

Vanuatu National Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) Taskforce



Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCov) Public Advisory #2

6 February 2020

At present, there are no suspected or confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV in Vanuatu, nor in any other Pacific island country. Should a case be detected, the Ministry of Health Emergency Medical Team are on standby with dedicated quarantine facilities in Port Vila and Luganville, and a thorough response plan is ready should it be required.

All cross-border government agencies and state-owned enterprises operating within Vanuatu's international port of entries (seaports and airports) have been advised about the current World Health Organization declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern for 2019-nCoV on 31 January 2020.

The Ministry of Health and the 2019-nCoV Taskforce have now further revised the current surveillance program for 2019-nCoV in Vanuatu.

The Taskforce has adopted the WHO's revised definitions for suspected, probable and confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV as the basis for Vanuatu's response to this disease. These definitions can be found on [WHO's website](#).

In line with WHO's revised case definitions of 2019-nCoV, Vanuatu's enhanced surveillance response measures have been updated as follows:

1. Pre-Departure Screening Measures (craft entering Vanuatu)

- All travellers of any nationality wishing to enter Vanuatu (including Ni-Vanuatu citizens) MAY NOT enter Vanuatu if they have transited through, travelled to or resided in China in the previous 14 days. Travellers wishing to enter Vanuatu who have transited through,

travelled to or resided in China in the previous 14 days must self-quarantine outside of Vanuatu for an additional 14 days from the date of their last departure from China, before they may enter Vanuatu.

- Additionally, after the 14 day self-quarantine period has lapsed, travellers of any nationality wishing to enter Vanuatu who have transited through, travelled to or resided in China since 31 December 2019 MUST also present a Medical Certificate obtained from a registered medical practitioner that certifies that they are free from any acute respiratory illness. Travellers of any nationality wishing to enter Vanuatu who have transited through, travelled to or resided in China since 31 December 2019 who fail to present a valid Medical Certificate will be prevented from boarding any craft travelling to Vanuatu.
- Medical certification is NOT required for travellers of any nationality who have NOT transited through, travelled to or resided in China since 31 December 2019.

1. Pre-Arrival Surveillance Measures (craft entering Vanuatu)

1.1. Airlines

- All flight crew on board all foreign going aircraft coming onto Vanuatu are advised to report any symptoms or signs of flu, running nose, fever, headache, chest pain, or difficulty in breathing to ground staff at the airport terminal, when detected during flights.
- **All air travellers of any nationality on flights inbound to Vanuatu MUST complete an Incoming Passenger Health Declaration form** detailing their travel since 31 December 2019, including their current health status, phone number, email address and physical address while visiting or residing in Vanuatu. It is an offence under the Public Health Act to not complete this Declaration Form. Air travellers who do not present a completed Incoming Passenger Health Declaration form will not be permitted to enter Vanuatu and will be returned to their port of origin on the next available flight, at their own expense.

1.2. Shipping

- The Master and Captain of all foreign going vessels coming into Vanuatu MUST provide the following documentation to the Health Surveillance Team within 24 hours prior to arrival:
 - a) Voyage Memo (outlining all ports visited during the past 14 days)
 - b) Maritime Health Declaration (certifying health condition of crew and captain on board)
 - c) Vaccination List (outlining any case of outbreak on board).
- The Health Surveillance Team will provide clearance to all incoming vessels, prior to berthing alongside the seaport.
- Non-passengers are NOT permitted to board any foreign-going vessel that is berthed in a Vanuatu port until further notice (Vanuatu Government Customs and Immigration staff on official business and staff of local shipping agents excepted).

2. Actual Arrival Measures

2.1. Airports

- Health Officials are stationed at the airside (both at Port Vila International Airport and Santo International Airport) to screen all incoming passengers and crew for suspected symptoms of acute respiratory illness.
- Any passenger with suspected symptoms of acute respiratory illness will be immediately isolated for further medical assessment.
- All passengers cleared for entry will be monitored for the duration of their stay, or for the 14-day 2019-nCoV incubation period if their stay exceeds 14 days.

2.2. Seaports

- Health Officials are stationed at all international seaports during arrival of vessels (Port Vila and Luganville) to screen all incoming passengers and crew for suspected symptoms of acute respiratory illness.
- Any passenger with suspected symptoms of acute respiratory illness will be immediately isolated for further medical assessment.
- All passengers cleared for entry will be monitored for the duration of their stay, or for the 14-day 2019-nCoV incubation period if their stay exceeds 14 days.

3. Post Arrival Measures (Private Dwellings, Hotels and Resorts)

- All arriving passenger records are kept and monitored under the Ministry of Health database monitoring system.
- Continuous contact tracing of each traveller will be undertaken by the Ministry of Health Surveillance Unit until such time as the traveller has passed through the 14-day 2019-nCoV incubation period without displaying suspected symptoms of 2019-nCoV, or the traveller departs Vanuatu.

Key Recommendations for the public

At this time, the Ministry of Health recommends that all travellers (both citizens and non-citizens) avoid non-essential travel to China until further notice. The Prime minister will give his statement tomorrow on all the latest development in the country.

The Ministry of Health strongly emphasises the need for all travellers and the general public to observe the following hygiene practices:

- 1. Avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections;**
- 2. Frequently wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment.**
- 3. Cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow.**
- 4. Avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals.**

If you become unwell:

In case of symptoms of respiratory illness or infection (fever, cough and breathing difficulties) either during or after travel to an affected area, travellers are encouraged to seek medical advice and isolate themselves to prevent the potential for spreading any infection.

Anyone with flu-like symptoms persisting over a week and/or if the condition worsens, such as difficulty breathing, chest pain or worsening of chronic medical conditions, MUST seek medical attention.

**Vila Central Hospital - 22100 or 112 (Emergency) - Dr. Vincent Atua
Mobile: +678 771 6135**

Health Surveillance Monitoring - Mr. Vanua Sikon Mobile: +678 572 4903

There is no specific treatment for people who are sick with 2019-nCoV. Treatment includes isolation as a precaution, and supportive medical care for those who experience symptoms.

Vanuatu currently has no confirmed or suspected cases of Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV). The Ministry of Health Taskforce is continuing to closely monitor the emerging situation around the outbreak of 2019-nCoV in close collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other partners. This is a fast-evolving situation and The Ministry of Health Taskforce will issue further advisories with new information as necessary.

Signed,
Chairman of the Novel Coronavirus National Taskforce, Donald A.
PELAM,
Acting Director—Public Health
Department of Health,
Ministry of Health,
Republic of Vanuatu



The image shows a handwritten signature in blue ink to the left of a circular official seal. The seal is also in blue ink and contains the following text: "REPUBLIC OF VANUATU" at the top, "Ministry of Health" below it, "Acting Director of Public Health" in the center, and "Directeur Par Interim de la Sante Publique" and "Ministère de la Santé" at the bottom. The seal also features a small emblem of a person standing on a globe.