



Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30333

April 5, 2020

Dominic Mancini
Acting Deputy Director
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Request for Emergency Clearance

Dear Mr. Mancini:

Pursuant to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 CFR 1320, *Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public*, I request that the following collection of information, Airline and Vessel and Traveler Information Collection (42 CFR Part 71.4(d)), be processed in accordance with section 1320.13 Emergency Processing.

I have determined that this information must be collected prior to the expiration of time periods established under Part 1320, and that this information is essential to the CDC's ability to effectively address the public health emergency from COVID-19 that began in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, and which continues to expand globally and within the United States. CDC has found that cruise ship travel markedly increases the risk and impact of the COVID-19 disease outbreak within the United States. If unrestricted cruise ship passenger operations were permitted to resume, infected and exposed cruise ship cases would place healthcare workers at substantial increased risk. Specifically, these cases would divert medical resources away from persons with other medical problems and other COVID-19 cases, consuming precious diagnostics, therapeutics, and protective equipment. Ongoing concerns with cruise ship transmission would further draw valuable resources away from the immense Federal, state, and local effort to contain and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Further, the current ongoing non-passenger operation of cruise ships has not sufficiently abated the public health concern, as ship crew become sick and require medical care drawing on otherwise engaged Federal, state, and local resources. As operators of non-U.S. flagged vessels sailing in international waters, it is imperative that the cruise ship industry and cruise lines themselves take responsibility for the care of their crew and do not further tax limited U.S. resources during a public health emergency.

Therefore, as part of an extended No Sail Order, CDC is requiring that cruise ship operators have constructed appropriate, actionable, and robust plans to prevent, mitigate, and respond to the spread of COVID-19 on board cruise ships if they intend to operate within the jurisdiction of the United States. These plans must meet the following criteria:

- adequately prevents, mitigates, and responds to the spread of COVID-19 on board cruise ships
- ensures that any disembarkation of passengers or crew is conducted in such a way as to not result in further spread of COVID-19.

- response measures shall not significantly burden U.S. government operations or the operations of any state or local government, including the U.S. healthcare system.
- remains consistent with CDC recommendations and guidance for any public health actions related to COVID-19.

CDC cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance procedures due to the public harm that could result if routine processing of this request is required. CDC requests emergency clearance to require cruise ship operators to develop these COVID-19 response and mitigation plans for review by CDC, as requested.

As of March 31, COVID-19 has caused more than 160,000 illnesses and nearly 3,000 deaths in the United States. The public health response is immensely resource intensive and the additional burden of preventable cases from cruise ship should be addressed by the cruise ship operators. Implementing this information collection from the cruise ship operators can ensure that they have sufficient plans to address COVID-19 outbreaks onboard, and prevent further cases in the United States. Absent this emergency approval CDC will not be able to implement this program in a timely manner.

Please provide an approval/disapproval determination of this request to collect information under an emergency clearance by close of business on Monday, April 6, 2020.

Respectfully,

Rima Khabbaz, MD
Director, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic
Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention (CDC)