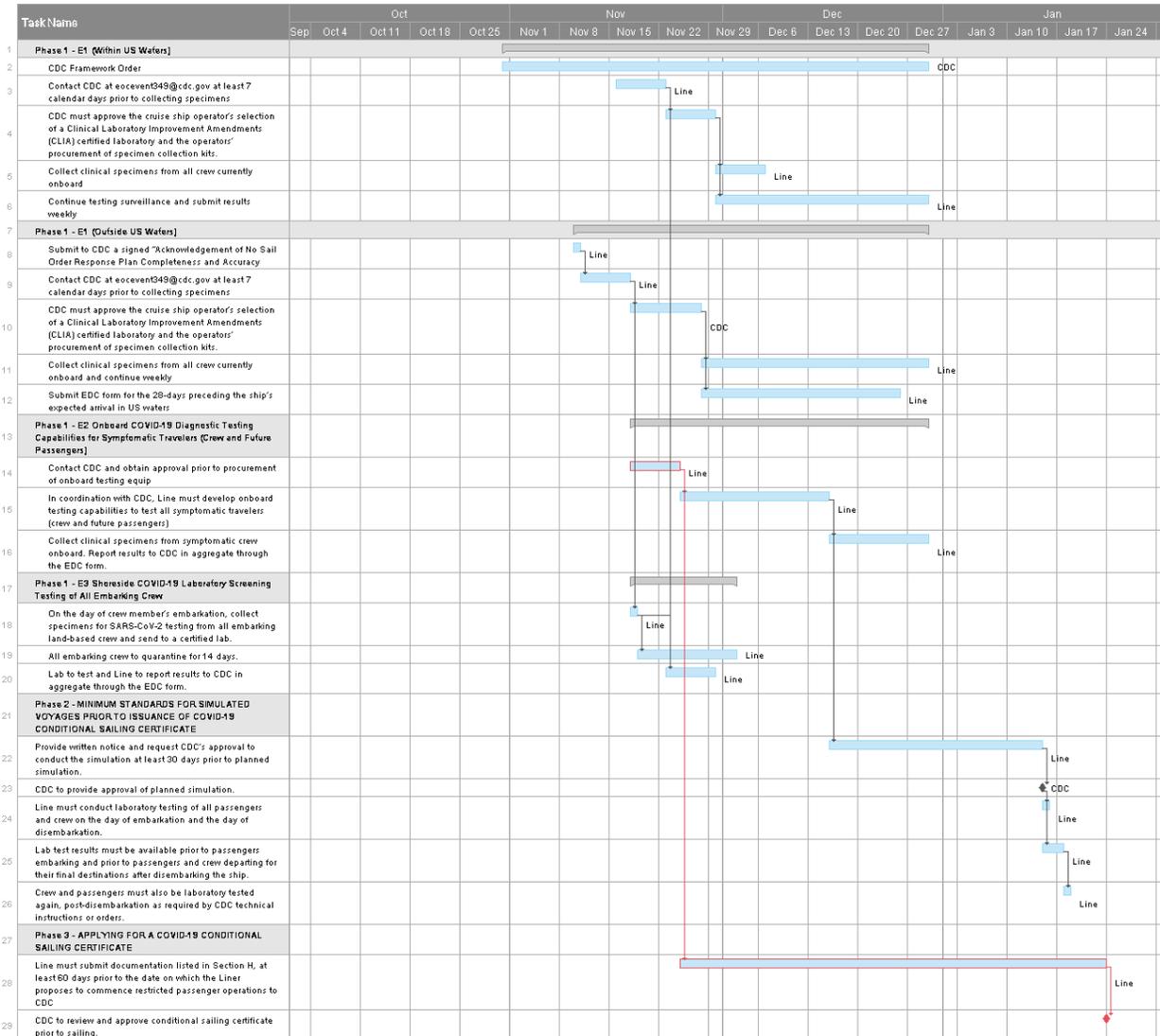
The Gantt chart software that GPHS utilizes is a Cloud based App, “*SmartSheet*”, that allows for sharing of the Gantt chart with multiple users. They can be assigned as collaborators (editors) or just viewers, with discussions, attachments, and notes available on any browser, device, or operating system. The originator or collaborator can easily move tasks, change timelines, and edit dependencies, all with the click of a mouse, along with customizable views that suit the user. The App can import data from MS Project, Excel, Google Sheets and export to those tools along with PDF or PNG files. In addition, it can allow you to see your tasks and milestones in your Google Calendar or iCal.



