



U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System

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Contact: Nuns Jain at C19WG@cmts.gov

Memorandum to State and Local Health Officials

Richard V. Timme, 2021
From: RDML Richard V. Timme, Chair of the CMTS Coordinating Board
Subject: The U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (MTS) Encourages COVID-19 Vaccination Prioritization for Mariners and MTS Workforce

As Chair of the CMTS Coordinating Board (www.cmts.gov), I am pleased to forward two white papers developed by the CMTS COVID-19 Working Group which outline vaccination priority considerations for U.S. merchant mariners and port workers. [[Priority COVID-19 Vaccination of U.S. Merchant Mariners](#) and [Priority COVID-19 Vaccination of U.S. Port Workers.](#)]

We recognize that the widespread availability of vaccinations has made them more readily accessible to both U.S. and international seamen. However, the CMTS appreciates the opportunity to emphasize the value of the maritime transportation workforce as we move into the next phases of the pandemic which may include booster shots and other protections.

U.S. merchant mariners play a critical role in our Nation's international and domestic supply chain to support the distribution of vitally important personal protective equipment, ventilators, and other urgent medical supplies, as well as maintaining U.S. national security sealift requirements. The nature of their work makes them extremely vulnerable for COVID-19 infection due to living and operating in close quarters, far from medical services, and within constantly changing geographic locations.

Port and related workers include longshoremen, stevedores, checkers, warehouse personnel, crane operators, truckers, rail operators, shipbuilders, ferry boat operators, and port authority personnel. Each of these jobs is essential to keeping the supply chain open. More importantly, the health and well-being of port workers has been under extraordinary stress – the same as other essential workers.

International seafarers on foreign flag vessels that call at your ports also provide critical goods and services to your state and support the nation's supply chain and economy. These international seafarers interact with the port workers in your state. We encourage you to continue expanding your efforts to facilitate vaccinations for international seafarers.

Thank you for all you've done to support the accessibility of vaccinations to the maritime transportation workforce. For more information on the value of the maritime transportation workforce to U.S. economic vitality and National security, and as critical essential workers, please review the referenced white papers. Please also contact Mr. Nuns Jain at C19WG@cmts.gov if we can provide additional information.