

**Sayı** : 38591462 - 010.07.03 - 2020 - 1171

10/04/2020

Konu : ICS'nin COVID-19 Hakkındaki Güncel Duyurusu**Sirküler No :445**

Sayın Üyemiz,

İlgi : ICS'nin 08.04.2020 tarihli ve COVID-19(20)32 sayılı yazısı.

Uluslararası Deniz Ticaret Odası(International Chamber of Shipping-ICS) tarafından gönderilen ilgi yazı ile Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'nün(World Health Organization-WHO) yayınladığı ve **08 Nisan 2020 tarihi** itibariyle Çin ve diğer ülkelerden bildirilen "Yeni Koronavirüs" (novel coronavirus – COVID-19) akut solunum yolu hastalık vaka tablolarını içeren rapor ile "Yeni Koronavirüs" hakkındaki güncel bilgiler Odamıza iletilmiştir.

ICS tarafından, virüs ve etki durumunun yakından takip edildiği ve haftalık olarak virüsün etkisi, yayılımı ve tedbirler konusunda üyelere yönelik düzenli güncellenmiş rapor sunulacağı belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca, Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'nün daha önce yaptığı açıklamalarda 208 ülkede görülen COVID-19 vakasının, son açıklama itibarıyla 211 ülkeye çıktığı ifade edilmektedir. Buna ilave olarak Dünya Sağlık Örgütü(WHO) tarafından, gemilerin Uluslararası Sağlık Yönetmelikleri'ne uyumu için Uluslararası Denizcilik Örgütü(International Maritime Organization-IMO) ve Uluslararası Çalışma Örgütü(International Labour Organization-ILO) tavsiyelerine uyulması gerektiği bildirilmektedir.

Ayrıca, bahse konu yazıda COVID-19 ile ilgili güncel bilgilere ilave olarak, ICS tarafından hazırlanan, denizcilerin gemilere serbest dolaşımının kolaylaştırılmasına yardımcı olmak için hazırlanan taslak belge (Ek-3), ILO hukuk departmanı tarafından hazırlanmış MLC 2006 ve COVID-19 ile ilgili "Sıkça Sorulan Sorular"ı içeren bilgi notu (Ek-4) ve NCMDM ve Radio Medico Norway tarafından geliştirilen interaktif, internet tabanlı COVID-19 değerlendirme uygulaması yer almaktadır.

Bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.

Saygılarımla,

*e-imza*İsmet SALİHOĞLU
Genel Sekreter**Ek:**

- 1- İlgi Yazı Türkçe Tercümesi (5 sayfa)
- 2- İlgi Yazı (8 sayfa)



Bu belge, 5070 sayılı Elektronik İmza Kanuna göre Güvenli Elektronik İmza ile İmzalanmıştır.

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uygulanmaktadır.



- 3- Denizcilerin Serbest Dolaşımını Hakkındaki Taslak Belge Şablonu (2 sayfa)
4- ILO Bilgi Notu (18 sayfa)

Dağıtım:**Gereği:**

- Tüm Üyeler (WEB sayfası ve e-posta ile)
- Türk Armatörler Birliği
- S.S. Gemi Armatörleri Mot. Taş. Koop.
- Vapur Donatanları ve Acenteleri Derneği
- İMEAK DTO Meslek Komite Bşk.
- İMEAK DTO Şubeleri ve Temsilcilikleri
- GİSBİR
- Yalova Altınova Tersane Gir. San. ve Tic. A.Ş.
- TÜRKLİM
- KOSDER
- Gemi Sahibi Firmalar
- Marinalar

Bilgi:

- Meclis Başkanlık Divanı
- Yönetim Kurulu Başkan ve Üyeleri
- İMEAK DTO Çevre Komisyonu



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Sayılarla Son Durum.