*Stay Up to Date by subscribing to the Leader-SHIP e-Newsletter*

The [Leader-SHIP Newsletter](#) covers COVID-19 And Its Impact On The Global Cruise Industry.

<https://www.gphsconsulting.com/leader-ship-newsletter/newsletter-home>



## Acronyms, Initialisms and Definitions

aCLI	Additional COVID-like illness signs and symptoms as defined by the council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) and that are not included in the definitions of ARI, ILI, or pneumonia, or as defined by CDC in technical instructions, CDC will use the most current CSTE definition in effect, which may be found at: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/">https://www.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/</a>
ARI	Acute Respiratory Illness defined as the presence of cough, sore throat, or runny nose (rhinorrhea) in the absence of fever and in the absence of a non-infectious diagnosis (ie: allergies) as determined by the ship's medical provider, or as defined by CDC in technical instructions.
CLI	COVID-Like Illness
EDC	Enhanced Data Collection
ILI	Influenza-Like Illness defined as fever (> 100.4°F [38°C]) plus either cough or sore throat or as defined by CDC in technical instructions.
USCG Controlled Free Pratique	United States Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security Has the same meaning as under 42 CFR 71.1
COVID-19	The disease caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.
COVID-like Illness	ARI, ILI pneumonia, aCLI or other signs or symptoms of COVID-like illness as defined by CDC in technical instructions.
CDC	US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or an authorized representative acting on its behalf.
Crew or Crew member	Any individual serving on board a cruise ship who is assigned to perform regular duties or tasks on behalf of a cruise ship operator in exchange for compensation.
Cruise Ship	Any commercial, non-cargo, passenger- carrying vessel operating in US waters with the capacity to carry 250 or more individuals (passenger and crew) with an itinerary anticipating an overnight stay onboard or a twenty-four (24) hour stay onboard for either passenger or crew.
Cruise Ship Operator	The master of the vessel (cruise ship) and any other crew member responsible for cruise ship operations and navigation, as well as any person or entity (including a corporate entity) that authorizes or directs the use of a cruise ship (i.e.: an owner, lessee, or otherwise). A cruise ship operator may also include the cruise ship captain or the cruise line to which the cruise ship belongs, and the officers and directors of the cruise line.

Isolation	Measures taken by a cruise ship operator to ensure the onboard or onshore separation of passengers or crew displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19, or who have tested positive SARS-CoV-2, from other passengers or crew who do not display such signs or symptoms or have not tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.
Laboratory Testing or Laboratory Test Results	Testing performed in a laboratory certified as meeting the standards of the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) of 1988 (42 USC 263a) and 42 CFR 493 or CLIA-waived point-of-care testing or the results of such testing. Testing must be performed using tests that are approved, cleared or authorized for emergency use by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as specified by CDC in technical instructions or orders.
Operate or Operating in US waters	Any action by a cruise ship operator to bring or cause a cruise ship to be brought into or transit in or between any waterways (ie: shifting berths, moving to anchor, discharging waste, making port or embarking or disembarking passengers or crew) subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.
Passenger	Any individual being transported or offered transport on board a cruise ship who is not a crew member, excluding US government personnel.
Passenger Operations	Any action by a cruise ship operator to cause passengers to embark or disembark a cruise ship.
Person	Any individual or partnership, firm, company, corporation, association, organization or other legal entity.
Quarantine	Measures taken by a cruise ship operator to ensure the onboard or onshore separation and restriction of movement of passengers or crew who were potentially exposed to a person with COVID-19 while that person is considered infectious.
Responsible officials	The Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) of the operating cruise company and all parent companies, the Chief Compliance Officer (or equivalent) of the operating cruise company and all parent companies, and the highest-ranking Medical Officer of the operating cruise company and all parent companies.
Simulated voyage	A mock voyage or series of mock voyages designed and implemented in so far as possible to replicate real world onboard conditions of cruising with measures in place to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.

