

The impact of COVID-19 on SIRE and OVID inspections – FAQs

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, OCIMF has worked with members and industry partners to respond to the challenge of ensuring the continued prevention of harm to people or the environment in the marine industry under what are unprecedented circumstances.

To keep stakeholders updated on guidance provided by OCIMF, Guidance Bulletins and updates have been shared regularly as the situation has changed and evolved.

The key measures implemented by OCIMF to support users of the Ship Inspection Report (SIRE) and Offshore Vessel Inspections Database (OVID) Programmes, which are critical tools for ensuring the safety of tankers, barges and offshore vessels are recapped below.

It also provides responses to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding OCIMF's position on inspections in relation to COVID-19.

Overview of key measures implemented by OCIMF in response to COVID-19

The health and safety of all those involved in the inspection process is of the utmost importance to OCIMF. This includes the vessel operators and crews, the inspectors, report users and OCIMF members.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, OCIMF has implemented the following measures:

- Increased the availability of SIRE and OVID reports from 12 months to 18 months. This gives report users a more extensive choice of available screening information and reduces the need to renew inspections in the short-term.
- Set up a Task Force to investigate alternative inspection strategies and methods in the short and mid-term to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the Inspection Programmes and users, including vessel crew/operators and inspectors.
- Issued comprehensive Inspection guidance aimed at enhancing the safety and protection of all programme participants. Guidance is updated regularly.
- Suspended all Inspector training and accreditation activities, including Audited and Accompanied Inspections.
- Engaged with other associations in the oil and gas industry to jointly identify and address the impact on the maritime industry due to COVID-19 pandemic.

OCIMF is introducing a new facility that allows submitting companies to identify where inspectors are located, in relation to specific terminals. This allows Submitting Companies to choose inspectors residing closest to the planned port of inspection reducing the distances inspectors would travel.

Full details of the guidance shared in OCIMF's COVID-19 Bulletins is provided in the news section of the OCIMF website, here: <https://www.ocimf.org/news/news-articles>





FAQs about OCIMF's current position on Inspections

What are SIRE and OVID Inspection programmes?

The Ship Inspection Report (SIRE) Programme is a unique tanker risk assessment tool used by charterers, ship operators, terminal operators and government bodies.

The Offshore Vessel Inspections Database (OVID) programme provides a database of offshore inspections broadly following the format of SIRE but with a specific focus on the different processes and procedures applicable to the offshore industry.

How are SIRE and OVID Inspections conducted?

SIRE and OVID Programmes each have large databases containing up-to-date technical and operational information about tankers, barges and offshore vessels. This information is used by prospective charterers and others to get a more comprehensive understanding of how these vessels are managed and maintained in terms of safety and environmental protection. This data is often a critical factor in the choice of a vessel to be employed.

Vessel operators will request an OCIMF member to commission an inspection. If agreed, the OCIMF member will employ an Accredited Inspector to carry out the inspection based on a standard Inspection Questionnaire. The subsequent Inspection Report is uploaded to the SIRE or OVID database where it remains available for all OCIMF members to access and interrogate using their own risk assessment criteria to judge the level of safety and environmental risk associated with a particular vessel.

Given COVID-19, are Inspections still being carried out?

Vessel operators and others are still requesting inspections and in many cases, these are being performed without difficulty. However, there are regions where it has proved difficult to get an Inspector into a port, or a terminal, or to arrange transport. In general, OCIMF has seen around a 20% reduction in inspections due primarily to COVID-19 prevention measures.

Will the requirement for Inspections be postponed until COVID-19 is no longer a threat?

Inspections are conducted mainly at the request of the vessel operator. Quite rightly, vessel operators and charterers must continue to uphold safety and environmental standards throughout the COVID-19 situation. OCIMF does not commission or arrange inspections. An inspection request is made to an OCIMF member by the vessel operator and the request is either accepted or rejected by the member. If the member wishes to proceed for safety reasons, they should liaise with the vessel operator to ensure both the operator and vessel crew are willing and able to conduct the inspection and to agree on health and safety precautions, including any COVID-19 precautions that are in line with the WHO recommendations.





However, OCIMF is extending the availability of Inspection Reports on its database for 18 months (rather than 12 months) to help those who are finding it challenging to arrange an Inspection.

How is OCIMF protecting those involved in Inspections?

OCIMF has issued very clear guidelines which are regularly updated and available from the OCIMF website. This advice has been developed to protect everyone involved in the inspection programme and includes compliance with all local laws on PPE requirements and social distancing. The concerns of the inspector and the vessel's crew must be taken into account and if they don't feel safe with an inspector coming onboard then the inspection should not go ahead.

Is OCIMF considering additional measures ?

OCIMF has convened a Task Force that is urgently investigating alternative ways of carrying out Inspections while continuing to provide acceptable levels of assurance. New methods might include remote inspections.

Like all organisations, OCIMF must balance the benefits of implementing any new practices against the likelihood of the current COVID-19 restrictions being eased in the short to medium term.