Bölge	Vaka Sayısı	Vefat Sayısı	Risk Düzeyi
Küresel	1279722	72614	Çok yüksek
Batı Pasifik	113641	3892	Çok yüksek
Avrupa	686338	52809	Çok yüksek
Güneydoğu Asya	9132	362	Çok yüksek
Doğu Akdeniz	78565	4149	Çok yüksek
Amerika Kıtası	384242	11097	Çok yüksek
Afrika	7092	294	Çok yüksek

7 Nisan 2020 Tarihi İtibarıyla En Fazla COVID-19 Vakası Tespit Edilen İlk 12 Ülke.

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri
İspanya
İtalya
Fransa
Almanya
Çin
İran
İngiltere
Türkiye
İsviçre
Belçika
Hollanda

Günlük istatistiklere dahil edilmek üzere WHO'ya rapor edilen vaka sayısı, bildirildikleri süreye bağlı olarak değişkenlik gösterebilmektedir. ICS, farklı medya organları tarafından rapor edilen vaka sayılarını takip etmekle birlikte, WHO verilerinin resmi rakamlar olarak kullanılmasının önem arz ettiği belirtilmektedir.

Özellikle Afrika, Güney ve Orta Amerika ile Karayipler olmak üzere birçok ülkenin koronavirüs test kitlerine erişim sağlayamadığı bilinmektedir. Bu nedenle belirtilen ülkelerde virüsün bulaşma durumu bilinmemekte olup dikkatli olunması gerekmektedir.

Ayrıca, Latin Amerika ülkelerinde ve Afrika'da vaka tespit edilen yeni ülkelerin olduğu belirtilmektedir.

[WHO-COVID-19 gösterge tablosundan](#) ülkelerle ilgili detaylı bilgiye erişilebilmektedir. Bazı ülkeler, ilk başta tespit edilen vakaları geçici olarak çözmüş gibi gözükse de, bu ülkelerde de potansiyel riskin devam ettiği göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

ICS'nin COVID-19 Sürecinde Sağladığı Destek.

- Salgın ile ilgili durum ICS tarafından günlük olarak takip edilmekte olup, üyelere konu hakkında gerekli tavsiyeler sunulmaktadır.
- Tüm büyük yardım kuruluşları ve Uluslararası Taşımacılık İşçileri Federasyonu (The International Transportation Workers' Federation-ITF) katılımıyla, koronavirüs özel çalışma grubu toplantısı haftada bir ICS koordinesinde düzenlenmektedir. Bahse konu grup Salı günleri toplanmakta olup, ortaya çıkan önemli konular ilgili birlik ve hükümetlere aktarılmakta, acil durumlardaki ihtiyaçları karşılamak üzere başarılı bir şekilde çalışmaktadır.
- ICS tarafından, çeşitli konularda işbirliği alanlarını görüşmek üzere Perşembe günü bir araya gelen Birleşmiş Milletler ajansları ile sektörler arası bir grup kurulmuştur. Bu grup özellikle sertifikasyon ile ilgili hususların tartışılmasında ve gemi personeli değişiklikleriyle ilgili endişelerin dile getirilmesinde etkili olmaktadır. Ayrıca bahse konu grup IMO, ILO ve WHO tarafından hazırlanan gerekli sirkülerin yayınlanmasını sağlamaktan da sorumludur.
- Ayrıca ICS, kriz nedeniyle ihtiyaç sahiplerine yardım ulaştırılması hususunu tespit edebilmek için fon sağlayıcılarla birlikte çalışmaktadır. Bunun neticesinde, çeşitli yardım kuruluşları tarafından, denizciler ve aileleri için yardım kampanyalarına katılanlara kolaylık sağlamaya yönelik olarak ihtiyaç duyulan acil bağış fonları oluşturulmuştur.
- ICS, denizcilik şirketlerine hangi limanların açık olduğu, koronavirüs ile ilgili bilinmesi ve yapılması gerekenler, bayrak devletleri, istihdam sağlayan devletler ve liman devletleri tarafından verilen, gemiler ile personelin yanı sıra toplum için gerekli eylemler hakkında tavsiye ve güncel bilgiler içeren bir portal (e-room) kurmuştur. Portal kullanıcılarından kendi ülkeleri ile ilgili bilgileri paylaşması istenmektedir.
- **IMO tarafından, [COVID-19'a özel bir web sitesi](#) kurulmuştur.**
- Uluslararası Deniz Ticaret Odası aşağıdaki hususların yerine getirilmesi önemle tavsiye etmektedir.
 - Teste tabi tutulması gereken veya COVID-19 test sonuçları pozitif çıkan mürettebata ait bilgilerin ICS ile paylaşılması,(Yolcu ve yük gemilerinde, salgından etkilenen mürettebatın sayısını izlemek ve sonraki süreçte uygun önlemlerin alınmasını sağlamak için bahse konu hususları WHO ve IMO'ya bildirmek önem arz etmektedir.)
 - Gerekli tıbbi malzemenin tedarik sürecinde karşılaşılan sorunlar hakkında bilgi sağlanması,(Liste güncellenecek olup belirlenen malzemelerin elde edilmesinin mümkün olmaması durumunda potansiyel alternatiflerin belirlenmesi için WHO'dan tavsiye alınacaktır.)
 - Özellikle personel değişimi ile ilgili diğer istihdam ve personel milliyeti tespitine ilişkin hususların bildirilmesi,
 - Uluslararası düzeyde gündeme getirilmesi gerekebilecek salgına ilişkin ortaya çıkan diğer hususlar hakkında bilgi verilmesidir.