Social distancing	Maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) between one individual and another individual, not gathering in groups, and avoiding crowded places and mass gatherings.
US waters	Any international, interstate, or intrastate waterways that are subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

#### A. SCOPE

This framework applies to any person (or entity) operating or intending to operate a cruise ship in US waters and to any person (or entity) operating a cruise ship outside of US waters if the cruise ship operator intends for the ship to operating in US waters while this Conditional Order remains in effect. The Order shall remain in effect until the earliest of:

- a. the expiration of the Secretary of Health Services' declaration that COVID-19 constitutes a public health emergency;
- b. the CDC Director rescinds or modifies the Order based on specific public health or other considerations;

**c. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021**

1. Upon request from CDC, the cruise ship operators must make their properties and records available for inspection to allow CDC to ascertain compliance with this framework. Such properties and records include but are not limited to vessels, facilities, vehicles, equipment, communications, manifests, list of passengers, and employee and passenger health records.
2. CDC may enforce any of the provisions of this framework through additional orders published in the Federal Register and issue additional technical instructions as needed.
3. Nothing in this framework supersedes or preempts enforcement of emergency response requirements imposed by statutes or other regulations.
4. Cruise ship operators may use the services of professionally licensed and accredited third-party auditors to assist them in meeting the requirements of this framework. Notwithstanding, the cruise ship operator's responsible officials maintain an overall duty and responsibility for meeting the requirements of this framework, including the requirements of any technical instructions or orders.

Third-party auditors are prohibited from interfering with CDC's ability to inspect and conduct oversight under this framework, including but not limited to interfering with CDC's ability to interview cruise ship crew and personnel or visually inspect and oversee collection of laboratory specimens and laboratory testing.

This document provides guidance for the initial phases of CDC's Framework for Conditional Sailing Order for cruise ship operations in U.S. waters to ensure health and safety protections for the crew prior to resuming passenger operations in a way that mitigates the risk of spreading COVID-19.

## Preventive Measures

Cruise ships involve the movement of large numbers of people in settings where they are likely to have close contact with one another. Close-contact environments facilitate transmission of respiratory viruses from person to person through exposure to respiratory droplets, aerosols, or contact with contaminated surfaces. Cruise ships may also be a means by which infected persons travel between geographic locations.

To reduce spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, CDC recommends that cruise ship operators:

- Relocate all crew to single-occupancy cabins with private bathrooms.
- Instruct crew members to remain in cabins as much as possible during non-working hours.
- Cancel all face-to-face employee meetings, group events (such as employee trainings), or social gatherings.
- Close all crew bars, gyms, and other group settings.
- Implement social distancing of crew members when working or moving through the ship (maintaining at least 6 feet [2 meters] from others).
- Instruct crew members to wear a [face mask](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fcloth-face-cover.html) when outside of individual cabins.  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fcloth-face-cover.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprevent-getting-sick%2Fcloth-face-cover.html)
- Modify meal service to facilitate social distancing (e.g., reconfigure dining room seating, stagger mealtimes, encourage in-cabin dining).
- Eliminate self-serve dining options at all crew and officer messes.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of non-contact methods of greeting.
- Promote respiratory and [hand hygiene](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) and cough etiquette.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- Place hand sanitizer (containing at least 60% alcohol) in multiple locations and in sufficient quantities to encourage hand hygiene.
- Ensure handwashing facilities are well-stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) to [help stop the spread](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) in high-trafficked areas.

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc&CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunication%2Ffactsheets.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc&CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunication%2Ffactsheets.html)

Some exceptions to these measures can be made for those ships that have met the “[Green](#)” or “[Yellow](#)” criteria. See [COVID-19 Color-coding System for Cruise Ships During the Initial Phases of Conditional Sailing](#).

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html#greenship>

## **B. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROTECTION OF CREW FOR CRUISE SHIP OPERATOR OR INTENDING TO OPERATE CRUISE SHIPS IN U.S. WATERS**

1. A cruise ship operator must meet the requirements of this framework as a condition of obtaining or retaining controlled free pratique for operating a cruise ship in U.S. waters or if the cruise ship operator is operating a cruise ship outside of U.S. waters and intends for the ship to return to operating in U.S. waters while this Order remains in effect.
2. These requirements must also be met as a condition of obtaining or retaining controlled free pratique for conducting a simulated voyage or applying for a COVID-19 *Conditional Sailing Certificate*.
3. The cruise ship operator must have received a signed confirmation from CDC “*Acknowledgement of No Sail Order Response Plan Completeness and Accuracy*”.
4. Cruise ships operating in U.S. waters must continue to submit the EDC form as specified in CDC technical instructions or orders.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html>
5. Cruise ship operators with ships that have not been in U.S. waters **during the period March 14<sup>th</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**, or who voluntarily withdrew their ships during this time period, and who wish to operate those ships in U.S. waters during the period that this framework remains in effect, must additionally submit the EDC form during (at a minimum) the **28 days preceding** those ships’ expected arrival in U.S. waters and continue to submit the EDC form after the ships’ entering U.S. waters.

