



# **COVID-19 PROTOCOL FOR CONTROL AND MONITORING OF PASSENGERS AND CARGO ENTRY TO ANTARCTICA THROUGH CHILE**



## 1. BACKGROUND

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) classified the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a global pandemic. In this context, countries and states have owed extreme measures to prevent the spread of the disease. In particular, this document seeks to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in Chile and the Antarctic Peninsula area, and to protect professionals, researchers and logistics who carry out activities in Antarctica.

Punta Arenas (Chile) is the gateway city to Antarctica that most countries (between 19 and 23 depending on the season) use to access that territory worldwide. For this reason and in the context of the pandemic, Punta Arenas is a very important place of sanitary control for Antarctic activity.

In coordination with different public and private Chilean institutions, it has been agreed to establish a series of procedures in a protocol, which seek to avoid, as far as possible, the arrival of COVID-19 in the Antarctic region.

This document has been designed based on the documentation on epidemiological control prepared by the Chilean Ministry of Health (In Spanish <https://www.minsal.cl/nuevo-coronavirus-2019-ncov/informe-tecnico/>).

**This protocol will be conditioned to the epidemiological situation of Chile and the Magallanes region at the time of its application.**

## 2. OBJECTIVE

To provide guidelines for the control and monitoring of staff and cargo of National Antarctic Programs (NAPs), during their passage through Punta Arenas to and from Antarctica, in order to:

1. Avoid the spread of COVID-19 on the Antarctic Peninsula;
2. Prevent the entry of the virus from other countries to the Magallanes and Chilean Antarctic Region; and
3. Protect the capacity of the regional health system.

This protocol will be applied to all researchers, logistics personnel and cargo of the NAPs and Antarctic operators while in Punta Arenas or in the Chilean Territory, in transit to Antarctica.

This protocol defines: responsibilities, actors involved and ways of operating in several scenarios.



### **3. CONTROL AND MONITORING**

The Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) will be the national technical coordinating agency of the “COVID-19 Protocol for the Control and Monitoring of Passengers and Cargo traffic between Punta Arenas and the Antarctic Peninsula”. For this, INACH will develop a coordinated work with different public and private agencies, national and international, among them: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Antarctic Operators, NAPs, Chilean health authority, Chilean maritime authority, logistics services companies and related public agencies.

Control and monitoring consists of establishing a system of coordination and pertinent information so that the different public or private agencies can receive, attend, quarantine and transport passengers and cargo between Punta Arenas and the Antarctic Peninsula.

#### **Control and Monitoring Instructions**

Among the actions that the National Antarctic Programs must carry out when planning and coordinating their trip to Antarctica via Punta Arenas, are:

- Identify a coordinator of your program who will act as a counterpart to the Chilean authorities.
- Each PAN, through its diplomatic mission in Chile, must deliver information of its trip to Antarctica via Punta Arenas, to the Chilean Antarctic Directorate and to the INACH coordinator, at least 30 days before the trip.
- At the same time, the NAP manager must report on its protocols to prevent COVID-19 infections in the transfer to Punta Arenas and Antarctica to the INACH coordinator (representative of Chile to COMNAP).
- Fill out an Affidavit for each person that is transported by air and / or sea (annexes No. 3, 4 and 5, as appropriate).
- The application of this protocol will be subject to the epidemiological situation in Chile and the Magallanes Region.

