

IMCA Safety Flash 08/20

February 2020

These flashes summarise key safety matters and incidents, allowing wider dissemination of lessons learnt from them. The information below has been provided in good faith by members and should be reviewed individually by recipients, who will determine its relevance to their own operations.

The effectiveness of the IMCA safety flash system depends on receiving reports from members in order to pass on information and avoid repeat incidents. Please consider adding the IMCA secretariat (imca@imca-int.com) to your internal distribution list for safety alerts and/or manually submitting information on specific incidents you consider may be relevant. All information will be anonymised or sanitised, as appropriate.

A number of other organisations issue safety flashes and similar documents which may be of interest to IMCA members. Where these are particularly relevant, these may be summarised or highlighted here. Links to known relevant websites are provided at www.imca-int.com/links. Additional links should be submitted to info@imca-int.com.

Any actions, lessons learnt, recommendations and suggestions in IMCA safety flashes are generated by the submitting organisation. IMCA safety flashes provide, in good faith, safety information for the benefit of members and do not necessarily constitute IMCA guidance, nor represent the official view of the Association or its members.

1 Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak

The Director-General of WHO (the World Health Organisation) and the Secretary-General of IMO (the International Maritime Organization) have jointly issued the attached statement [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.2](#) to assist States in ensuring that health measures are implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.



A Joint Statement on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak - 13 February 2020 -

On 31 December 2019, the first outbreak of what has now become known globally as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China. On 9 January 2020, Chinese authorities reported in the media that the cause of this viral pneumonia was initially identified as a new type of coronavirus, which is different from any other human coronaviruses discovered so far.

Following the advice provided by the Emergency Committee convened under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) on 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations.

WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and the global community on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak. Based on recommendations developed by the WHO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued Circular Letter No.4204 of 31 January 2020 to provide information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Following the advice of the Emergency Committee, the WHO Director General did not recommend any travel or trade restriction. Countries are stepping up their efforts in line with WHO's recommendations for preparedness and response to this public health risk. At the same time, additional measures are being adopted by countries, ranging from delayed port clearance or refusal of entry, which may cause severe disruption of international maritime traffic, in particular affecting ships, their crews, passengers and cargo.

WHO is working in close consultation with IMO and other partners to assist States in ensuring that health measures be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

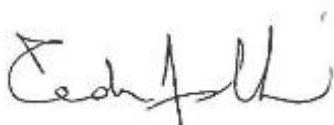
In this connection, WHO and IMO call upon all States to respect the requirements of “free pratique” for ships (IHR (2005) article 28) and the principles of proper care for all travelers and the prevention of unnecessary delays to ships and to persons and property on board, while recognizing the need to prevent the introduction or spread of disease.

IHR States Parties have committed to providing a public health response to the international spread of disease “in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade”. Further, IMO’s Convention on the Facilitation of Maritime Traffic (commonly known as the “FAL Convention”) states that non-Parties to the IHR shall endeavor to apply the IHR to international shipping.

Accordingly, measures interfering with international maritime traffic are subject to provisions of the IHR (2005), including the specific requirements set out in Article 43. Further, it is essential that States Parties implement the IHR with full respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone, as stated in Article 3(1). The principles of avoiding unnecessary restrictions or delay on port entry to ships, persons and property on board are also embodied in Articles I and V and section 6 of the annex of the FAL Convention. IHR and IMO regulations must be applied in a consistent manner to secure their common objectives.

In particular, flag State Authorities, port State authorities and control regimes, companies and ship masters should cooperate, in the current context of the outbreak, to ensure that where appropriate, passengers can be embarked and disembarked, cargo operations can occur, ships can enter and depart shipyards for repair and survey, stores and supplies can be loaded, and crews can be exchanged.

The World Health Organization and the International Maritime Organization stand ready to assist and support countries and the maritime industry in responding to the challenges to shipping posed by the current outbreak of novel coronavirus.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General
World Health Organization



Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization

Members may wish to refer to:

- ♦ [Corona Virus Outbreak](#) (IMCA SF 04/20)

2 Impact of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak on Singapore-Registered Ships

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) have issued [Shipping Circular No. 3 of 2020](#) relating to the impact of COVID-19 on Singapore-registered ships. It is applicable to Ship owners, managers, operators, masters of Singapore-registered ships, recognised organisations, agents and the general shipping community.

The circular notes the following: “*The MPA understands that in view of the ongoing COVID-19 situation, owners and managers of Singapore-registered ships (SRS) are facing challenges in meeting various statutory requirements under the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Act (the MLC Act), the Merchant Shipping Act and the subsidiary legislations.*

These challenges may include the timely repatriation of seafarers onboard SRS at the end of the period in the seafarer’s employment agreement (SEA), deployment of seafarers who are not able to obtain revalidation from

training institutes for their expiring certifications, inability to obtain shipyard dry-docking services, inability to carry out mandatory periodical surveys, audits and inspections in time, etc.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) empathises with the situation faced by the owners and managers of SRS and desires to take a pragmatic approach to assist the industry in overcoming these challenges.”

The circular goes on to deal with a pragmatic approach (in the face of COVID-19) to a number of issues including the following:

- ◆ Extension of sea service beyond contract period;
- ◆ Extension of sea service period beyond qualification revalidation deadline;
- ◆ Extension of mandatory surveys, audits and expiry of statutory certificates.

Members may wish to refer to:

- ◆ [Corona Virus Outbreak](#) (IMCA SF 04/20)

3 Statement on COVID-19 from UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

The United Arab Emirates Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation issued a statement on the 24th February 2020 detailing a travel ban to Iran and Thailand following recent concerns on the new coronavirus, COVID-19, outbreaks in these countries. The statement read: *“In light of the UAE's efforts to monitor and contain the spread of the new coronavirus, COVID-19, and in the interest of general public safety and health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has issued a travel ban, calling on all UAE citizens to not travel to Iran and Thailand at present and up until further notice.”*

Furthermore, the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) has recently changed the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) case definition to include the following countries:

- ◆ China
- ◆ Hong Kong
- ◆ South Korea
- ◆ Iran
- ◆ Japan
- ◆ Singapore
- ◆ Italy
- ◆ Thailand

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF

- ◆ Minimize close contact with people with respiratory illness, like coughing or sneezing. Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter.
- ◆ Cover your mouth and nose with a bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of the tissue properly. Wash your hands.
- ◆ Wash your hands regularly. Use soap & water or alcohol hand gels. Wash for 20 seconds using correct technique. Wash hands after contacting respiratory secretions or contaminated objects.
- ◆ Avoid sharing personal items such as utensils, toothbrushes, and towels especially with sick persons.
- ◆ Avoid travel to areas with high possibility of contacting COVID-19. Do not travel if you are sick.
- ◆ Stay indoors if you are coughing or sneezing. Consult a doctor.
- ◆ Cook eggs and meats thoroughly and do not touch wild or farm animals.
- ◆ Get information from accredited sources and adhere to advisories from Health Authorities.

In light of the above, Dubai Petroleum Establishment and Dubai Supply Authority, as a precautionary measure have, with immediate effect, restricted the movement of personnel in order to protect people and operations. In order to achieve this, all personnel will complete a COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire, and their temperature will be taken (see attachment) prior to entering company operations/facilities. Any personnel answering ‘Yes’, to any of the screening questions, or found to have a temperature above normal will be referred for further evaluation.