

# Brazil health agency confirms COVID-19 cases in cruise ship

January 3 2022, by Débora Álvares



Passengers disembark from the cruise ship 'MSC Preziosa', in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, after Brazil's Sanitary Agency has confirmed more cases of COVID-19 on board. Rio's Health Secretariat said that those living in the city or nearby regions will be quarantined in their homes. Those who live outside the state will be isolated in hotels. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado

Passengers on the cruise ship MSC Preziosa had to wait more than six hours to disembark at Rio de Janeiro Sunday due to an inspection by Brazilian health authorities that confirmed 28 cases of COVID-19 on board - 26 passengers and two crew members.

Rio's health secretariat said in a statement that among those who tested positive, people living in Rio or the nearby region can quarantine themselves at home. Others must first isolate in hotels, and there was no information provided about who would pay for the costs.

After the inspection, MSC Preziosa was authorized by federal health regulator Anvisa to continue operating. Other passengers were waiting to embark for Bahia. The ship had set out from the Brazilian resort of Búzios.

In a statement to the Associated Press, MSC said it applies "protocols that are stricter and stronger than in any other travel industry," adding that only vaccinated people are allowed to board, and that it conducts regular tests on passengers and [crew members](#).

The company also said that when identified, positive cases are isolated in cabins with balconies and disembarked at the first ship stop. Cases identified on ships "are only a small fraction of those identified on land," the company said. It declined to say how many passengers were on board or what their nationalities were.



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Passengers wait in line to board at the cruise ship 'MSC Preziosa', in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, after Brazil's Sanitary Agency has confirmed more cases of COVID-19 on board. Rio's Health Secretariat said that those living in the city or nearby regions will be quarantined in their homes. Those who live outside the state will be isolated in hotels. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado



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Passengers arrive for boarding at the cruise ship 'MSC Preziosa', in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, after Brazil's Sanitary Agency has confirmed more cases of COVID-19 on board. Rio's Health Secretariat said that those living in the city or nearby regions will be quarantined in their homes. Those who live outside the state will be isolated in hotels. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado



A passenger arrives to board at the cruise ship 'MSC Preziosa', in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, after Brazil's Sanitary Agency has confirmed more cases of COVID-19 on board. Rio's Health Secretariat said that those living in the city or nearby regions will be quarantined in their homes. Those who live outside the state will be isolated in hotels. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado





Passengers converse on the balconies of the cabins of the cruise ship 'MSC Preziosa', in the Port Area of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, after Brazil's Sanitary Agency has confirmed more cases of COVID-19 on board. Rio's Health Secretariat said that those living in the city or nearby regions will be quarantined in their homes. Those who live outside the state will be isolated in hotels. Credit: AP Photo/Bruna Prado

Epidemiologist Denise Garrett, who is also vice president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, said the atmosphere on [cruise ships](#) is "very conducive to transmission, especially now with omicron."

"There are thousands of people sharing the same indoor air," she said. "It should be avoided at all costs."



The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last week raised the risk of COVID-19 spreading on cruises to the maximum level, saying COVID-19 can spread easily among people on board, even among those fully vaccinated.

Anvisa has issued a recommendation to Brazil's [health ministry](#) that the travel season be suspended. The ministry said in a note it "will evaluate the appropriate measures together with the ministries related to the issue."

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