### **4. PROCEDURES IN CHILE**

#### **4.1. Pre-trip to Chile considerations**



- It is suggested that each NAP, in its protocols for the selection of Antarctic personnel, consider the risk factors for COVID-19 indicated by the WHO, avoiding sending people who are in the risk group.
- The staff must have health insurance that covers care for any event in case of COVID-19 diagnosis.
- 5 days before the trip to Chile from the country of residence, the staff must undergo a serological test (IgG / IgM) and a PCR test, the results of which they must carry upon arrival in Punta Arenas.
- All personnel arriving in Punta Arenas must carry out diagnostic tests for COVID-19 coordinated with the health authority.
- A negative result will allow to initiate a preventive quarantine in facilities that have the approval of the health authority in Punta Arenas. NAPs that have their own vessels may request to carry out the quarantine on board their vessel, in Punta Arenas. In the case of any positive result, the health authority will be informed and the isolation protocol for the patient and their companions will be activated, following the corresponding procedure, according to their route of entry (annexes No. 3, 4, and 5).
- Entry to Chile will be restricted to any PCR+ person for COVID-19.
- As indicated in point No. 3, each NAP must send the following information to the Antarctic Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile and INACH:
  1. Date and flight number
  2. Passengers list
  3. Cargo
  4. Reservations in hotels certified by the health authority
  5. Transport to Punta Arenas
  6. Contact details of the program coordinator

## **4.2. Entry to the Magallanes Region**

### **4.2.1. Access routes to the Magallanes Region**

Personnel and/or cargo destined for Antarctica and using Punta Arenas as a gateway, for the purposes of this Protocol, may only enter the Magallanes Region by one of the following routes:

1. Carlos Ibáñez del Campo Airport;
2. Arturo Prat Dock of the Empresa Portuaria Austral (EPA); or
3. Complejo de Integración Austral (border crossing Chile-Argentina).

#### **4.2.1.1. Carlos Ibáñez del Campo Airport, Punta Arenas**



Upon arrival, the staff must go through a sanitary customs office, where physiological parameters established by the Health Authority will be controlled (which are indicated in the “COVID-19 Suspect Cases Detection Protocol In Airport” (Phase 4, according to the stages defined by the WHO for the control of pandemics) (Annex N° 3) and the Chilean Air Force (FACH) Protocol to face the COVID-19 in Antarctica (Annex N° 1).

All delegations must have a previous coordination with their agency to ensure the movement of cargo and personnel, according to the standards defined by the Chilean health authority (Annex No. 6).

Once the entry procedures are completed, the staff and cargo must go directly to their quarantine places (section 4.3), using means of transportation authorized and certified by the Health Authority.

#### **4.2.1.2. Arturo Prat Dock (EPA), Punta Arenas**

All vessels destined for or returning from Antarctica must comply with the provisions of Ordinary Official Letter N° 12000/4/Vrs., of March 27, 2020, of the Chilean Directorate of the Maritime Territory of the Merchant Navy (Annex n° 2) and the protocol for monitoring travelers from the Health Authority which is indicated in the Protocol for the Detection of Suspicious Cases of COVID-19 in Ports (Phase 4) (Annex N° 4).

#### **4.2.1.3. Complejo de Integración Austral (border crossing Chile-Argentina)**

- For the purposes of this Protocol, the access by land to Punta Arenas will be allowed only through the Complejo de Integración Austral border crossing.
- The “Protocol for the detection of travelers at border crossings”, established by the Health Authority, must be followed (Annex N° 5).
- The staff must fill out an affidavit indicating the place of origin and possible risky contacts.
- Personnel must go directly to the certified quarantine location.
- Once the entry procedures are completed, the staff and cargo must go directly to their quarantine places using means of transportation established for this, following sanitary corridor protocols.

### **4.3. Quarantine in the Magallanes Region and Punta Arenas**

#### **4.3.1. Ingreso a Chile**

Any person entering Chile must carry out a preventive quarantine (isolation) of 14 days. The NAPs must organize the flight schedule to Punta Arenas considering a stopover with a minimum of time at the Santiago city airport, so that the facility is not abandoned. The flight schedule information must be



submitted at least 30 days in advance, to authorize the quarantine in Punta Arenas. Otherwise, you must carry out the isolation in Santiago.

#### **4.3.2. Examinations on arrival at Punta Arenas.**

Prior to their trip to Chile, the NAPs will have to coordinate the taking of samples and analysis for PCR examination and antibody test for COVID-19.