6. The cruise ship operator has observed, and will continue to observe, all elements of its No Sail Order response plan including following the most current CDC recommendations and guidance for any public health actions related to COVID-19, or if any deviations from the plan have occurred such deviations have been reported and corrective actions taken to the satisfaction of CDC. For additional technical guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html>
7. The cruise ship operator has arranged for and submitted, and will continue to arrange for and submit, such laboratory test results as may be required by CDC for every crew member on board ships operating in U.S. waters and/or operating outside of U.S. waters if the cruise ship operator intends for the ship to return to operating in U.S. waters at any time while this Order remains in effect.
8. Laboratory testing for every crew member must be conducted on a **weekly basis** or as such other intervals as required by CDC in technical instructions or orders.
9. CDC may conduct oversight of specimen collection, testing, and laboratory procedures, as necessary.
10. If the cruise ship received any ship-to-ship transfers in the last 28-days, those transfers can only be done from a cruise ship with no confirmed COVID-19 or COVID-like illness during the 28-days before the transfer occurred.
11. If the cruise ship received any land-based embarking crew, such crew were laboratory tested for COVID-19 upon embarkation and quarantined per CDC technical instructions or orders immediately upon embarking the ship.

**C. GENERAL PROHIBITION ON A CRUISE SHIP OPERATOR COMMENCING OR CONTINUING PASSENGER OPERATIONS WITHOUT A COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE**

1. A cruise ship operator shall not commence or continue any passenger operations in U.S. waters without a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate issued by CDC that meets the requirements of the framework for each ship that the cruise ship operator intends to operate with passengers in U.S. waters.
2. As a condition of obtaining or retaining a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, the cruise ship operator must be in compliance with CDC's standards for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard the cruise ship as set forth in this framework and in the CDC technical instructions or orders.
3. A cruise ship operator shall not violate the terms or conditions of a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate issued pursuant to this framework.

#### D. AGREEMENT WITH PORT AND LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES

1. As a condition of obtaining or retaining controlled free pratique for conducting a simulated voyage or obtaining or retaining a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, a cruise ship operator must document the approval of all U.S. port and local health authorities where the ship intends to dock or make port during a simulated voyage or a restricted passenger voyage. Such written approval must include the following:
  - a. a medical care agreement between the cruise ship operator and the healthcare entities, addressing evacuation to onshore hospitals for passengers and crew in need of care, in accordance with CDC technical instructions and orders;
  - b. a housing agreement between the cruise ship operator and one or more shoreside facilities for isolation and quarantine of COVID-19 cases and close contacts, identified from the day of embarkation through disembarkation for each voyage, in accordance with CDC technical instructions and orders; and,
  - c. a port agreement between the cruise ship operator and port authority to determine the number of cruise ships at any single port, in order to not overburden the public health response resources of any single jurisdiction in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak.

## E. PHASE 1 - INITIAL PHASE

### E1: Shoreside COVID-19 Laboratory Screening Testing of All Crew

In preparation for the resumption of passenger operations, cruise ship operators must have adequate health and safety protections for crew members while they build the onboard laboratory capacity needed to test crew and future passengers. By December 29, 2020 (60 days after the effective date of the Framework Order) \*, cruise ship operators must collect clinical specimens for SARS-CoV-2 testing from all crew currently onboard their cruise ships and arrange for the transportation and testing of those specimens at a shoreside laboratory facility. This testing must be conducted by a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA)-certified laboratory using reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

1. **Within 60-days** cruise ship operators must collect clinical specimens from all crew currently onboard their cruise ships and have those specimens immediately transported and tested by a shoreside approved laboratory facility. The certified laboratory must use the reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests method.
2. For cruise ship operators with ships that have not been in US waters during the period of the No Sail Order or voluntarily withdrew their ships, the 60-day period will begin upon:
  - a. CDC confirming to the cruise ship operator in writing that the operator has a complete and accurate NSO (no sail order) response plan, including having submitted to CDC a signed *"Acknowledgement of No Sail Order Response Plan Completeness and Accuracy"*; and
  - b. submission of the EDC form for the **28-days preceding** the cruise ship's expected arrival in US waters.
3. To ensure the validity of sampling, testing and test results, cruise ship operators must contact CDC at [eocevent349@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent349@cdc.gov) at **least 7 calendar days prior** to collecting specimens and conducting testing. CDC must approve the cruise ship operator's selection of a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certified laboratory and the operators' procurement of specimen collection kits. Include *"Laboratory Screening Testing of All Crew Onboard SHIP NAME"* in the subject line as part of your request for CDC approval.
4. CDC's response to the cruise ship operator's email may include additional information regarding best practices that may assist cruise ship clinicians or public health staff in collecting and transporting crew specimens. CDC may elect to oversee the onboard collection of crew specimens through remote means allowing for visual observation.
5. Cruise ship operators must report all laboratory results in aggregate to CDC through the Enhanced Data Collection (EDC) form.