ILO Bilgi Notu.

Uluslararası Çalışma Örgütü (International Labour Organisation-ILO) tarafından hazırlanan bilgi notu Ek'te sunulmuştur. Bahse konu bilgi notu ILO hukuk departmanı tarafından hazırlanmış olup, MLC 2006 ve COVID-19 ile ilgili "Sıkça Sorulan Sorular"ı içermektedir.

Koronavirus - Küresel Liman Kısıtlamaları Haritası.

ICS, üyelerini ve denizcilik şirketlerini, Küresel Liman Kısıtlamaları ile muhtemel limanları hakkında web sitesinin takip edilmesi konusunda teşvik etmektedir. Ülkeler açısından, Çin limanlarında bulunan gemi ve mürettebatı üzerinde koronavirüs yayılmasıyla mücadele etmeye yönelik yeni kısıtlamalar getirilmesi güç bir süreç olacaktır. Bu kapsamda, Wilhelmsen Ships Service tarafından, “Coronavirus-Global Port Restrictions Map” online uygulaması geliştirilmiştir. Uygulamada bulunan liman veya ülkelerin üzerine gelerek tüm konumlardaki kısıtlamalar görüntülenmektedir. Harita, günde iki kez güncellenmektedir ve önceki 24 saat için güncellemelerin bulunduğu yerler öne çıkarılmaktadır. Bahse konu harita uygulamasına <https://wilhelmsen.com/ships-agency/campaigns/coronavirus/coronavirus-map/> adresinden erişim sağlanabilmektedir.

Uluslararası Limanlar Birliği (International Association of Ports and Harbors-IAPH) tarafından sunulan haritaya <https://sustainableworldports.org/world-ports-covid19-information-portal/> adresinden, ICS'nin önerdiği bir diğer Liman Kısıtlamaları Haritasına ise <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiN2I3MmJiYmYtYmYyNy00MGVklWI0ZTktZDZmNTY4ZTBiMzM3IiwidCI6IjM5MGZkN2Q4LWUzMjktNDdiYy04MmY4LWM5NTY4NTg5MzYyYyIsImMiOjEwfQ%3D%3D> adresinden ulaşılabilmektedir.

Hindistan Uyruklu Denizcilerin Ülkelerine Geri Dönmesinde Karşılaşılan Zorluklar.

Devletlerin uyguladıkları kısıtlamalar nedeniyle, şirketlerin denizcilerini Hindistan'a geri gönderme sürecinde yaşadıkları zorluklar ICS tarafından bilinmektedir. Hindistan Ulusal Armatörler Birliği (Indian National Shipowner's Association-INSA), bu süreçten etkilenen Hint denizcileri, buldukları gemi ve çalıştıkları şirketler adına Hindistan Denizcilik Genel Müdürü ile temasa geçmek istemektedir. Gemi personeline yardım sağlanması hususunu Hindistan Denizcilik Genel Müdürlüğü ile görüşecek INSA CEO'su Sn. Anil DEVLİ'ye (ceo@insa.org.in), gemi personeli ve geri dönüş tarihleri bilgilerini içeren listenin gönderilmesi talep edilmektedir.

