

# Practice Update

DATE October 25, 2022

**Audience:** All PTCC Staff, CCPA and EPOS

**Subject:** Practice Update – Cruise Ship

**What's New:** Definition and clarity of roles for the telephone assessment of patients on marine vessels/cruise ships within B.C. waters

**Why:** Cruise Ships present a unique instance where a patient could be having a medical event but is unable to access definitive care for several hours, due to their location. However, they will likely be under the care of the ship's physician. In these circumstances, Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) Victoria may contact the PTCC for assistance with the medical triaging of these events if there is a reasonable belief the patient will be admitted to the B.C. health care system.

When the patient suffers an acute clinical event on a cruise ship, the ship's Master will contact JRCC Victoria. At this time, the JRCC will contact the PTCC to request EPOS for a telephone assessment. BCEHS is not responsible, nor is expected, for making the final decision on patient disposition. BCEHS is simply to assist JRCC with assessing patient needs and coordinate possible receipt of the patient to a BCEHS resource.

**How does this affect my practice?** PTCC staff, if possible, will receive a "pre-alert" from the JRCC that a conference call between the cruise ship and JRCC is being setup. Once setup, JRCC will then contact PTCC to request EPOS for the conference. PTCC staff will attempt to contact EPOS. If EPOS is unavailable, the CCPA may be used in their place. Once the conference is established with the cruise ship, JRCC will connect PTCC and EPOS to the conference.

PTCC will document the conference by creating an MPDS event using the appropriate MPDS protocol with the clinical information provided and using the "Unknown Address-PTCC" commonplace name on the CAD. This will provide an event number for EPOS to document their assessment.

EPOS will assess the event and guide the discussion as appropriate with regards to medical considerations. This is to assist JRCC with deciding if the patient needs immediate air rescue by a Cormorant helicopter, the ship requires direction into the nearest appropriate port for patient transfer to shore, or the ship can reasonably transport the patient to their next planned port of call.

Furthermore, this is the forum to discuss level of care issues during transport, the most appropriate treatment facility for the patient's condition, and along with JRCC, develop a coordinated plan to transport the patient to that location (either entirely by JRCC assets, or a combination of JRCC and BC EHS assets). JRCC may include the military Duty Medical Officer (DMO) on this call to liaise with EPOS on medical considerations.

**Please note that the decision for the cruise ship to change course is entirely the responsibility of the cruise ship captain, their on-board physician and the cruise line's ground-based medical oversight agency.** The role of BCEHS personnel is to advise and support only.

After conference conclusion, PTCC will appropriately document the event and liaise with JRCC for any EHS coordination that will be required.

Any other JRCC marine events for patients not under immediate physician's care (ie fishing boats, etc) can be assessed by the CCPA and should be processed by PTCC staff using an appropriate MPDS protocol, followed by discussion with the JRCC for best course of action.

**Who do I contact if I have questions?**

Please contact your Manager or Charge Dispatcher