



European
Barge
Union



***Guideline for a
Minimum Standard for the Resumption of
River Cruises in Europe under COVID-19***



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1. The IG RiverCruise and the European Barge Union (EBU)

IG RiverCruise, a registered association based in Basel, has been representing the interests of European river cruise operators for 20 years.

In addition to representing common, fundamental interests and concerns of the members relevant to river cruise shipping vis-à-vis third parties, IG RiverCruise also sees itself as a contact and representative of the European river cruise industry.

The European Barge Union (EBU) represents the interests of freight and passenger carrying barge owners and operators at a Pan-European level. Its members are the national associations of barge owners and operators as well as other international organisations, amongst them G River Cruise. EBU's mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable, safe and efficient Pan European transport system via a larger share of inland waterway transport.

IG RiverCruise and EBU, in consultation with their members, propose this guideline for a minimum standard for the resumption of river cruises in Europe, under the Covid-19 conditions, which are eased differently from country to country.

Tourism was severely hit by the Corona crisis - especially the river cruise sector.

The associated regional and international differences in measures to contain the Corona pandemic are leading to uncertainty among tour operators, ship owners and passengers as to the conditions under which a voyage can take place at all.

The ongoing individual relaxation schemes based on different protection concepts in the individual European countries have strengthened the members of IG RiverCruise in their view that until the pandemic measures are lifted, a uniform concept for international river cruises must be made available. This uniform solution is continuously oriented towards the relaxation or tightening of the recommendations issued by the WHO and the European Commission.

The guideline for a minimum standard was developed for the Corona exit strategy and refers to the specific situation arising from it. The guidelines will be adapted as soon as the requirements change and will expire immediately if the measures to contain the Corona pandemic are withdrawn.

2. Minimum Standard during the eased Covid-19 Conditions

Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, river cruise operators were able to swiftly implement clear procedures to respond immediately to increased hygiene measures and thus ensure safe travel for passengers.

- This set of minimum standards agreed by the members of IG RiverCruise relates to the shipboard operation of river cruise vessels.
- The aim of these recommendations is to ensure through these standards, which are uniformly implemented throughout the industry, a continuous passenger ship traffic on European inland waterways during the Covid-19 restrictions on passenger traffic.
- The minimum requirements can be adjusted by the shipping company if less extensive rules apply in the area of operation than provided for in the standard.
- These measures are based on the protection concepts and recommendations issued by the official authorities and have been standardized for European passenger shipping.
- Passengers will be informed by the tour operator prior to arrival about the required information on their state of health and the pre-boarding checks. This concept stipulates that the passengers have complied with the requirements regarding the duty to inform about their state of health / health tests.
- The captain is responsible for the safety on board the ship. The hotel manager or another designated person is responsible for implementing the hygiene regulations on board.
- This guide is applicable during official orders due to the Covid-19 restrictions and may be adapted in case of changes in regulations.
- The guideline follows the health protection recommendations of the WHO and the European Commission.
- At all times, the safety, health and well-being of passengers and crew on board are of the highest priority.

3. Basic Rules

- **Physical Distancing**

- Operational procedures are designed in such a way that a distance of at least 1.50 metres is maintained between persons.

The distance may deviate if the ship passes through a country which requires for less than 1.50 metres "physical distance".

- Where this distance cannot be maintained, employees protect themselves with the appropriate protective equipment for the situation, consisting of disposable gloves, aprons or protective masks / face shields (hereinafter referred to as personal protective equipment - PPE), which is changed regularly
- Physical contact is only carried out in a well protected manner in medical emergencies and during activities involving physical contact (hairdressing, massage).
- Shaking hands and other physical greeting rituals are strictly avoided.

- **Attention through Advice**

- On board, instructions with pictograms are placed prominently in front of every access to public spaces, indicating how to protect oneself.

- **Hygiene**

- Compared to many onshore operations, the river cruise sector has developed standards that are already tested - for example, in dealing with the norovirus. This hygiene standard applies to the regular cleaning and disinfection of potentially contaminated objects (doors, door handles, handrails, elevator buttons, etc.)

4. Passenger Health

- The passengers were asked beforehand - before departure - by the tour operator about their state of health and about possible Covid-19 diseases in their social environment. Passengers travel with a completed infection protection questionnaire.
- At check-in, the shipping company carries out the standard procedure that determines whether a passenger can board or not. (See Embarkation / Check-In).
- Passengers are tested with a contactless clinical thermometer if they feel sick.
- Passengers are regularly questioned about their state of health.
- The distance rules of 1.50 metres apply to all passengers.
- General mask recommendation for the following cases: Passage from or to public areas and from or to the cabins.

5. Crew Health

- Each crew member boards with a completed health questionnaire or medical certificate.
- Employees are tested once a day with a contactless clinical thermometer.
- Before taking up their duties, all employees are regularly questioned about their state of health.
- The crew will be trained on arrival in the use of personal protective equipment and hygiene measures. The training courses will be documented.
- Hygiene regulations for the crew:
 - All employees are expressly requested to observe personal and hand hygiene. Appropriate instructions are given daily for this purpose.
 - Hygiene measures:
 - Setting up hand sanitizing stations.
 - All employees are provided with sufficient quantities of hand disinfectant.
 - All persons in the company wash their hands regularly with soap and water. This is particularly important before arrival and before and after breaks. Where this is not possible, hands must be disinfected.
 - All employees who come into contact with guests and are not protected by a partition must wear personal protective equipment appropriate to the situation. The shipping company provides all employees with sufficient PPE material.
 - Personal protective equipment is changed regularly and disposed of in a closed waste bin after use.
 - All employees are required to keep a distance of 1.50 metres from each other.