**E2: Onboard COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing Capabilities for Symptomatic Travelers (Crew and Future Passengers)**

1. During this **60-day period**, cruise ship operators in coordination with CDC must develop onboard testing capabilities to test all symptomatic travelers (crew and future passengers) for COVID-19 and close contacts.
2. After this 60-day period, laboratory testing for **every crew member** must be conducted on a **weekly basis** or as such other intervals as required by CDC in technical instructions or orders.
3. All cruise ships must procure rapid RT-PCR point-of-care equipment to test symptomatic travelers. This instrument must be CLIA-waived and have been evaluated on the FDA reference panel for SARS-CoV-2 and demonstrated a lower limit of detection correlating to higher sensitivity.
4. Cruise ship operators must contact CDC prior to procuring this equipment. Antigen testing is NOT recommended at this time.
5. Cruise ship medical clinic staff must be competent in specimen collection, be able to properly use test equipment follow manufacturers' instructions, and have access to all use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) for specimen collection and handling. Cruise ship operators must maintain onboard SARS-CoV-2 testing equipment to manufacturer's specifications.
6. CDC may ensure competency by conducting oversight of these specimen collection practices through remote means allowing for visual observations.
7. Once testing equipment has been obtained and cruise ship medical clinic staff are properly trained in its use, all symptomatic crew onboard the cruise ship must be tested for SARS-CoV-2 infection immediately upon notifying medical staff of symptom onset. These results must be reported to CDC in aggregate through the EDC form.

**E3: Shoreside COVID-19 Laboratory Screening Testing of All Embarking Crew**

1. On the day of crew member's embarkation, cruise ship operators must collect specimens for SARS-CoV-2 testing from all embarking land-based crew.
2. Cruise ship operators must immediately transport the specimens to a CLIA-certified laboratory for testing. CDC must approve the selection of a CLIA- certified laboratory.
3. The laboratory must use an RT-PCR test that has been approved by FDA.
4. Cruise ship operators must report the results in aggregate to CDC through the EDC form.

5. All embarking land-based crew must be immediately quarantined onboard for **14 days**. Those who test positive must be isolated until criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation according to the most current CDC guidance.
6. CDC may also oversee the collection of specimens, or the quarantine or isolation of embarking crew, through remote means allowing for visual observation.

**F. CONTINUED COMPLIANCE WITH NO SAIL ORDER (NSO) RESPONSE PLANS**

1. Cruise ship operators must continue to follow their cruise line's No Sail Order response plans per the CDC No Sail Order and Suspension of Further Embarkation; etc. For additional information: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/index.html>
2. Cruise ship operators must also continue to follow the *CDC's Interim Guidance for Mitigation of COVID-19 Among Cruise Ship Crew* and the *COVID-19 Color-coded System for Cruise Ships*, which may be modified or updated as needed. For additional information, consult the following web sites: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/management/technical-instructions-for-cruise-ships.html>
3. Ship-to-ship crew transfers and embarkations may continue to impact ship's color-coding status. For additional public health preventive measures, such as social distancing mask use, and cabin occupancy, refer to: <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/index.html>

## G: PHASE 2

### MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SIMULATED VOYAGES PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE

1. As a condition of applying for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate (CSC), a cruise ship operator must have successfully conducted a simulated voyage or series of simulated voyages demonstrating the cruise ship operator's ability to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 onboard its cruise ships.
2. Prior to conducting a simulated voyage, the cruise ship operator shall provide written notice and request CDC's approval to conduct the simulation. Such written notice must be provided prior to the simulation and specify the time, location, contact information for all individuals or parties involved, and protocols or practices to be simulated.
3. Important: this written notice should be submitted at least **30 calendar days prior** to the date on which the cruise ship operator proposes to conduct the simulation.
4. A cruise ship operator shall not apply for approval to conduct a simulated voyage until all of CDC's requirements relating to the protection of crew onboard ships in U.S. waters have been satisfied.
5. The cruise ship operator's responsible officials must sign the application for permission to conduct a simulation and certify that all of CDC's requirements related to the protection of crew onboard cruise ships in U.S. waters have been satisfied.
6. CDC will respond to the written notice and request for approval to conduct a simulation, in writing, in a timely manner. CDC may deny the request to conduct a simulation if the cruise ship operator is not in compliance with any provision of the framework, technical instructions or orders, or if in CDC's determination the simulation does not provide adequate safeguards to minimize the risk of COVID-19 for all participants.
7. CDC may conduct such oversight and inspection of simulated voyages as it deems necessary in its discretion, including through in-person or remote means allowing for visual observations.
8. CDC may issue additional requirements through technical instructions or orders related to a cruise ship operator's processes and procedures for conducting and evaluating a simulated voyage prior to applying for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate.
9. A simulated voyage must meet the following requirements:
  - a. the cruise ship operators shall inform volunteer passengers, in writing, that they are participating in a simulation of unproven and untested health and safety protocols for the