Based on the results of the serological tests, it will be preceded as follows:

- A) Patients with negative results, can be transferred directly from the airport to the place of isolation, starting from that moment preventive quarantine in a place contracted by the NAP.
- B) Patients with a positive result, activate a protocol that corresponds to their entry route (Annex N° 3, 4, and 5).

If the PCR result is positive, proceed as indicated in B).

A negative result will allow the quarantine to continue.

On day 10 of quarantine, the PCR and antibody test against COVID-19 should be repeated. Only people who, maintaining the above, remain negative and symptom-free as of day 14 will have authorization to travel to Antarctica.

Once the quarantine has been completed, the personnel must be transported by a sanitary corridor to the airport to directly board a plane to Antarctica.

#### **4.3.3. Quarantine or isolation in a hotel**

For the proper fulfillment of the preventive quarantine, the usual activities outside the contracted premises will be restricted and you must remain in isolation for 14 days. The hotel / hostel must be authorized by the health authority. The hotel / hostel must have the necessary adaptations to allow strict isolation. Logistics and scientific personnel in quarantine should follow the following recommendations:

- During the first six (6) days you will not be able to leave your room, so you must contract room feeding services. You should avoid contact with hotel staff. From day seven (7), the possibility of using dining rooms will be evaluated, always avoiding contact with hotel / hostel staff.
- Do not leave the place, do not receive visits, or make or participate in social events, such as receptions and meetings.
- Keep social distance (+1 mt).



- Follow WHO prevention recommendations (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>).
- Occupy a single room, with a window to maintain ventilation.
- In case it is not possible to have a single room, keep social distance and minimize the use of common spaces.

#### **4.4. From Punta Arenas to Antarctica**

Depending on the means of transport to be used, each company or institution responsible for transport services must ensure that specific protocols are applied to reduce the risk of the virus spreading and must include all the indications recommended by Chilean or international authorities as measures of prevention of contagion. These institutions must activate the corresponding protocols when suspected of positive COVID-19 cases and inform the Health Authority.

Passengers and cargo entering in Chilean and/or foreign aircraft to Antarctica must comply with the provisions of the "FACH protocol to face situation COVID-19 in Antarctica" (Annex N° 1).

The transportation of passengers of the National Antarctic Programs may not be shared with passengers of other types of activities.

