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Circular Letter No.3497  
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To: All IMO Member States  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Personal protective equipment – Ebola virus disease**

### Introduction

1 The purpose of this circular is to provide updated World Health Organization (WHO) information and guidance on the safe and effective use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the Ebola virus disease (EVD).

2 The updated guidelines aim to clarify and standardize safe and effective PPE options to protect healthcare workers and patients, as well as provide information for the procurement of PPE in the current Ebola outbreak. The guidelines are based on a review of evidence of PPE use during care of suspected and confirmed Ebola virus disease patients.

### Use of personal protective equipment

3 WHO experts agree that it is important to have PPE that protects the mouth, nose and eyes from contaminated droplets and fluids. Given that hands are known to transmit pathogens to other parts of the body, as well as to other individuals, hand hygiene and gloves are essential, both to protect individuals and to prevent transmission to others. Face cover, protective foot wear, gowns or coveralls and head cover were also considered essential to prevent transmission to healthcare workers.

### Guidance available

4 The WHO Rapid advice guideline: personal protective equipment in the context of Filovirus Disease Outbreak Response (Filovirus includes Ebola) provides the latest advice and can be found at: [www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/ppe-guideline/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/ebola/ppe-guideline/en/). This advice updates that contained in Circular Letter No.3484, annex.

5 General information on EVD and related guidance can be found at:

[www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/en)  
[www.imo.org/Mediacentre/HotTopics/ebola](http://www.imo.org/Mediacentre/HotTopics/ebola)  
[www.ics-shipping.org/ebola-information](http://www.ics-shipping.org/ebola-information)

WHO International Health Regulations  
WHO Guide to ship sanitation  
International Medical Guide for Ships.