purpose of simulating a cruise ship voyage and that sailing during a pandemic is an inherently risky activity;

- b. all volunteer passengers must be at least 18 years old or older.
- c. The cruise ship operator must obtain from all volunteer passengers a written certification from a healthcare provider that the volunteer passenger has no pre-existing medical conditions that would place that individual at high risk for COVID-19 as determined through CDC guidance.
- d. CDC may issue additional requirements through technical instructions or orders related to a cruise ship operator's obligation to screen for volunteer passengers who may be at high risk of COVID-19.
- e. The cruise ship operator must conduct any simulation on a consensual basis and not as a condition of employment or in exchange for consideration or future reward. The cruise ship operator must document the informed consent of all participants in writing.
- f. The cruise ship operator must embark additional crew members beyond safe minimum manning levels only as determined through CDC technical instructions or orders.
- g. The cruise ship operator must design and conduct a simulated voyage insofar as practicable to test the efficacy of the cruise ship operator's ability to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 onboard its cruise ship.
- h. The cruise ship operator must conduct a monitored observation period and laboratory testing of volunteer passengers, as directed in CDC technical instructions or orders, prior to embarking volunteer passengers on a simulated voyage.
- i. A simulated voyage must include the following simulated activities:
  - i) embarkation and disembarkation procedures; including terminal check-in,
  - ii) onboard activities, including at dining and entertainment venues,
  - iii) private island shore excursions, if any are planned during restricted passenger voyages,
  - iv) evacuation procedures,
  - v) transfer of symptomatic passengers or crew, or those who test positive for SARS-COV-2 from cabins to isolation rooms,

- vi) quarantine of all remaining passengers and non-essential crew, and
- vii) other activities as may be listed in CDC technical instructions and orders.
  
- j. The cruise ship operator must meet standards for hand hygiene, face coverings and social distancing for passengers and crew, as well as ship sanitation, as may be required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- k. The cruise ship operator must modify meal service and entertainment venues to facilitate social distancing during the simulated voyages.
- l. The cruise ship operator must conduct laboratory testing of all passengers and crew on the day of embarkation and the day of disembarkation as required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- m. Laboratory test results must be available prior to passengers embarking and prior to passengers and crew departing for their final destinations after disembarking the ship.
- n. Crew and passengers must also be laboratory tested again, post-disembarkation as required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- o. Based on public health considerations, CDC may also require additional laboratory testing of passengers and crew and reporting of results, including during the voyage, as required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- p. The cruise ship operator must immediately conduct laboratory testing of any passengers and crew who report illness consistent with COVID-19 during the simulated voyage with rapid-point-of-care results as required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- q. Identified close contacts of cases must also be laboratory tested with rapid point-of-care results.
- r. CDC may require the cruise ship operator to immediately end the simulated voyage and take other actions to protect the health and safety of volunteer passengers and crew, if COVID-19 is detected during the simulation.
- s. Cruise ship operator must document any deficiencies in its health and safety protocols through an “after-action” report and address how the cruise ship operator intends to address those deficiencies prior to applying for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate.

- t. The after-action report must be submitted to CDC as soon as practicable at the end of the simulation and as part of the cruise ship operator's application for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate.
- u. Based upon CDC's review of the after-action report and/or cruise ship operator's application for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, CDC may request that the cruise ship operator modify its practices or procedures and/or engage in additional simulated voyages prior to the issuance of the COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate.