Denizcilerin Gemilere Serbest Dolaşımını Kolaylaştırılmasını Amaçlayan Taslak Belge Şablonu.

Denizcilerin, gemilerine gidip gelmelerinde serbest dolaşımı kolaylaştırmaya yönelik hazırlanmış belge Ek'te yer almaktadır. Bahse konu belgede IMO ve ILO logolarının kullanılması uygun görüldüğü takdirde düzenleme yapılarak yeni versiyonu kullanıma sunulacaktır. Bu sebeple, ICS tarafından yapılacak logo hususunda yapılacak bilgilendirmeye kadar Ek'te bulunan belgenin kullanılması tavsiye edilmektedir. Bu konuda, mümkün olan en kısa sürede geri dönüş yapılacağı bildirilmektedir.

COVID-19 Salgınının Denizciler Üzerindeki Etkisi.

Birçok ülke, COVID-19 salgınından önemli ölçüde etkilenen ülkelere gelen denizciler için vize kısıtlaması ve zorunlu karantina uygulamıştır. Durum hakkında günlük olarak güncellenen ve kapsamlı bilgiler sunan Uluslararası Hava Taşımacılığı Birliği (International Air Transport Association-IATA) [web sitesi](#) ziyaret edilebilir.

Sosyal yardım kuruluşları video konferans yoluyla gemilere sanal ziyaret gerçekleştirme imkanı sunmaya başlamıştır. Denizcilik firmalarının bu imkandan faydalanmaları için bilgilendirilmeleri istenmektedir. Firmaların ayrıca, gemilerindeki personel için aileleriyle

görülebilmelerini kolaylaştırmak amacıyla telefon hizmetlerini ucuzlatmak ya da ücretsiz yapmalarını sağlamak yönünde teşvik edilmeleri tavsiye edilmektedir. ICS, bu süreçte gemi personeli ve ailelerinin ruhsal sağlıkları ile ilgili durumları da yakından takip etmektedir.

Tıbbi Öneriler.

Helse Bergen tarafından oluşturulan yeni bir portal ICS'ye önerilmiştir. NCMDM ve Radio Medico Norway, denizcilerin hasta gemi personelini veya gemideki diğer kişileri değerlendirmelerine yardımcı olmayı amaçlayan etkileşimli, internet tabanlı bir COVID-19 değerlendirme uygulaması geliştirmiştir. Ayrıca, dikkat edilmesi gereken uyarı işaretleri ve TMAS hizmetlerine ne zaman başvurulacağına dair tavsiyeler de dahil olmak üzere muhtemel COVID-19 vakalarının tedavisi hakkında rehberlik sağlayan bahse konu uygulamaya www.covid19atsea.no web adresinden ücretsiz olarak erişim sağlanmaktadır.

Gemide bulunanların kullanması için çok yararlı bir uygulama olduğu düşünülmektedir. Mümkün olduğunca çok kişinin uygulamaya erişim sağlaması için çaba sarfedilmektedir.

Bütün ülkeler, denizcilik ve havacılık da dahil olmak üzere tüm ulaşım sektörleri için geçerli olan WHO Uluslararası Sağlık Düzenlemelerine uymalıdır..

100'den fazla mürettebatı olan gemilerin bir tıp doktoru bulundurmaları gerekirken, uluslararası sefer yapan kargo gemileri ve diğer gemilerde sadece sınırlı ilk yardım ve tıbbi eğitim almış denizciler bulunmaktadır.

