

## FAQ on COVID-19 Vaccination V.Group

### Group Position:

V.Group and our customers see COVID-19 vaccinations becoming the general practice in the industry, as they are demanded by more airlines, ports and transit countries.

Based on these challenges, we are now requiring that with effect from 15th February 2022, all joining seafarers should be fully vaccinated according to the World Health Organisation (“WHO”) and/or the guidelines issued by the seafarer's, country of origin with the following exceptions:

1. Seafarers who hold a medical related exemption certificate issued by a medically qualified person.
2. Seafarers who hold a certificate of recovery from the COVID-19 illness and cannot be vaccinated prior their next joining date.
3. Seafarers who can legitimately demonstrate that the vaccine was unavailable in his/her region.
4. Seafarers who choose not to have the vaccination and the Crew Management Partner approves the deviation from protocol.

Colleagues are encouraged to follow their national health authority's guidelines and recommendations for vaccination against COVID-19.

V.Group will be following the global situation closely and any new developments impacting vaccination of our colleagues, besides those made by national authorities, shall be raised with COVID-19 executive group for discussion and decision.

## **Section I: V.Group Position on COVID-19 Vaccines**

### **Q1. Does V.Group recommend that shore personnel should be vaccinated?**

V.Group recommends that government instructions issued by personnel's country of residence should be followed.

### **Q2. Is V.Group supporting any vaccination programs?**

The vaccination program has been led by the regional V.Group offices who provide encouragement, support and guidance to the seafarers. In addition, we now have a Central Vaccination Coordination team to manage the global program supporting vaccinations at selected airports and ports where available.

### **Q3. Is becoming vaccinated a requirement of employment by V.Group?**

It is important to start your vaccination as soon as possible because some vaccines require weeks between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> dose.

For seafarers on leave, it will become a requirement effective from 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022, and you are required to inform your crewing team immediately if for any reason you cannot be fully vaccinated before that date.

For those onboard, it will become the requirement after you return home and before your next assignment.

### **Q4. How long is my COVID-19 vaccination certificate valid for?**

The validity of COVID-19 vaccination certificates will depend on the vaccine maker's instructions, your national health authority's regulation as well as the regulations in ports and transit countries. We will closely follow vaccination protocols in countries of interest and keep you informed as applicable.

We encourage boosters when offered for those already fully vaccinated.

## **Section II: COVID-19 Vaccination Programmes Globally**

### **Q1. Which groups are prioritised groups to receive the vaccination, and what is the rationale for prioritising them?**

There is a general consensus globally on the need to prioritise vaccination based on the following principles:

- a. Sustain healthcare and COVID-19 response systems
- b. Reduce morbidity and mortality among those at greatest risk
- c. Protect those at increased risk due to their living or working conditions (e.g. settings with the potential for rapid transmission and large outbreaks)
- d. Maintain the function of society as a whole with a view to maximise benefits and minimise harms.

As vaccine supply will arrive in batches over several months as manufacturers increase their production of vaccines, vaccination should start with groups who are at greater risk and hence most in need of COVID-19 vaccination, including healthcare workers and COVID-19 frontline workers, as well as vulnerable groups at greater risk of severe disease from COVID-19 infection, such as the elderly.

### **Q2. What about Seafarers? Are they given priority?**

Although the UN's IMO and other bodies moved with extraordinary and commendable speed to categorize mariners as Essential Workers who should be entitled to early access to testing and vaccine, not all nations have ratified that ruling. Lack of universal ratification may not obligate all the maritime nations to recognise mariners' essential status. Even the countries that ratified seafarers as essential may not list them in their priority categories.

It may be some time before we see availability of vaccine for large numbers of seafarers.

### **Q3. What is V.Group doing to ensure seafarers prioritisation?**

V.Group has signed the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change.

In this declaration, stakeholders from across all the maritime value chain recognize our shared responsibility to ensure that the current crew change crisis is resolved as soon as possible. Therefore, we commit to take action to resolve the crew change crisis, based on our position and role in the value chain, thereby ensuring the rights and wellbeing of the seafarers supporting global supply chains.

We will be fighting for the following actions to be implemented:

- Recognize seafarers as key workers and give them priority access to Covid-19 vaccines.
- Establish and implement gold standard health protocols based on existing best practice.
- Increase collaboration between ship operators and charterers to facilitate crew changes.
- Ensure air connectivity between key maritime hubs for seafarers.

**Q4. Which vaccine will I get? Will I be able to choose which brand of vaccines we receive?**

The vaccine type will be indicated by the different governments depending on your country of residence.

## **Section III: Post-vaccination Matters**

### **Q1. Are there any side effects? What should I do if I suffer from any side effects?**

The vaccine has been assessed to be safe for use. However, you may experience common side effects, similar to other vaccines. Most side effects are mild or moderate, and usually get better within a few days.

See a doctor if:

- The side effects persist or get worse
- The fever persists for more than 48 hours (2 days)

In very rare cases, vaccines can cause a severe reaction. **If you experience a severe reaction, seek medical attention immediately.**

### **Q2. With COVID-19 vaccines deployed, is there still a need for public health measures?**

Clinical data on the duration of the vaccine's protection and its effectiveness in preventing transmission is still being monitored.

As such, until a significant proportion of the population is vaccinated, we will need to continue to practice public health measures, such as safe distancing, mask wearing and good hand hygiene, so that we can continue to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

### **Q3. Will vaccinated persons be exempted from measures such as pre-departure/entry to any country testing? What about public health measures such as quarantine?**

While there is evidence that COVID-19 vaccines are effective in preventing symptomatic disease, the extent of their ability in preventing transmission to others is still being studied.

Hence, vaccinated persons should continue to adhere to public health and general safe management measures in every country.

### **Q4. Can I use the proof of vaccination for travel purposes? Will it be recognised by other countries?**

At the moment, jurisdictions have different travel restrictions and requirements, please verify jurisdictions' restrictions and requirements before you travel.

Authorities are working on a global solution but there are not global agreements at the moment. We have set up a V.Group taskforce to monitor and adapt to the different solutions.

One of these ongoing projects, is airlines creating the IATA Travel Pass. It is a mobile app to help passengers easily and securely manage their travel in line with government requirements for COVID-19 tests or vaccines.

**Q5. Will existing measures still be required for those who are vaccinated?**

Public health measures, such as safe distancing, mask wearing and good hand hygiene, must continue to be practised.

Every country will maintain the measurements they deem necessary. Vaccinated persons should continue to adhere to public health and general safe management measures in every country.