

Best Management Practices: ICMA Guidance for Maritime Ministry During COVID-19

June 2020



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Introduction

COVID-19 has changed the world in a short space of time, bringing with it significant obstacles to the maritime industry and to those organisations serving it. There is perhaps no group of workers more isolated during a pandemic than the world's seafarers. Across the globe, crews are unable to take shore leave or end their contracts and return to their loved ones because of the many national lockdowns and travel restrictions in place amid concerns about contracting COVID-19.

These protocols seek to offer general guidance to those port ministries still operating and to assist every station in forward planning. Face-to-face interaction is at the heart of our work with seafarers. When restrictions are eased, the challenge for all of us will be to find practical solutions to enable ministries to operate in ways which are safe for staff, volunteers, and the seafarers we serve.

This guidance is for all connected with maritime ministry. The information which follows is based on existing practice across ICMA members and external, reliable sources of information such as the World Health Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation.

A first draft of this document was produced for The Mission to Seafarers by Ben Bailey, head of the ICMA delegation to the IMO.

Nothing in this document is intended to replace or contravene any law, code or other statute and should be considered general guidance only.

What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new, infectious disease. According to the World Health Organisation, most people infected with COVID-19 will experience a mild to moderate form of respiratory illness. Older people and those with underlying medical problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious complications.

COVID-19 spreads through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms¹:

- Fever (38 C / 100 F or higher)
- Dry cough
- Tiredness

Less common symptoms:

- Aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Diarrhoea
- Conjunctivitis
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- A rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes

Prevention

To prevent infection and to slow transmission of COVID-19, the World Health Organisation advises everyone to:

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or clean them using an alcohol-based hand gel
- Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre ² between yourself and others
- Avoid touching your face
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Stay at home if you feel unwell
- Refrain from smoking and other activities that weaken the lungs
- Practise physical distancing by avoiding unnecessary travel and staying away from crowded places.

¹ World Health Organisation: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

² Advice on the amount of space required for social distancing varies between countries. Check with your national centre for disease control or other source of public health information for your country's specific guidance.

General Note

All staff should ensure that they work closely with their local manager or society supervisor to agree protocols and procedures. Any station with volunteers who are worried should be encouraged to stand down, particularly those who are older or who have underlying health conditions.

ICMA recognises that each Member will determine the services they can offer given their local context. However, it is the position of ICMA that where Members are able to do so safely, ship visiting, and the operation of seafarers' centres should continue and be available to crews unless prevented from doing so by a national government or port authority.

The Need for Risk Assessments

The IMO has issued a Circular³ containing practical measures to address COVID-19 risks for all people involved on ships in port and in ports where they may need to interact with each other. The Circular and industry guidance⁴ recognises that different national requirements exist and puts forward expectations from shipowners and global industry associations.

All of us have a responsibility to protect seafarers and the people who serve them. It may be that seafarers will only be allowed to visit seafarers' centres for their shore leave. Therefore, we must do all we can to ensure our facilities are safe and regularly cleaned. ICMA members are encouraged to update your Risk Register, to help identify the risks associated with your work. If you do not have a Risk Register, a simple template is contained in the Resources section of this Guidance.

Guidance on Ship Visiting

Visiting seafarers on their vessels goes to the heart of maritime ministry. The following is recommended:

- **Chaplains should remain in regular contact with their local manager or society supervisor, ensuring they are well and not displaying symptoms.**
- **Where ship visiting teams operate, each member should be spoken to before each shift. This should be completed by the Chaplain/Lead to ensure everyone is well and not displaying any symptoms.** Ideally, this would be carried out by telephone call or video conferencing. If checks are made in person, social distancing should be maintained.
- **Everyone should be temperature screened before ship visiting each day.** This should be done by the Chaplain or appropriate staff member. Anyone found to have a temperature over 37.8C (100 F) should be asked to return home immediately, and all colleagues should follow national laws regarding self-isolating at home.

