

Beat: Travel

Anthem of the Seas

Departure Delayed

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USPA NEWS - Royal Caribbean has delayed the Friday February 7th, 2020 sailing of Anthem of the Seas by one day due to suspicion of Chinese passengers on the previous sailing who were feared to be infected with the coronavirus.

Upon the arrival of the Anthem Of The Seas at Cape Liberty in Bayonne, New Jersey Friday morning, there was much concern that a coronavirus outbreak could have been onboard. The ship was met by officials from the U.S. Centers For Disease Control and Prevention who screened 27 passengers thought to have had recently traveled from China. After assessment 23 passengers were cleared and the remaining 4 were taken to an area hospital for further evaluation.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy posted the following to Twitter, "This morning, personnel from the @CDCgov(Centers For Disease Control)boarded a cruise ship docked in Bayonne and screened 27 passengers who recently traveled from mainland China and 23 of those passengers were cleared and 4 individuals are being evaluated at an area hospital. The hospital is following proper infection control protocols while evaluating these individuals. New Jersey currently has no confirmed cases of coronavirus and the risk to residents remains low."

Even though the Anthem of the Seas has been cleared to sail by the local authorities, Royal Caribbean has decided to delay the ships departure until February 8, 2020. This decision was made to "reassure concerned guests" that the ship has also been cleared by the CDC with conclusive test results.

Royal Caribbean issued a communication to guests advising of the scheduled departure change and future screening and boarding policies. The highlights include,

"Given that we have shortened the sailing, you'll receive a 1-day refund in the form of an onboard credit for the day missed, plus a prorated credit, if you pre-purchased any packages such as, beverage, internet, or dining. Both credits will be added to your Onboard Account and once you're onboard, you can use these credits anywhere onboard."

"Please also take a minute to review our screening and boarding protocols. We have been working with medical experts, public health authorities, and local governments, and in alignment with new stricter CDC protocols, we are tightening our measures to protect guests and crew. These steps are intentionally conservative, and we apologize that they will inconvenience some of our guests. Until further notice, all ships in the Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. fleet will adopt these health screening protocols. Regardless of nationality, any guest or crew member traveling from, to or through mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau less than 15 days prior to their sailing will be unable to board any of our ships. Any guests holding a Chinese, Hong Kong, or Macau passport, regardless of when they were there last, will not be allowed to board our ships. Any guest or crew member that has been in contact (which the CDC defines as 6 feet or 2 meters) with someone that has traveled from, to, or through mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau less than 15 days will not be permitted to board. Additionally, there will be mandatory specialized health screenings performed on: Guests who are unsure if they have been in contact with individuals who have traveled from, to or through mainland China or Hong Kong in the past 15 days. Guests who report feeling unwell or demonstrate any flu-like symptoms, any guest presenting with fever or low blood oxymetry in the specialized health screening will be denied boarding."

" If you or someone in your stateroom has traveled or been in close contact with someone that has traveled from, to or through mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau within 15 days of sailing departure, or is a passport holder of China, Hong Kong, or Macau, please contact your Travel Advisor immediately, or contact us at 1-800-256-6649 or visit www.RoyalCaribbean.com/contactus for your local Royal Caribbean International office phone number."

In a "Late Breaking Development" as of February 8th, 2020, sources close to law enforcement have reported to several media outlets that a crew member had passed away last weekend on the Anthem of the Seas. The remains of a 54 year old a Filipino national were found in an engine room after he had not shown up for work. The remains were kept in a refrigerated compartment until the ship docked in New Jersey. The remains have been taken to Newark for what sources described as a "rush" autopsy. The death is not thought to be the result of the coronavirus.

Royal Caribbean said in a statement, "We can confirm that local authorities were immediately notified after a crew member who did not report for work was found deceased. We cooperated fully with law enforcement in their investigation and have been advised the death was non-suspicious,"

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