

BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!



THE QUARTERLY SAFETY BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL LONGSHOREMEN'S ASSOCIATION, AFL-CIO

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August 9, 2014

The Ebola Virus

Should Longshore Workers Feel At Risk?

Members of the International Longshoremen's Association are unquestionably part of an International ocean transportation system. A system that embraces all continents. The vessels we service come to us from virtually every point on the compass, flying the flags of many different nations; with crews representing a whole host of nationalities. It makes sense, therefore, that in light of recent reports of the Ebola virus reaching critical levels within some West African nations that we soberly assess potential risks and that we are knowledgeable about how to better safeguard ourselves and our families.

According to the World Health Organization (an agency of the United Nations), these are the illness' key characteristics:

- 1). Ebola virus disease (EVD), formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever, is a severe, often fatal illness in humans.**
- 2). EVD outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 90%.**
- 3). EVD outbreaks occur primarily in remote villages in Central and West Africa, near tropical rain forests.**
- 4). The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission.**
- 5). Fruit bats of the *Pteropodidae* family are considered to be the natural host of the Ebola virus.**
- 6). Severely ill patients require intensive supportive care. No licensed specific treatment or vaccine is available for use in people or animals.**

From that perspective, we can easily appreciate that while the chances of contracting EVD would be much, much greater if our membership were actually working or living near West African rain forests, there are some currently remote risks that we should be mindful of. Those risks are predominantly associated with exposure to the blood or bodily fluids of other humans who have been infected with the virus.

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Some Additional Facts

Ebola first appeared in 1976 in 2 simultaneous outbreaks, in Nzara, Sudan, and in Yambuku, Democratic Republic of Congo. The latter was in a village situated near the Ebola River, from which the disease takes its name.

Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals. In Africa, infection has been documented through the handling of infected chimpanzees, gorillas, fruit bats, monkeys, forest antelope and porcupines found ill or dead or in the rainforest.

Ebola then spreads in the community through human-to-human transmission, with infection resulting from direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, and indirect contact with environments contaminated with such fluids. Burial ceremonies in which mourners have direct contact with the body of the deceased person can also play a role in the transmission of Ebola. Men who have recovered from the disease can still transmit the virus through their semen for up to 7 weeks after recovery from illness.

Signs and Symptoms

EVD is a severe acute viral illness often characterized by the sudden onset of fever, intense weakness, muscle pain, headache and sore throat. This is followed by vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, impaired kidney and liver function, and in some cases, both internal and external bleeding. Laboratory findings include low white blood cell and platelet counts and elevated liver enzymes.

People are infectious as long as their blood and secretions contain the virus.

The incubation period, that is, the time interval from infection with the virus to onset of symptoms, is 2 to 21 days.

Being observant and keeping distant from individuals aboard vessels you service who are exhibiting the symptoms emboldened above is warranted and advisable.

This week, the United States Coast Guard issued a subject-specific **Marine Safety Information Bulletin** that details additional facts and provides further recommendations. Importantly to our interests, the publication sets out the following:

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“The Coast Guard will review all Notice of Arrivals [of vessels coming to all U.S. ports] to determine if a vessel has visited a country impacted by Ebola virus outbreak within its last five ports of call.”

Here’s a link to the Coast Guard’s Bulletin: https://www.uscg.mil/msib/docs/012_14_8-7-2014.pdf

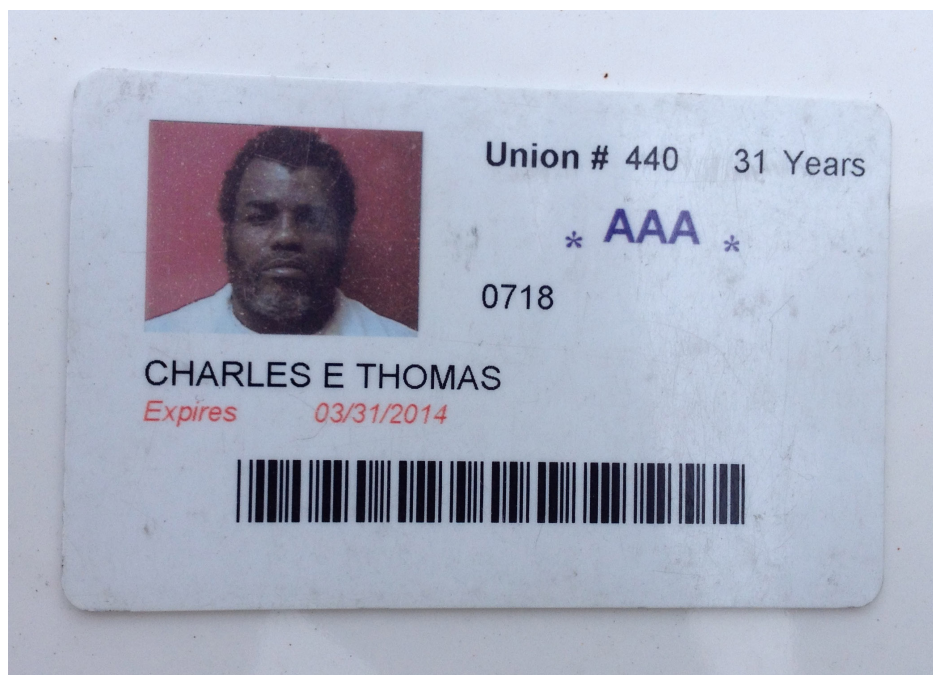
The Current Outbreak



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WE MOURN



ILA mourns the death of Charles Thomas, a thirty-one year veteran longshore worker and member of ILA Local Union 1416.

Brother Thomas was fatally injured on 02 July 2014, when he was struck by a moving reach stacker while walking through container yard at Miami port.

His death should reinforce in all of our minds, the importance of remaining alert, observant and mindful of the line of sight limitations container handling equipment operators must confront on a daily basis.

ILA members fully appreciate the need to keep pedestrian activity to a minimum, to use only designated marine terminal walkways and to constantly scan and focus upon their surroundings.

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