



For Immediate Release

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**American Queen Steamboat Company Using Ochsner Health's
Safe to Return Employer Solutions to Safely Return Guests and Crew
as part of New Health and Safety Protocols**

NEW ALBANY, Ind., May 22, 2020 –[American Queen Steamboat Company \(AQSC\)](#), a Hornblower® Family Company, is partnering with [Ochsner Health](#) by implementing Ochsner's Safe to Return Employer Solutions to help improve and maintain a healthy and safe return of guests and crew to its paddlewheelers.

Ochsner Health will conduct assessments of the *American Queen*, *American Duchess* and *American Countess* and will work with AQSC on implementing disease prevention and mitigation strategies across the entire AQSC fleet. Another hallmark of this program is the real-time access to infectious disease experts within the Ochsner Health system should a need arise. AQSC will be announcing details on a healthcare partner for its Pacific Northwest itineraries on board the *American Empress* in the coming weeks.

As part of Ochsner Safe to Return Employer Solutions, Ochsner Health will reassess the AQSC vessels on a monthly basis and provide updated recommendations as needed based on scientific data and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations.

As a result of the partnership with Ochsner Health recommendations, AQSC will implement the following actions:

- Offer a **Virtual Employer Clinic**, powered by TytoCare, so employees and guests, if necessary, can virtually talk to a healthcare professional without disembarking.
- Provide access to **infectious disease experts** within the Ochsner Health system.
- Utilize Ochsner Health personnel to oversee the **pre-boarding screening process and assessments** on all itineraries embarking in New Orleans, LA. AQSC will identify healthcare partners for the additional turn ports of call.
- Engage Ochsner Health to conduct **monthly assessments of the AQSC health and safety protocols** and make adjustments as needed.

“We are thrilled to have this ongoing support from Ochsner Health and their expert-team of providers,” shares John Waggoner, founder and CEO of American Queen Steamboat Company. “By partnering with Ochsner Health, we are able to provide added preventative measures to our already increased diligence in guest and crew safety.”

Along with the Ochsner partnership, AQSC unveiled new [health and safety protocols](#) being implemented across all vessels including pre-cruise screenings, crew screenings, updated boarding processes, increased sanitation measures, enhanced technologies and an onboard tele-health capability. Technology highlights include MXP Protect, which incorporates the use of thermal imaging. These new policies and practices will be implemented when AQSC resumes its operations.

Victory Cruise Lines, operated by AQSC, will implement similar health and safety protocols as the AQSC fleet when it resumes its operations on the Great Lakes and Canadian Maritimes.

To ensure the safety and comfort of both guests and crew, AQSC and VCL are staying current with guidance, mandates and public health advancements communicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), United State Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), United State Coast Guard (USGC) and the municipalities each vessel visits.

Below you will find an overview of the new health and safety protocols. For more information on AQSC's policies, please visit: www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com/health-and-safety-protocols. For more information on VCL's policies, please visit: <https://www.victorycruiselines.com/health-and-safety/>.

Pre-Cruise Screening

Prior to embarkation, all guests and crew will be required to complete a health and safety questionnaire and a medical travel screening survey. At the pre-cruise hotel, medical personnel will perform a health screening on each guest, including a temperature check, and will deny boarding to anyone that may pose a health risk. The 24-hour window between the pre-cruise hotel stay and vessel embarkation allows the AQSC and VCL crew and guests time to make any necessary adjustments following the pre-cruise screening. No guests or crew will be allowed to check-in directly on the vessel without having completed the above described pre-cruise screenings. Details on each vessel's onboard sanitation and safety procedures will also be provided to all guests and crew prior to boarding.

Boarding Procedures and Gangway Screening

Once guests and crew are cleared during the pre-cruise screening process, embarkation will be conducted via one controlled access point where thermal cameras will take the temperature of each guest and crew member boarding the vessel in addition to the manual temperature checks completed in the pre-cruise screening. The onboard medical representative will conduct the gangway screening, complete the health and safety survey and provide reports to the Master and each Hotel Director.

AQSC and VCL will require a 24-hour notice for anyone that needs access to the vessel and has not been pre-screened during hotel screening, including guests, crew, visitors and contractors.

Screening and Monitoring During the Cruise

Trained staff will maintain protocols and observe guests and crew for symptoms throughout the voyage. The Master and medical representative will respond to medical calls, practice quarantine procedures and utilize shoreside medical facilities for passenger and crew as necessary. If a guest or crewmember has an elevated temperature, they will be evaluated by the medical representative before being allowed to board the vessel. Any guest or crew who has an elevated temperature, shows signs or symptoms of illness or that vessel management feels needs further assessment will be sent directly to a local medical care partner for evaluation and testing. In addition, guests or crew who test positive for any contagious condition will not be allowed to rejoin the vessel.

The vessels' access points will be monitored and controlled at all times. Utilizing the cutting-edge technology from MXP Protect, AQSC will be able to efficiently and effectively monitor all critical areas of operation with thermal scanning. All guests and crew will be passively monitored by thermal imaging when returning to the vessel in addition to random manual screening. In the event of a confirmed positive case on board, AQSC and VCL will manually screen 100% of all individuals coming and going from the vessel.