## H. PHASE 3

### APPLYING FOR A COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE

1. A cruise ship operator must submit the following documentation / materials at **least 60 days prior** to the date on which the cruise ship operator proposes to commence restricted passenger operations to CDC:
  - a) a completed CDC registration / application form that must include the signatures of the cruise ship operator's responsible officials;
  - b) The names, titles and contact information for the cruise ship operator's responsible officials and of any third-party auditors.
  - c) A completed statement of intent stating the name, carrying capacity for passengers and crew, itinerary, ports of call(s), length of voyage, and expected onboard or shoreside activities, for the cruise ship that the cruise ship operator intends to have certified for restricted passenger operations.
  - d) A copy of the USCG Certificate of Inspection and that the certificate was in effect for the six months preceding the application.
  - e) A certification statement signed by the responsible officials attesting that the cruise ship operator:
    - i) has complied and remains in compliance with CDC's crew protection requirements prior to applying for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate.
    - ii) has adopted health and safety protocols that meet CDC's standards for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 among passengers and crew onboard the cruise ship that will be commencing restricted passenger operations and will modify these protocols as needed to protect the public's health as required by CDC's technical instructions or orders.

- iii) has sufficient medical and point of care laboratory capabilities and staff onboard the cruise ship that will be commencing restricted passenger operations to manage severe COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in exigent circumstances as required by CDC technical instructions or orders.
- iv) is in compliance with the other requirements contained in the framework for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard cruise ships and agrees to continue to comply with these requirements.

#### **I. REVIEW OF AN APPLICATION FOR A COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE**

1. Upon receiving the documentation required by the framework, CDC will review the application for completeness. Based upon CDC's determination as to whether the cruise ship operator has met CDC's standards for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard the cruise ship for which the operator intends to commence restricted passenger operations, it shall grant or deny the application.
2. If CDC requires additional information to ascertain whether the cruise ship operator has met CDC's standards for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard cruise ships, or if it determines that application to be incomplete, it may hold the application in abeyance pending the submission of such additional information as required by CDC to make such a determination. Applications that are denied may be administratively appealed.
3. CDC may limit the terms or conditions of a cruise ship operator's COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate in regard to passenger or crew capacity, itinerary, ports of call, length of voyage, onboard or shoreside activities, or in regard to any other passenger, crew or cruise ship operations, as needed to ensure the health and safety of passengers and crew or the public's health.
4. As a condition of obtaining or retaining a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, the cruise ship operator must:
  - a. upon request, make its properties and records available for inspection to allow CDC to ascertain compliance with the framework. Such properties and records include but are not limited to vessels, facilities, vehicles, equipment, communications, manifests, list of passengers, and employee and passenger health records.
  - b. make any crew member or other personnel involved in the operation of the cruise ship available for interview by CDC.

- c. provide proof of having been inspected by any other agency or entity with authority, jurisdiction, or oversight over any aspect of a cruise ship operator's operation.
- d. establish mechanisms to ensure compliance, including reporting mechanisms to notify CDC and USCG **in writing 24 hours of the occurrence of any deviations**, whether intentional, or as a result of error or omission, and take corrective steps to rectify those deviations.
- e. comply with the requirements of the framework. These requirements apply to any cruise ship operating in U.S. waters and to cruise ships operating outside of U.S. waters if the cruise ship operator intends for the ship to return to operating in U.S. waters at any time while the Order remains in effect.

**J. AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION OF COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE**

1. A cruise ship operator may seek to amend or modify a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate issued under the framework by submitting such amendment or modification to CDC for review and a determination in accordance with this section.
2. CDC will review the request and either grant or deny the request in writing.
3. If CDC requires additional information to ascertain whether the proposed amendment or modification meets CDC's standards for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard cruise ships, or if it determines the request to be incomplete, it may hold the request in abeyance pending the submission of such additional information as requested by CDC.
4. CDC may require any cruise ship operator to amend or modify a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate based on public health considerations specific to the cruise ship, cruise ship operator, or affecting the health and safety of the cruise travel as a whole.
5. Denials of requests to amend or modify a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate are subject to administrative review as outlined in the framework.

**K. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR RESTRICTED PASSENGER VOYAGES AS A CONDITION OF OBTAINING AND RETAINING A COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE**

1. As a condition of obtaining and retaining a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, a cruise ship operator must:
  - a. in marketing materials, on its website, and in offerings for voyages, notify prospective passengers, prior to accepting a reservation, of any CDC travel advisory warning or recommendation relating to cruise travel.