³ [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.16](#)

⁴ COVID-19 Related Guidelines for Ensuring a Safe Shipboard interface between Ship and Shore-based Personnel

- **All ship visitors should comply with port requirements on PPE.** In addition to normal items such as a hard hat, steel-toed, non-slip footwear and Hi-Viz jacket or vest, **all teams are required to wear a face mask⁵.**
- **Before commencing the ship visit, you should wash your hands** with soap and water or an alcohol-based gel.
- **Ship visits should take place at the bottom or top of the gangway only.** If at the top of the gangway, teams should take particular care and ensure that they are in a safe, sturdy position.
- **At all times, Ship visitors must keep social distancing of at least 1 metre⁶** - between seafarers and each other.
- **No one should go inside a vessel.** Exceptions to this are when requested to do so by appropriate authorities (i.e. a ship's agent or police. **NOT** the seafarer), or because a vessel's health and safety policy require it.
- **Ship visitors should not shake hands with seafarers.** Signalling with a hand-gesture, a bow or other "socially-distant" greeting is recommended.
- **At the end of the ship visit, cleanse your hands thoroughly** using soap and water or an alcohol-based gel. Discard any gloves you may have been wearing.

Guidance on Preparing Care Packages and Shopping Requests

It is not uncommon for seafarers to request items of shopping or to be welcomed to a port by a ship visitor bearing a gift. Whilst the risk of catching COVID-19 from surfaces is considered low⁷, the following guidance is provided:

- **Wash your hands before creating the care package and wear disposable gloves as you feel appropriate.**
- **Prepare any surfaces before you begin by wiping them down.**
- **All items provided should be wiped down individually with medicinal alcohol or antibacterial wipes.**
- **Avoid including newspapers and magazines, as very often these cannot be sanitized.**
- **Transfer care package items to a new, clear plastic bag which has been disinfected and left to dry.**
- **Secure the bag by using staples or a sanitised plastic tie.**
- **Once you have finished, wipe down the surfaces you have used.**
- **Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser.**

Where you have been asked to purchase large amounts of shopping, you should agree beforehand how the ship's crew would like you to bring the items to the vessel. You should also consider, when shopping, wearing disposable gloves; only including items which can be easily wiped down or washed; and, once you have delivered the items, you should wash your hands or use hand sanitiser.

⁵ Please refer to the guidance on face masks on page 8

⁶ Advice on the amount of space required for social distancing varies between countries. Check with your national centre for disease control or other source of public health information for your country's specific guidance.

⁷ How long does COVID-19 live on surfaces? <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Guidance on Wearing a Mask

There is a lot of conflicting information regarding wearing masks or using a face-covering. Much of the science and public advice suggests that masks are most effective when entering enclosed spaces, such as a shop or form of public transport.

ICMA recommends that face masks are worn by all personnel engaged in ship visiting and by those working in seafarers' centres. Our primary reason for this is to prevent seafarers' welfare personnel from inadvertently passing the virus on to seafarers.

EU Healthy Gateways⁸ has provided an overview on the various types of face mask which should be used on board vessels. ICMA recommends that you consider the final section of the table below, recognising that each Member may take a different view.

Table 9: Recommended PPE for other staff (e.g. harbor pilot, ship agent, other visitor)¹⁷

SETTING: ON CONVEYANCE			
WHO	WHEN	WHERE	WHAT
Other staff entering conveyance before assessment by authorities⁽⁵⁾: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harbor pilots • Ship agents • Other visitors 	If there is information of a suspect case on board conveyance	In isolation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical face mask If available, FFP2 respirator (tested for fitting) • Goggles (or face shield) • Disposable gloves • Long sleeved water-resistant gown • Perform frequent hand hygiene
		Outside isolation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical face mask • Disposable gloves • Perform frequent hand hygiene • Maintain 1 metre distance
	If there is no information of a suspect case on board or if no information is available	In all areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical face mask If not available, non-medical "community" mask • Perform frequent hand hygiene • Maintain 1 metre distance

Please remember that you may need to change your mask depending on how many hours you are working, or if it becomes damp. Please ensure you order enough to meet your needs.

⁸ *Who, Where, How – Overview of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Recommended for Staff at Points of Entry and Crew on board Conveyances in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic.*

https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_PPE_Overview_24_04_2020_F.pdf?ver=2020-04-27-141221-467

HOW TO WEAR A MEDICAL MASK SAFELY

[who.int/epi-win](https://www.who.int/epi-win)

Do's →



Wash your hands before touching the mask



Inspect the mask for tears or holes



Find the top side, where the metal piece or stiff edge is



Ensure the colored-side faces outwards



Place the metal piece or stiff edge over your nose



Cover your mouth, nose, and chin



Adjust the mask to your face without leaving gaps on the sides



Avoid touching the mask



Remove the mask from behind the ears or head



Keep the mask away from you and surfaces while removing it



Discard the mask immediately after use preferably into a closed bin



Wash your hands after discarding the mask

Don'ts →



Do not Use a ripped or damp mask



Do not wear the mask only over mouth or nose



Do not wear a loose mask



Do not touch the front of the mask



Do not remove the mask to talk to someone or do other things that would require touching the mask



Do not leave your used mask within the reach of others



Do not re-use the mask

Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from COVID-19. Maintain at least 1 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, even while wearing a mask.

