



29 November, 2019

Re: Health Alert: Re-emergence of Polio virus in the Philippines

After 19 years of being polio-free, Polio is re-emerging in the Philippines. As of this writing, there are now seven confirmed polio cases nationwide. In line with this unfortunate development, the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) has now issued a travel advisory for travelers entering and leaving the Philippines. For those leaving, they are encouraged to check the immunization requirements of their country of destination, and if required, to receive a dose of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) and get their International Certificate of Vaccination (ICV) from the Bureau of Quarantine to serve as proof of their vaccination.

At present, there is generally no requirement for Filipino seafarers to get the polio vaccination before deployment. However, we recommend the manning agents to check which countries of destination (or ports of joining/ disembarkation) require such proof of vaccination.

As currently advised by the Bureau of Quarantine, the list of countries requiring a certificate of polio vaccination are as follows:

- Afghanistan
- Belize
- Brunei Darussalam
- Georgia
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Lebanon
- Maldives
- Morocco
- Oman
- Pakistan

Qatar  
Saint Kitts and Nevis  
Saudi Arabia  
Seychelles  
Ukraine

Said list and varying requirements are updated regularly. Hence, we suggest constant verification with the specific country included in the list as well as other countries a traveler intends to visit.

The vaccination is administered by both private and government hospitals including the Bureau of Quarantine, the authority which issues the certificate (ICV). The vaccine is free of charge when received from a government hospital. On the other hand, the certification from the Bureau of Quarantine has a fee of PHP 300 (or roughly USD 6). In view of the number of travelers applying for the ICV, the certification may currently take about 4 weeks to be issued and this should be taken into consideration in any deployment.