- b. such notification must further advise prospective passengers that, if a threshold of COVID-19 is detected onboard the cruise ship during a voyage, the voyage will be ended immediately and the ship returned to the US port of embarkation and their subsequent travel, including returning home, may be restricted or delayed.
- c. not sail on an itinerary **longer than seven (7) days**. CDC may shorten or lengthen the number of days permitted to sail based on public health considerations and as set forth in technical instructions or orders.
- d. screen passengers and crew before they embark for signs and symptoms or known exposure to COVID-19 and deny boarding to anyone who is suspected of having COVID-19 or is an identified contact of a confirmed or suspected case, in accordance with CDC technical instructions or orders.
- e. conduct laboratory testing of all passengers and crew on the day of embarkation and the day of disembarkation.
- f. Laboratory test results must be available prior to passengers embarking and prior to passengers and crew departing for their final destinations after disembarking the ship.
- g. immediately conduct laboratory testing of any passengers and crew who report illness consistent with COVID-19 during the voyage with rapid point-of-care results. Identified close contacts of cases must also be laboratory tested with rapid point of care results.
- h. report syndromic surveillance and all laboratory test results using CDC's EDC form.
- i. meet standards for hand hygiene, face coverings and social distancing for passenger and crew, as well as ship sanitation.
- j. modify meal service and entertainment venues to facilitate social distance.
- k. In addition, CDC may require the following:
  - i) a monitored observation period of passengers prior to embarking.
  - ii) post day of disembarkation laboratory testing of passenger and crew.
  - iii) additional laboratory testing of passengers and crew and reporting of results during a voyage.
  - iv) CDC may issue additional technical instructions or orders regarding health and safety standards for restricted passenger voyages.

**L. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR MANAGEMENT OF PASSENGERS AND CREW FROM COVID-19 AFFECTED CRUISE SHIPS FOR RESTRICTED PASSENGER VOYAGES**

1. Based on a threshold of COVID-19 being detected in passengers or crew, as determined through CDC technical instructions or orders, a cruise ship operator must immediately take the following actions:
  - a. Conduct such notifications of passengers, crew members and other government entities as CDC may require.
  - b. Immediately end the restricted passenger voyage, cancel future restricted passenger voyages until directed by CDC that such voyages may resume, and return the ship to the US port of embarkation.
  - c. Immediately isolate any sick or infected passengers and crew in single occupancy cabins with private bathrooms and quarantine all remaining passengers and non-essential crew.
  - d. Disembark and evacuate passengers and crew only in such a manner as prescribed in the cruise ship operator's pre-existing port and local health authority agreements.
  - e. arrange to disembark and transport passengers and crew using non-commercial transportation or other transportation in accordance with CDC's technical instructions and orders.
  - f. Instruct disembarking passengers and crew to stay at home and continue to practice social distancing after reaching their final destination.
  - g. Inform ship pilots, ground transportation, air charter operators, and other agencies with relevant jurisdiction that COVID-19 has been detected in passengers or crew and confirm that the operators have plans in place to notify and protect the health and safety of their staff (ie: driver, air crew, etc).
  - h. CDC may issue additional technical instructions or orders regarding what measures cruise ships operators must take in the event that COVID-19 is detected in passengers or crew.

**M. DENIALS, SUSPENSION, REVOCATION AND REINSTATEMENT OF A CRUISE SHIP OPERATOR'S COVID-19 CONDITIONAL SAILING CERTIFICATE**

1. CDC may deny an application for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate, or revoke, or suspend a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate if:

- a. the cruise ship operator is not in compliance with CDC's standard for mitigating the risk of COVID-19 onboard a cruise ship; or
- b. the cruise ship operator is not in compliance with the terms of its COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate; or
- c. necessary to protect human health or safety based on public health considerations specific to the particular cruise ship operator, cruise ship, or affecting cruise travel as a whole.
- d. CDC may re-instate a suspended or revoked COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate after:
  - i) inspecting the cruise ship operator's properties and records, including, but not limited to, its vessels, facilities, vehicles, equipment, communications, manifest, list of passengers and employees and passenger health records.
  - ii) conferring with the cruise ship operator, responsible officials, third-party auditors or other persons under the cruise ship operator's employ; and
  - iii) receiving information and written assurances from the cruise ship operator and/or its responsible officials that any deficiencies have been rectified and actions taken to ensure future compliance.

#### **N. ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW**

1. A cruise ship operator may appeal a denial of its application for a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate or a revocation or suspension based on specific factors particular to that operator.
2. The appeal must be in writing, state the factual basis for the appeal and be submitted to the CDC Director **within 30 calendar days** of the decision.
3. Prior to deciding upon an appeal, the CDC Director may further investigate the reasons for the denial, revocation, or suspension, including by conferring with the cruise ship operator, responsible officials, third-party auditors, or other persons under the cruise ship operator's employ.
4. The CDC Director's decision will be issued in writing and will constitute final agency action.