EPI·win



⁹ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Guidance on Transportation

Transportation is an important service which will require significant planning.



IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO TRANSPORT SEAFARERS FROM ONE SHIP AT A TIME IN A VEHICLE

- Vehicles should be checked that they are in a roadworthy condition prior to commencing the journey.
- Draw a plan of the vehicle and agree which seats will be out of bounds to create more space between passengers – i.e. in people

carriers, use the seats at the back of the vehicle rather than immediately behind the driver. Any passenger seats in the front of the vehicle should be marked “unavailable” until further notice, even for co-workers.

- Each vehicle should have a bottle of hand sanitiser or antibacterial “wet wipes”. Stocks should be checked daily and replaced regularly.
- The steering wheel, gear stick, dashboard and other areas in the cab area should be wiped down with a disinfectant solution (i.e. Clorox wipes, Wet Ones, or another antibacterial wipe).
- Where seats are made of fabric, consider the use of plastic covers. These can be easily wiped down.
- If there is no divider between the driver’s cab and passengers, plastic sheeting should be affixed to create a divide. Change this at regular intervals.
- All passengers should be asked to clean their hands prior to entering the vehicle. If using wipes instead of hand sanitiser, used wipes should be discarded in a bin liner and a knot tied at the top. Dispose of the bag at the earliest opportunity, ideally before setting off.
- All vehicle interiors, including seatbelts and headrests should be wiped down at regular intervals during the shift.



Guidance on Seafarers' Centres

ICMA members operate seafarers' centres around the world, however owing to COVID-19, the majority of them are currently closed. Where they are open, strict protocols have been implemented by local committees to ensure social distancing and the safety of seafarers and staff.

IT MAY BE ADVISABLE TO ALLOW SEAFARERS FROM ONE SHIP AT A TIME IN A CENTRE.

- **Where possible, no visitors other than seafarers or authorised port personnel should be allowed to visit during this time.** Examples would include the Media and church fellowship groups, etc.
- **Where national public health advice requires, seafarers should have their temperature taken on arrival at the Seafarers' Centre.** This should be done by a digital, hands-free thermometer. Any seafarer found to have a temperature over 37.8C (100 F) should immediately return to the vessel, along with the crew. Port Health should be notified, and the team should follow national rules for self-isolating.
- **Wall-mounted hand sanitisers should be installed.** Every visitor must use them upon entering the building. Consider also installing in lavatories and at other key locations.
- **Centres should operate a "one-way" system.** Where possible, a different point should be used for entry and exit.
- **Strict social distancing should be in place and enforced for staff and visitors.** Tables and chairs should be roped off and a space of at least 1 metre¹⁰ between seats should be maintained. Social distancing applies equally to staff and volunteers.
- **Paper "sign in" books should be removed.** A simple, secure spreadsheet or other electronic form of data collection should be used, and everyone must sign in to comply with any "track and trace" regulation, as national public health advice requires.
- **Where bars and stores exist, Perspex or plastic sheeting should be considered to create a physical barrier between customer and cashier.** A hatch should be cut out for the passing of goods. Consider limiting the number of people in the area.
- **Consider using chairs with surfaces which can be wiped down or cover fabric items of furniture with plastic.**
- **All seats, counter tops, tables, and other surfaces should be wiped down regularly throughout the day.**
- **All paper-based products (leaflets, magazines, newspapers) should be removed until further notice.**
- **Card payments should be the preferred method for purchases.** Where this is not possible (i.e. Foreign Exchange or where seafarers only have cash), disposable gloves should be used.
- **Given that cash can transmit the virus, you may need to consider washing coins and wiping bank notes where you can.**
- **Everyone working or volunteering at the centre should be spoken to before commencing their shift to ensure they are well and not displaying any symptoms.** Local staff should remain in regular contact with their local Chairperson or Director.

¹⁰ Advice on the amount of space required for social distancing varies between countries. Check with your national centre for disease control or other source of public health information for your country's specific guidance.

Checklists

The following may be helpful in your planning.
They are not exhaustive.