ICS tarafından sunulan rehberliğin güncel gelişmeleri yansıtmasının sağlanması için uluslararası kuruluşlarla çalışmaya devam edileceği belirtilmektedir. Mevcut güncel öneriler aşağıda sunulmuştur:

- Teletıp (telefon vasıtasıyla tedavi) hizmetleri, internet ve liman sağlık otoritelerinin tavsiyelerine erişim sağlanması.
- Gemiler İçin Uluslararası Tıbbi Rehber'in bir kopyasının veya gemide bulunması gereken ekipman ve ilaçların listesinin olduğu, tıbbi tavsiyeler içeren, eşdeğer bir ulusal belge bulundurulması.
- Dünya Sağlık Örgütü'nün COVID-19 için önerdiği ekipmanların kontrol edilmesi. Bahse konu ekipmanların çoğu halihazırda ticaret gemilerinde bulunmaktadır ancak test ekipmanı da dahil olmak üzere gemide taşınmayan ekipmanlar liman devleti sağlık görevlileri tarafından sağlanmalıdır.
- Hastalığın yayılmasını önlemek için tıbbi oda mevcut durumda kullanılıyorsa, tercihen tekli kabinlerden yararlanılması.
- **COVID-19 sürecinde Tarama ve Test ile Limanlarda Tıbbi Bakıma Erişim konularında Uluslararası Denizcilik Sağlığı Birliği (International Maritime Health Association-IMHA) tarafından hazırlanmış protokollerin incelenmesi önerilmektedir.**

ICS (COVID-19) Gemi İşletmecileri İçin Denizcilerin Sağlığını Koruma Rehberi.

Bu kapsamlı rehber, COVID-19 salgınının yayılmasını sınırlamak için uluslararası sularda faaliyet gösteren her türlü gemiyi güncel ve etkili bilgilerle desteklemeyi amaçlamaktadır. WHO, IMO, Avrupa Hastalık Önleme ve Kontrol Merkezi (European Centre for Disease

Prevention and Control-ECDC) ve Uluslararası Denizcilik Saęlıęı Birlięi (International Maritime Health Association-IMHA) ile birlikte oluřturulmuř olup, ařaęıda belirtilenler de dahil olmak üzere bir dizi önlemi vurgulamaktadır:

- Liman Giriř Kısıtlamalarının yönetilmesi,
- Denizciler için COVID-19'a yönelik pratik koruyucu önlemler,
- Salgın Yönetim Planı,
- Gemiye binif öncesi tarama,
- řüpheli enfeksiyon vakalarında yapılacak iřlemler gibi konularda eęitim,
- Gemilerdeki denizciler için hijyen önlemleri,
- Yüksek risk durumu yönetimi,
- Vaka yönetimi,
- İzolasyon/karantina,
- Temizlik, dezenfeksiyon ve atık yönetimi.

ICS (COVID-19) Gemi İřletmecileri İçin Denizcilerin Saęlıęını Koruma Rehberi'ne ařaęıdaki adresten ücretsiz olarak ulařılmaktadır.

[https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6](https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-(covid-19)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6)

Bahse konu rehberde gemilerde kullanılabilir, [ICS COVID-19 web sitesinde](#) yer alan ve ücretsiz olarak indirilebilir afifler de bulunmaktadır.

Bahsi geçen afiflerin Fransızca'ya tercüme edilmesine saęladıęı katkılardan dolayı Kanada Deniz Ticaret Odası'na ICS tarafından teřekkür edilmektedir. Afiflerin tercümesine katkıda bulunmak isteyen dięer üye birliklerin ICS iletiřime geçmesi istenmektedir.

Gemilerin Limanlarda Tıbbi Desteęe Eriřimi.

ICS, kruvaziyer gemilerinin belirli ülke limanlarına giremedięi durumlar hakkında bilgileri takip etmektedir. Geliřen her olay WHO'ya bildirilmekte, ülkelerin Uluslararası Saęlık Mevzuatı (International Health Regulations-IHR) kapsamındaki yükümlülüklerini yerine getirmeleri için ICS tarafından teřvik edileceęi ifade edilmektedir. İlgili vakalar hakkında ICS ile bilgi paylařılması istenmektedir.

Semptomları olan denizcilerin karadaki personelden saęlanan tıbbi yardıma eriřemedikleri belirtilmekte olup, bu konuların uluslararası düzeyde gündeme getirilebileceęi durumların farkında olunmasının faydalı olacaęı düşünölmektedir.

Dünya Saęlık Örgütü (WHO).

