Beat: Travel

Holland America Ships Wait For Approval

To Dock In Florida

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, 03.04.2020, 21:48 Time

USPA NEWS - At this moment, the number of COVID-19 cases in Canada is 12,375. The breakdown by province is as follows: British Columbia 1,121, Alberta 968, Saskatchewan 206, Manitoba 182, Ontario 3,255, Quebec 6,101, New Brunswick 95, Prince Edward Island 22, Nova Scotia 207 and Newfoundland 195.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, travel throughout the world is pretty well at a standstill. While most citizens practice self-isolation, governments are restricting domestic travel, banning international travel and locking down borders. Travel by air, land, and sea are all affected.
Amid these new restrictions, there have been many travelers stranded and left to worry about how they will get home along with family members wondering when their loved ones will return. This developing story is a testament to the extraordinary times in which we are living.

On March 16, the Zaandam had arranged to dock in Punta Arenas, Chile, but the country prohibited the Zaandam from doing so after closing its borders due to COVID-19 concerns. Argentina and Peru also closed their borders and prohibited the ship from docking. The Zaandam has been at sea for the last 2 weeks seeking a port that would allow them to dock.
There had been 1,243 passengers and 1,247 crew members onboard the Zaandam, which includes 248 Canadians. There had been 11 people tested for COVID-19 of which 9 were reported to be positive. Four passengers have died. Two of the deceased tested positive for COVID-19 and Holland America has not yet said how the other two died.

On Friday, March 27th, nearly half of the passengers on the Zaandam were transferred by tender to the Rotterdam which had been sailing alongside the Zaandam. This was done to provide some relief to the Zaandam's crew. Only passengers who passed the health screening were allowed to transfer to the other ship. In a statement, Holland America said, " No guests who had any respiratory symptoms in the last ten days were transferred, and no Zaandam crew were transferred to Rotterdam.“
The Zaandam and the Rotterdam having received the proper authorization from the Government of Panama have traveled through the Panama Canal and are now sailing towards south Florida, however, it is not clear where the ships will be permitted to dock. At this hour, the fate of both the MS Zaandam and the MS Rotterdam and their combined total of 2,500 passengers and crew members remains uncertain, as officials in southern Florida weigh the risks of disembarking sick passengers in a region already struggling with cases of the COVID-19 virus.

U.S. President Donald Trump, on Tuesday, urged Florida officials to open an Atlantic Coast port to the Dutch cruise ships stuck at sea with a deadly coronavirus outbreak onboard, urging the governor to drop his opposition. "They're dying on the ship! I'm going to do what's right, not only for us but for humanity."

Holland America Line has released a statement to their website which outlines a plan for disembarkment of passengers from the Zaandam and Rotterdam pending approval to enter United States waters. Below is a portion of that statement. "April 1, 2020, 3:30 PM PDT -- Holland America Line is awaiting confirmation to disembark guests from Zaandam and Rotterdam in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We remain fully engaged with the Broward Unified Command and other governmental and embassy authorities to resolve this humanitarian situation and get the nearly 1,200 well guests home immediately who are fit for travel per guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Both ships are scheduled to arrive at the boundary of U.S. waters by early tomorrow morning and will remain outside U.S. waters while awaiting clearance to enter. Guests fit for travel per the CDC would transfer straight from the ship to flights for onward travel home, the majority on charter flights. Out of an abundance of caution, these guests will be transported in coaches that will be sanitized, with limited person-to-person contact and while wearing masks. These provisions well exceed what the CDC has advised is necessary for their travel. Guests have not left the ship since March 14 and have self-isolated in their staterooms since March 22. The approximately 45 guests who still have mild illness and are unfit to travel at this time will continue to isolate onboard until recovered. Disembarkation would be at a later date to be determined and only after they have recovered and are in alignment with CDC guidelines for being fit to travel."

Latest Development, April 2nd, 2020.

On Thursday, the Holland America Zaandam and sister ship Rotterdam were given the approval to dock in Port Everglades in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Holland America posted the details on the company blog. Holland America said, "Fit-to-travel guests will transfer straight from ship onto buses for transfer directly to the airport for their flights home. The majority will leave on charter flights. Local Florida residents will return home immediately via private car. Guests have not left the ship since March 14 and have self-isolated in their staterooms since March 22."

"Guests who still have symptoms will remain on board and disembark at a later date to be finalized after they have fully recovered and meet the CDC guidelines for being fit to travel. They will continue to be well cared for onboard by the ships´ medical staff. No crew from either ship will disembark in Fort Lauderdale."
To read the full blog post and other updates from Holland America visit www.hollandamerica.com.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-16755/holland-america-ships-wait-for-approval.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Brian Teepell

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report. Brian Teepell

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com