	HANDWASHING & HYGIENE
	Have hand sanitiser stations at points of entry/exit, in centre lavatories and in vehicles
	Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand wash and paper towels or hand-dryers
	Display the WHO posters prominently about hand washing and hand rubbing
	Remind staff to limit contact with others – including each other – no shaking hands or touching objects unnecessarily
	Ensure all waste disposal bins have a cover/lid
	If possible, accept only cashless transactions. Where this is not possible, wear gloves
	Designate two people to be responsible for preparing any care packages so that you limit the risk of contamination
	CLEANING & PPE
	Ensure everyone is trained on what PPE is required and how to wear it and remove it.
	Monitor supplies of cleaning materials and ensure regular, adequate supply
	Instruct teams to wear gloves when cleaning or handling money and to wash their hands thoroughly before and after wearing them
	Clean frequently-touched areas and surfaces several times a day
	Ensure any equipment loaned to seafarers (i.e. Mi-Fi units, keyboards, plug adaptors and cables) is wiped down before and after each use.
	Draw up a cleaning rota for the Vehicles and provide training on the protocols necessary to ensure it is safe
	Consider professional “deep clean” cleaners for centres and vehicles on a monthly basis
	MONITOR SYMPTOMS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING
	Display posters around the centre requesting people to practice social distancing
	Display signs detailing any one-way system in operation
	Move furniture around so that it is at least 2m apart from the next person
	Display WHO posters on what COVID-19 is and what the symptoms are
	When drawing up a rota, try to ensure there is a “gap” between one shift ending and another starting
	Ensure an e-log is kept for every ship visited, with a point of contact for every vessel in case of the need to “track and trace”
	Ensure an e-log is kept for every centre visit. Each visitor must provide contact details in case of the need to “track and trace”
	Ensure all data is kept and processed in line with national laws on data protection

Shopping List

List the things you need to buy or ensure you have access to:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HANDWASHING & HYGIENE
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CLEANING
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PPE
<input type="checkbox"/>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ITEMS FOR SHIP VISITING
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ITEMS FOR CENTRE OPERATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OTHER
<input type="checkbox"/>	

External COVID-19 Resources

The following websites and links may prove helpful in your planning and in seeking information.

World Health Organisation – COVID-19	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019
World Health Organisation - Posters	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public
IMO Circular on Related Guidelines for ensuring a safe shipboard interface between ship and shore-based personnel	http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/COVID%20CL%204204%20adds/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.16%20-%20Coronavirus%20(Covid%2019)%20-%20Covid-19%20Related%20Guidelines%20For%20Ensuring%20A%20Safe%20Shipboard.pdf
The International Labour Organisation	https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm
The International Christian Maritime Association	www.icma.as
The International Chamber of Shipping – Free COVID-19 resources	https://www.ics-shipping.org/free-resources/covid-19
The ITF Seafarers' Trust Country Information for Seafarers	https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/embed/covid-19-country-information-seafarers
EU Healthy Gateways Information on PPE	https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EU_HG_PPE_Overview_24_04_2020_F.pdf?ver=2020-04-27-141221-467

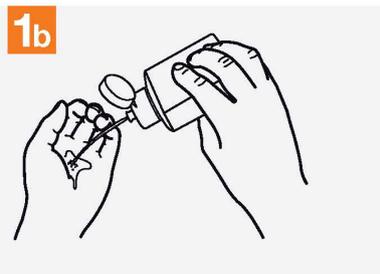
How to Handrub?

RUB HANDS FOR HAND HYGIENE! WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED

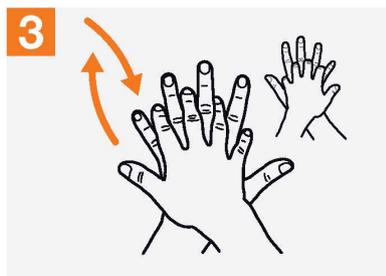
 **Duration of the entire procedure: 20-30 seconds**



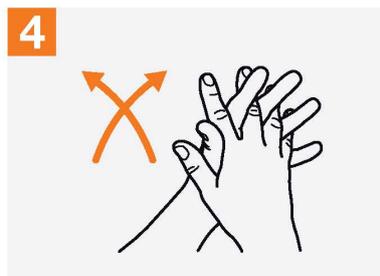
1a Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces;



