

**KPI Information Update IU-73-2014**  
**(IMO Circular Letter No.3484 regarding Ebola)**

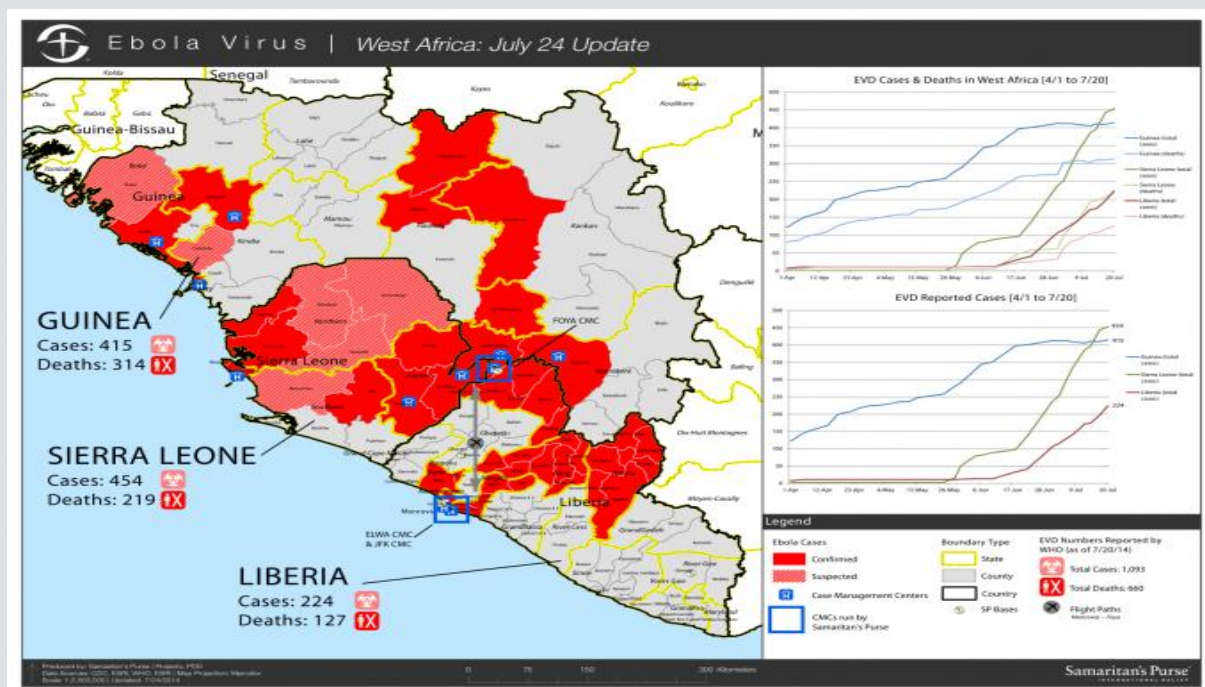
► **Introduction:**

The purpose of the circular is to provide information and guidance, based on recommendations developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the Ebola virus disease (EVD).

The current EVD outbreak is believed to have begun in Guinea in December 2013. This outbreak now involves

community transmission in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, and recently an ill traveler from Liberia infected a small number of people in Nigeria with whom he had direct contact.

On 8 August 2014, “WHO” declared the EVD outbreak in West Africa a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) in accordance with the International Health Regulations (2005)



► **Symptoms:**

Symptoms of EVD include fever, weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhea, rash, and in some

cases, bleeding. It is important to note that a person who is infected is only able to spread the virus to others after the infected person has started to have symptoms. A person usually has no

symptoms for two to 21 days (the "incubation period").

► **Risks:**

Unlike infections such as influenza and tuberculosis, EVD is not spread by breathing air (and the airborne particles it contains) from an infected person. Transmission requires direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other body fluids of infected living or dead persons or animals, all unlikely exposures for seafarers, passengers and others on board ships in the normal course of their activities.

Most infections currently being reported in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone are taking place in the community when family members or friends take care of someone who is ill or when funeral preparation and burial ceremonies do not follow strict infection prevention and control measures. Transmission can also occur in clinics and other health care settings, when health care workers, patients, and other persons have unprotected contact with a person who is infected. The risk of getting infected on an aircraft or passenger ship is small as sick persons usually feel so unwell that they cannot travel and, in any event, infection requires direct contact with the body fluids of the infected person. The risk of becoming infected with EVD during a visit to the affected countries and developing the disease after returning is very low, even if the visit includes travel to areas in which cases have been reported.

► **Precautionary measures:**

In the event that a seafarer, passenger, or other person has stayed in the areas where EVD cases have recently been reported, he or she should seek medical attention at the first sign of illness (fever, headache, achiness, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, rash, red eyes, and in some cases, bleeding). Early treatment can improve prognosis.

Any person with an illness consistent with EVD, or any person who has had contact with or is confirmed as having contracted EVD should not be allowed to join a ship or travel internationally unless that travel is part of an appropriate medical evacuation. In any event, all persons are advised to avoid such contacts and routinely practice careful hygiene, like thorough hand-washing.

International cooperation is necessary to support action to contain the virus and thus stop transmission to other countries and mitigate the effects in those affected. Affected countries are requested to conduct exit screening of all persons at international airports, seaports and major land crossings, for unexplained febrile illness consistent with potential EVD infection. Non-affected countries need to strengthen the capacity to detect and immediately contain new cases, while avoiding measures that will create unnecessary interference with international travel or trade.

**For more information please read the Circular Letter No.3484 issued by IMO:**

**([www.ukpandi.com/fileadmin/uploads/uk-pi/LP%20Documents/Circular\\_Letter\\_No\\_3484\\_-\\_Ebola\\_Virus\\_Disease\\_\\_Secretariat\\_.pdf](http://www.ukpandi.com/fileadmin/uploads/uk-pi/LP%20Documents/Circular_Letter_No_3484_-_Ebola_Virus_Disease__Secretariat_.pdf))**