



October 27, 2021

Dominic Mancini
Deputy Director
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC

Subject: Request for Emergency Review and Clearance

Dear Mr. Mancini:

Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 CFR Part 1320, *Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public*, I request that the proposed information collection project, COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate 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 CDC's COVID-19 emergency response. Unrestricted cruise ship travel has the potential to exacerbate and amplify the spread of SARS coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), the virus that causes COVID-19. While the actions taken by cruise ship operators to advance their public health response to COVID-19 are encouraging, further public health oversight is needed to provide uniform standards for mitigating the communicable disease risk to crew and prospective passengers as the industry continues to move towards limited passenger operations.

On October 25, 2021, CDC announced a Temporary Extension and Modification of the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order for cruise ships through January 15, 2022, to continue to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 from cruise ships into communities and protect public health and safety. This action is effective November 1, 2021, at 12:01 A.M. (EDT) upon the expiration of the current Framework for Conditional Sailing Order. The requirements in the Temporary Extension and Modification of the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order highlight the need for further action to continue the safer and healthier resumption of cruising in the United States. This order applies to foreign-flagged cruise ships operating in U.S. waters with the capacity to carry at least 250 individuals and with an itinerary anticipating an overnight stay onboard or a twenty-four hour stay onboard for either passengers or crew.

The Temporary Extension and Modification of the Framework for Conditional Sailing Order builds upon the phased-in approach to resume cruise ship passenger operations introduced by the current Order and provides a pathway to safer, healthier sailing, both to prevent COVID-19 outbreaks on ships and to prevent passengers and crew from seeding outbreaks at ports and in the communities where they live. CDC will continue to require a phased approach to resuming passenger operations. During the initial phases, cruise ship operators must demonstrate adherence to testing, quarantine and isolation, and social distancing requirements to protect crew members while they build the laboratory capacity needed to test future passengers. Subsequent phases include simulated voyages to test cruise ship operators' ability to mitigate COVID-19 risk, certification for ships that meet specific requirements, and return to passenger voyages in a manner that mitigates COVID-19 risk among passengers, crew members, and communities.



CDC's Framework for Conditional Sailing Order prohibits a cruise ship operator from commencing or continuing any passenger operations without a COVID-19 Conditional Sailing Certificate issued by HHS/CDC.

CDC cannot reasonably comply with the normal clearance given the fact that COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread rapidly around the world, and the extreme transmissibility of the Delta variant has resulted in rapidly rising numbers of COVID-19 cases. As of October 26, 2021, a cumulative estimated total of over 243 million cases and over 4.9 million confirmed deaths have now been reported worldwide. Even in countries that have managed to slow the rate of transmission, the risks for COVID-19 resurgence remains. In the United States, as of October 26, 2021, there have been over 45 million cases and more than 736,000 confirmed deaths. Additionally, despite the best efforts of cruise ship operators to provide a safer and healthier environment for crew and passengers, including operating ships with high percentages of vaccinated persons onboard, outbreaks of COVID-19 have continued to occur, many involving breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated persons.

Please provide an approval/disapproval determination of this request to collect information under an emergency clearance by close of business November 3, 2021.

Respectfully,

Debra Lubar, PhD
Acting Director, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic
Infectious Diseases (NCEZID), Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)