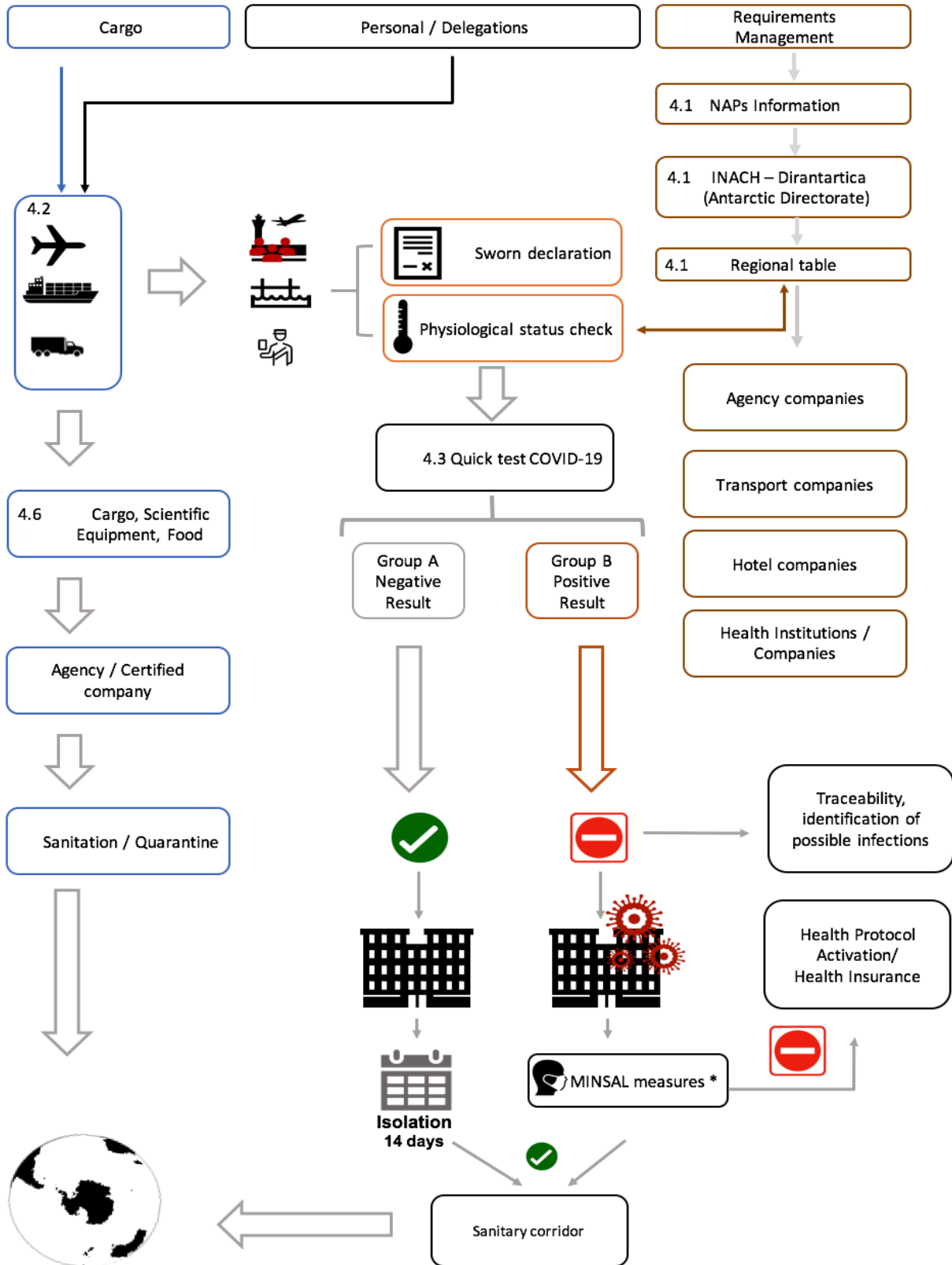
#### **4.5. From Antarctica to Punta Arenas**

Any person who stays at least 14 days in Antarctica or sailing in the waters of the Southern Ocean, will be understood to have made an effective quarantine, which will allow them to arrive in Punta Arenas without special considerations (following the procedure in Annexes n° 3 and 4), if the Health Authority does not have new sanitary measures on the matter.

By "effective quarantine" is understood as the effective time from a ship or aircraft leaving Punta Arenas until its arrival in Antarctica, without mediating contact with another port, airport or vessel; and your return to the same port from Antarctica, without having contact with another port, airport or vessel, once you have left the Antarctic Treaty area. In addition, the cycle of departure and return to Punta Arenas must complete at least 14 calendar days.

#### **4.6. Regarding cargo transportation**

The contracting of services of warehousing and cargo transport companies that have sanitization protocols in accordance with the provisions of the Health Authority in the document "Protocol of Cleaning and Disinfection of Environments - COVID-19" must be accredited (Annex N° 6).



\* MINSAL: Ministry of Health





## 5. PROCEDURES IN THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

While the validity of the State of Constitutional Exception of Catastrophe in Chile is maintained and / or the sources of contagion and spread of the COVID-19 virus continue in Chilean territory and in other countries that operate their Antarctic bases through Chile, priority will be given to Essential Antarctic air operations such as Aeromedical Evacuations (MEDEVAC), Search and Rescue (SAR), and critical base logistics support.

In suspected cases of COVID-19, the health authority will be immediately notified and will proceed as determined. A quick test will be performed and the patient will be preemptively isolated even if the result is negative.

If positive, the health authority will be informed, which will implement a contingency protocol in the event of an evacuation and the person will be isolated and their direct contacts will be examined.

The patient should be evacuated to Punta Arenas as soon as the patient's conditions and the weather permit it.

