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CIRCULAR

ICS revised Guidance for the protection of the Health of Seafarers

The Guidance has been produced by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) to help shipping companies and seafarers in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease.

[Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors/Verifiers](#)

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COVID-19 was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China and has since spread to almost all countries of the world. More than 5 million cases have been reported at the time of going to print, including over 300,000 deaths. In most cases, COVID-19 is a mild, self-limiting disease. In some cases, it can cause more severe illness including pneumonia and death. The time from the initial contact with the virus until symptoms develop is usually 5 to 7 days although it can be up to 14 days. In more severe cases, symptoms usually worsen gradually after they first appear.

This significant public health challenge requires close co-operation between flag and port States, shipping companies and other maritime service providers, to protect the health of seafarers (and passengers where applicable) as well as the general public.

Because a ship is a closed environment, after being at sea for 14 days or more, and if no crew show signs of illness, a ship may be considered as free from COVID-19 and therefore safe.

The [Guidance](#) is for use on all types of ship and tries to consider the needs of both cargo and passenger ships. It is recognized that cargo ships are unlikely to have a fully trained doctor or nurse on board and that medical treatment on cargo ships will be provided by a crew member with training to STCW medical requirements.

The Guidance builds on the previous guidance issued in March, providing comprehensive recommendations on:

- Safe port entry;
- Shipboard measures to address risks associated with COVID-19;
- Managing an outbreak of COVID-19 on board ships; and
- Managing other medical issues during COVID-19, including medical assistance to seafarers in ports

The Guidance has also included additional useful documents and forms for seafarers and port authorities:

- 10 posters for use onboard ship;

- Sample seafarer and passenger pre-boarding passenger locator form (PLF);
- Crew self-declaration form to aid safe passage;
- Recommend WHO COVID-19 support and logistics supplies list, including stocks of PPE;
- How to make a non-medical mask;
- Interim guidance on the use of masks in the context of COVID-19;
- Measures to enhance mental health and wellbeing; and
- Ability for seafarers to renew prescriptions.

Act now

ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators should take into consideration the revised Guidance and take all necessary measures and precautions to safeguard the health of the seafarers on board their vessels.