6. Hygiene on Board

- Preventing the spread of infections is a top priority.
- Public areas are regularly disinfected.
- The daily cleaning work includes a clear separation of the individual work steps.
- The crew access to each cabin is always with prior hand disinfection.
- Items shared by passengers (magazines, journals or bar snacks) are not allowed.
- Touch screens for passengers are not used (e.g. to order), or they are disinfected after each guest.
- In places where the minimum distance cannot be met on a temporary basis, passengers are advised to wear masks. The crew is obliged to wear masks if this situation occurs.

7. Reporting

The personal data of the crew and passengers are known to shipping company and the tour operator and are recorded in compliance with GDPR rules.

8. Embarkation

- **Loading**
 - Suitcases are disinfected in front of the ship (handles).
 - The ship's crew wears suitable personal protective equipment during the loading of suitcases.
- **Check-In**
 - Passengers are asked about their state of health on the day of embarkation (could also be done on the bus to the ship). When boarding the ship on the day of embarkation, temperature will be taken with a contactless thermometer.
 - Passengers must always disinfect their hands when they access the ship.
 - The entrance to the ship is controlled by a crew member.
 - In front of the reception desk there are distance marks on the floor.
 - The check-in at the reception takes place cabin by cabin, with an appropriate distance to the other passengers.
- **Double-docked Ships**
 - In case of double docking situations in ports, crew and passengers comply with the hygiene and physical distance rules and pass the adjacent ship quickly to the exit without forming groups. The crew controls this process.

9. Public Areas

- **Lobby / Reception**
 - Plexiglas protects reception staff and the cruise director's desk.
 - Key cards and boarding passes are regularly disinfected after each use.
 - The reception desk is regularly disinfected.
 - The ship lobby is not a meeting point for excursions or other activities.
- **Restaurant**
 - It is mandatory to wear disposable gloves for anyone who comes into contact with items during activities in the restaurant the guest later comes into contact with.
 - After clearing the tables, employees wash and disinfect their hands.
 - If the distances in the restaurant cannot be maintained and there is no other area available, all meals can be organized in two seatings if necessary.
 - A distance of 1.50 meters must be maintained between the groups of guests to the front and sides "shoulder-to-shoulder", and to the rear "back-to-back" a distance of 1.50 meters from table edge to table edge. If there is a separating element between the guest groups, the minimum distance is not applicable. In principle, all materials are permitted as long as the protection from a droplet infection is not significantly negatively affected by the choice of material.
 - Shared items such as table spices, cutlery baskets, butter pots are not allowed.
 - The breakfast buffet is without self-service. The crew serves from the buffet or à la carte from the kitchen, since even when serving from the buffet, depending on the restaurant layout, there is a risk of group formation when passengers choose their food.
 - Lunch/dinner is served exclusively (no buffet).
 - Passengers sharing the same cabin sit together.
 - The crew must use the appropriate personal protective equipment in the food processing area and guest area.

- **Bar / Lounge / Sun Deck**
 - Standing areas are not provided to avoid group formation.
 - Coffee stations can only remain open if the hygiene regulations regarding regular disinfection and availability of disinfectant wipes for guests can be guaranteed. Bar snacks are served individually per guest and are not shared with other guests.
 - Seating at the bar counter will be blocked or removed.
 - Drinks will be served exclusively (no pickup by guests at the bar).
 - The shipping company is free to offer cabin service if possible.
 - The crew must use the appropriate personal protective equipment in the food processing area and guest area.
 - Live entertainment is possible under observance of the minimum distance.
 - Parlor/board games are not provided.
 - The library remains closed.
 - Board games of the Cruise Director in the lounge will be omitted or will take place according to the applicable physical distance and hygiene rules.
 - Briefings in the lounge by the Captain and the Cruise Director will be held in accordance with the applicable physical distance and hygiene rules.

10. Galley

- Cleaning is carried out in strict compliance with the highest hygiene measures, identical to the hygiene standard in the case of a suspected Norovirus.
- The crew wears the appropriate personal protective equipment in the food, storage/processing area, as well as in the guest area.
- Increased disinfection of the work surfaces.

11. Cabins

- Each cabin must be cleaned in such a way as to avoid cross-contamination. After each cabin cleaning, hands are disinfected, and gloves are changed.
- Daily disinfection of door handles, remote controls, telephone, etc. in the cabins.
- Cleaning cloths are used in sets per cabin.
- Guest questionnaires are not collected. The surveys are collected electronically. Printed material (such as guest questionnaires, menu information, etc.) remains with the guest or is disposed of after use. If data is collected electronically, surveys may take place.

12. Cases of Illness on Board

If there is a suspected case of illness reported from a crew member or passenger, the following procedure applies:

- The passenger and the person sharing the cabin will be isolated immediately.
- The person is immediately equipped with personal protective equipment.
- The captain, hotel manager and cruise director are informed.
- Further information will take place according to the protocol of the shipping company (information task force - head office, crew, authorities).
- Local regulations regarding the activation of medical services are observed.
- Crew member / passenger agrees in writing to remain in self-isolation until the arrival of the medical team/the authority and to avoid contact with other people. This applies until the medical condition has been clearly determined by qualified personnel.
- Medical authorities and the local government will take over the further procedure up to quarantine.
- At all times the shipping company keeps accurate records of all steps taken.

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