



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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(2410)

TECHNICAL BULLETIN

To: Regional Concession Chiefs

From: Chief, Commercial Services Program /s/ **Brian Borda**

Subject: Management of Vomit on Board Vessels, Aircrafts, and Vehicles and
Distribution of Motion Sickness Medications across State Lines

PURPOSE

This technical bulletin was developed in consultation with the National Park Service (NPS) Office of Public Health (OPH) and addresses the minimum requirements for the development of concessioner procedures to manage vomit on board ferry vessels, aircraft or buses and to provide retail sales of motion sickness medication.

BACKGROUND

NPS operators, as concessioners contracted with the NPS, are obligated under the terms of their contract to develop and implement procedures to manage incidents that may impact public health. These should include procedures for the proper management of vomit from sick visitors. Motion sickness medication can be helpful in preventing such incidents. However, there may be specific rules and regulations pertaining to the transportation of those medicines across state lines.

Vomiting occurring on vessels, aircraft, and buses is frequently due to motion sickness; however, vomiting may also be caused by infectious diseases, such as norovirus, which is a common and highly contagious cause of gastrointestinal illness. An infectious disease, rather than motion sickness, should be considered especially if the passenger states that he/she felt sick prior to boarding the vessel, aircraft or vehicle or if the passenger states that he/she had been in contact with other people with vomiting prior to boarding. In addition, if the vomit contains blood, it can carry blood-borne pathogens, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). In order to protect health and prevent the spread of disease, vomit should be treated as potentially infectious material.

MANAGING VOMITING INCIDENTS

Containment:

In the past, some concessioners have asked that sick passengers hang their head over the rail or step off the vehicle and use the side of the road to deal with vomiting incidents. These are inadequate processes as they can be both uncomfortable and dangerous. Relying on restroom toilets that may not be accessible in time for a visitor to use is also not an adequate plan. Instead, concessioners like other commercial ferry, airline and vehicle tour companies, should provide motion sickness bags for use by visitors.

Initial Communication to Passengers:

The initial safety briefing for the transportation service to passengers should include the possibility of motion sickness and the availability and location of motion sickness bags. The passengers should also be instructed to notify the operator (e.g., ferry crewmember) if they vomit.

Use of Personal Protection:

Responders should protect themselves from the possible transmission of infectious diseases. Thorough and frequent handwashing is essential. Disposable gloves should always be used when handling items around a vomiting incident, including motion sickness bags. Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that can protect a responder during cleanup after a vomiting incident includes facemasks with eye protection, shoe covers, and disposable gowns.

Cleaning:

In the event that the vomiting incident was not contained in a motion sickness bag, thorough clean-up is needed. Cleaning supplies (e.g. disposable paper towels, a bucket, a spray bottle, a designated mop head or disposable mop heads, plastic garbage bags and bag-ties, and optional disposable scoops, small shovels, dustpans, sand, cat litter, or commercial absorbent powder) should be available and accessible.

The area around a vomiting incident within a 25-foot radius, should be cordoned off, thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests that in the case of possible norovirus infection, a freshly-made chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of 1000–5000 ppm (5–25 tablespoons of household bleach [5.25%] per gallon of water) or other [disinfectant registered as effective against norovirus by the Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-epas-registered-antimicrobial-products-effective-against-norovirus) be used (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-g-epas-registered-antimicrobial-products-effective-against-norovirus>). Contaminated clothes or linens should be immediately removed and washed in hot water using the longest available cycle and dried on the hottest setting. Hands should be thoroughly washed.

Disposal:

Motion sickness bags and other contaminated material should be disposed of in a manner that prevents transfer of the materials to other surfaces or persons. The used motion sickness bag, solid clean-up materials and contaminated PPE should be collected in a plastic bag and secured and can be disposed of in the regular trash.

Any material that has visible blood should be considered biohazardous waste and requires disposal via an authorized waste disposal vendor. More information on biohazardous waste disposal businesses can be found at [Michigan Department of Environmental Quality](#). Any non-disposable equipment that was used (e.g., mops) must also be properly sanitized.

Reporting:

Responders should log the incident and clean-up procedures. If the concessioner suspects the vomiting to be related to an infectious disease and that other passengers might be at risk for acquiring the infection, he/she should contact their local or State health department or the NPS OPH public health consultant and communicate the information to the park concession specialist.

MEDICATIONS TO TREAT MOTION SICKNESS

Medications are available to treat the effects of motion sickness (i.e., Dramamine), and it is recommended that transportation service providers with retail operations sell these products for visitors. There may be State regulations that prevent the sale of such motion sickness medications onboard when the aircraft, vessel or vehicle is traveling from one State to another. If this is the case, these medications should be offered for sale at boarding locations so passengers are able to purchase them in advance. In these cases, customers should be made aware by the concessioner that medications will not be available while on board.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Concessioners are responsible for providing safe and healthy services for visitors and employees and for understanding applicable laws, regulations and policy requirements of their contract.

The procedures outlined in the technical bulletin are advisory and the concessioner should seek its own experts if it has questions in meeting the NPS requirement for providing motion sickness bags, responding to and cleaning up incidents, and selling motion sickness medications.

DISTRIBUTION

Please distribute this memorandum to park concessions managers in your region.

FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS

For further information, contact [Kurt Rausch](#), Contract Management Branch Chief, NPS Commercial Services Program at 202.513.7202. or Dr. [Maria Said](#), Epidemiology Branch Chief, NPS Office of Public Health at 202-513-7151.

RESOURCES

- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Bloodborne infectious diseases: HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C. Available at: [CDC](#)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Occupational Safety and Health Standards, Bloodborne Pathogens. Available at: [OSHA](#)
- CDC. Norovirus. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/>.