Onboard and Additional Medical Resources

Through the partnership with Ochsner Health, guests and crew can take advantage of the onsite Virtual Employer Clinic, powered by TytoCare. The Virtual Employer Clinic allows guests and crew to remotely see an Ochsner Health physician without leaving the vessel. In addition, each vessel in the AQSC and VCL fleets carries a certified onboard medical representative to assist guests with urgent medical care, implement quarantine procedures and coordinate shoreside medical assistance. The tele-health capabilities combined with the already onboard medical representative provides guests with a heightened level of onboard care. In an emergency, AQSC and VCL have the ability to quickly transfer guests and crew to emergency medical services ashore by coordinating pick-up at municipal landings and docking facilities.

Cleaning Procedures

Increased sanitation of all contact services such as handrails, tables, chairs, desks, work surfaces, door handles, telephones and elevator controls in both the front and back of house will be conducted hourly with an all-chlorine solution that meets or exceeds EPA standards. All public and crew spaces will be fogged twice daily and multi-purpose disinfecting wipes will be made available in staterooms for all guests.

Restaurant Areas: All self-service buffets are suspended, and waiters will be stationed at buffet stations to serve food to guests. Crew will minimize guest touch points by manually entering cabin numbers rather than using guest swipe cards and by replacing all communal items such as salt/pepper pots, sugar bowls and butter bowls with single serve packets. All tables, chairs and countertops will be sanitized on the hour or when vacated by the guest, and menus will be printed on single-use paper and discarded after each use. All table items will be removed each time a table is vacated. All crockery, glassware and cutlery will be washed even if unused.

Bar Department: All self-service areas are now suspended, and individual bowls of bar snacks will be available upon request. Increased sanitation in accordance with the restaurant guidelines outlined above will also be implemented.

Deck Department: The Chief Officer will arrange for all deck rails, public swimming pools, the gangway and other external hardpoints to be thoroughly sanitized at least every hour when in use, with the gangway sanitation occurring every half-hour when in use.

Shore Excursions and Motorcoaches: A reduced number of guests will be transported on each motorcoach, targeting a maximum 52% capacity, to allow for adequate space between individuals. All bus seats, windows and handrails will be sanitized with an EPA-recommended solution each day before the first guests arrive and every hour when in use. Liquid hand sanitation dispensers will be available at the door for all guests. All shore excursions will be conducted within the guidelines of the local municipalities visited.

Staterooms: Cabin staff will clean and sanitize all surfaces of the stateroom and utilize an EPA-approved disinfectant spray, as well as the cutting-edge Protexus Electrostatic Sprayer equipment to fog staterooms daily.

For more information, visit www.americanqueensteamboatcompany.com or www.victorycruiselines.com, or call a professional travel agent.

American Queen Steamboat Company

American Queen Steamboat Company (AQSC) is the operator of the U.S.-flagged [*American Queen*](#), the largest, most opulent riverboat in the world. Longer than a football field, towering six decks in height and laced with fanciful gingerbread trim, she is a marvel of modern engineering. Her journeys through the heartland offer a unique perspective on America's history, culture and landscape with convenient departures from some of America's most iconic river port cities, including Memphis, New Orleans, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, St. Louis and Minneapolis. In April 2014, AQSC began serving the Pacific Northwest with the opulence and grandeur of the [*American Empress*](#), and added the [*American Duchess*](#) to the Mississippi River in August 2017. Debuting in 2020, the [*American Countess*](#) will begin cruising the Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee rivers.

Victory Cruise Lines

New Albany-based Victory Cruise Lines operates *Victory I* and *Victory II*, identical 202-passenger ships, and the upcoming newly built 200-passenger vessels, the *Ocean Victory* and *Ocean Discoverer*. Victory Cruise Lines operates all-inclusive cruises to Canada, the Great Lakes and New England, with upcoming itineraries to Alaska in 2021. For more information about Victory Cruise Lines, contact a travel agent or visit www.victorycruiselines.com.

About Ochsner Health

Ochsner Health is a system that delivers health to the people of Louisiana, Mississippi and the Gulf South with a mission to **Serve, Heal, Lead, Educate and Innovate**. Ochsner Health is a not-for-profit committed to giving back to the communities it serves through preventative screenings, health and wellness resources and partnerships with innovative organizations that share our vision. Ochsner Health healed more than 876,000 people from across the globe in 2019, providing the latest medical breakthroughs and therapies, including digital medicine for chronic conditions and telehealth specialty services. Ochsner Health is a national leader, named the top hospital in Louisiana and a top children's hospital by U.S. News & World Report. As Louisiana's leading healthcare educator, Ochsner Health and its partners educate thousands of healthcare professionals annually. Ochsner Health is innovating healthcare by investing in new technologies and research to make world-class care more accessible, affordable, convenient and effective. Ochsner's team of more than 26,000 employees and 4,500 providers are working to reinvent the future of health and wellness in the region. To learn more about Ochsner Health, please visit www.ochsner.org. To transform your health, please visit www.ochsner.org/healthyyou.

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