2 Rub hands palm to palm;



3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



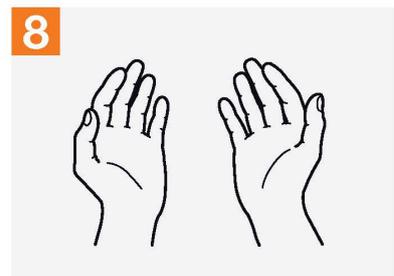
5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



8 Once dry, your hands are safe.



World Health Organization

Patient Safety

A World Alliance for Safer Health Care

SAVE LIVES

Clean Your Hands

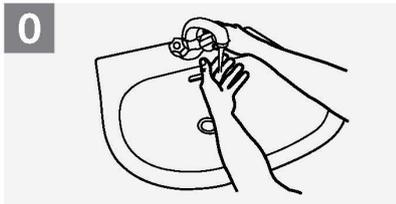
All reasonable precautions have been taken by the World Health Organization to verify the information contained in this document. However, the published material is being distributed without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied. The responsibility for the interpretation and use of the material lies with the reader. In no event shall the World Health Organization be liable for damages arising from its use. WHO acknowledges the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), in particular the members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.

May 2009

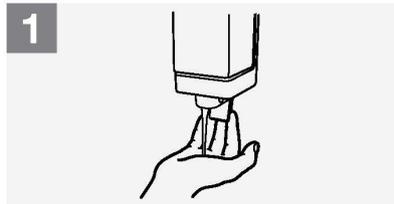
How to Handwash?

WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED! OTHERWISE, USE HANDRUB

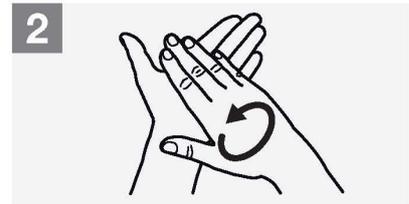
 **Duration of the entire procedure: 40-60 seconds**



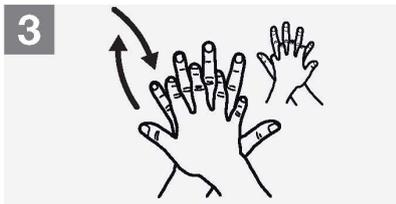
Wet hands with water;



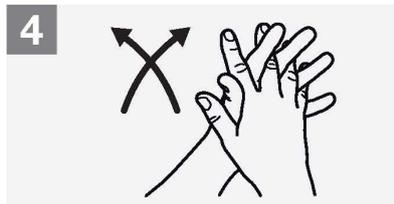
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



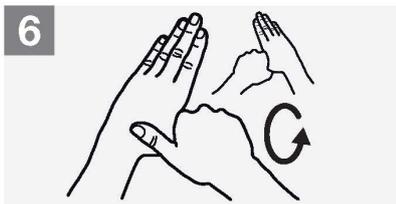
Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



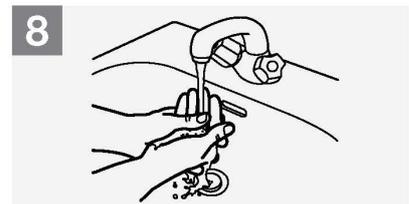
Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



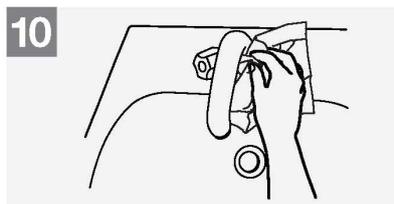
Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



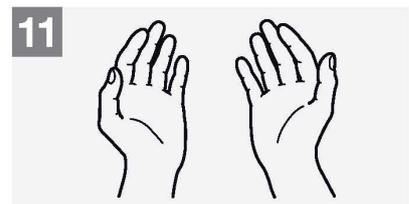
Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



Your hands are now safe.



World Health Organization

Patient Safety

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SAVE LIVES
Clean Your Hands

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WHO acknowledges the Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève (HUG), in particular the members of the Infection Control Programme, for their active participation in developing this material.

May 2009

A Sample Risk Register

A risk register helps to identify risks or hazards in your ministry and ways to eliminate or mitigate them. The Process is simple:

Risk: Identify the Risk/Hazard	Impact: What will happen if nothing is done about it?	Impact Level: Score the Risk between 1 (low) and 5 (high)	Probability: Score the Risk between 1 (low) and 5 (high)	Priority: Impact x Probability. Work on the highest rated first	Mitigation: What action can you take to mitigate or eliminate the Risk?	Owner: Who will be responsible for monitoring the Risk (staff or Board)

My Notes