ICS, hızlı tanımlama, tanı ve vaka yönetimi, hastaların tanımlanması ve takibi, saęlık kurumlarında enfeksiyonun önlenmesi ve kontrolü, yolcular için saęlık önlemlerinin uygulanması, toplumda farkındalık yaratma ve risk iletiřimi gibi kombine halk saęlıęı önlemleri uygulanarak Dünya Saęlık Örgütü'nün COVID-19 stratejik hedeflerini desteklemektedir.



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8 April 2020

COVID-19(20)32

**TO: LABOUR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
ALL MEMBERS & ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
BI WEEKLY MEMBERS MEETING PARTICIPANTS
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION GROUP PARTICIPANTS**

COVID-19 UPDATE AS OF 8TH APRIL 2020

ACTION REQUIRED:

Members are:

- ***Invited to note that due to Easter the next overall status report will be provided on Monday 20th April 2020. This interim report aims to also make members aware of a few other initiatives in the interim.***
- ***Invited to note information provided by WHO last night (5th Ap 2020). This demonstrates a shift to 211 countries now reporting confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the last week compared with 208 countries on Sunday. 145,964 additional cases have now been confirmed globally since the last report issued on Monday. There has also been a climb of 9,830 deaths over the last couple of days. However, it remains important to appreciate that in addition many countries cannot report all cases as they do not have the potential testing equipment so the numbers may be much higher.***
- ***Requested to notify ICS of any matters to be shared with other stakeholders.***

- ***Invited to note the two the draft international facilitation letter for companies to use to help gain clearance for seafarers to both join and leave their ships globally. Please note that this document covers the matters raised in the EU Green Lanes template but EU companies are welcome to use that for European based employees if they prefer***
- ***Invited to note that a new portal produced by NCMDM and Radio Medico Norway has developed as an interactive, internet based COVID-19 assessment tool. Further details are contained later in this circular. Please notify your members of this free tool.***
- ***Invited to note the draft letter template aimed to facilitate free movement for seafarers to and from their vessels attached at Annex 1, which has been prepared to facilitate free movement for seafarers to and from their vessels. ICS is still awaiting confirmation from ILO and IMO whether they also wish to include their logos too so it is suggested to hold off issuing this, unless an immediate repatriation is required, until we have established and advised members if this is the final version or not.***
- ***Invited to note the production of an Information note at Annex 2 from the International Labour Organisation which contains FAQs relating to the MLC 2006 and COVID-19. Members are invited to share this with their member companies.***

SITUATION IN NUMBERS

Area	No of Cases	No of Deaths	Risk level
Globally	1279722	72614	Very high
Western Pacific	113641	3892	Very high
European Region	686338	52809	Very high
South East Asia	9132	362	Very high
Eastern Mediterranean	78565	4149	Very high
Americas Region	384242	11097	Very high
African Region	7092	294	Very high

TOP 12 COUNTRIES WITH CASES AS AT 7th April 2020

United States of America
Spain
Italy
France
Germany
China
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
United Kingdom
Turkey
Switzerland
Belgium
Netherlands

The number of cases reported varies depending on the time they are reported to WHO for inclusion in their daily statistics, so numbers constantly change. ICS is also aware that different media are reporting higher numbers, but it is essential for us to use WHO data as official benchmark numbers.

It is also important to understand that a number of countries, particularly in Africa and South and Central America and the Caribbean still do not have access to testing kits or have an extreme shortage of kits (such as the US and the Philippines) so it is difficult to know how many people have really contracted the virus in these countries. Caution should therefore be taken in this regard.

It is also worth noting that the new countries now identified as having cases are within the Latin American countries and Africa.

To get specific information relating to a country please visit the WHO-covid-19 dashboard. [Link](#)

ICS ASSISTANCE

- ICS is monitoring the situation daily and advising members as and when appropriate.

- ICS is now chairing a weekly coronavirus taskforce group weekly involving all the main welfare agencies and ITF. This group meets on a Tuesday and key issues arising are flagged up to the appropriate agencies/ governments. This group continues to be successful in working collaboratively and responding to immediate needs.
- ICS has also established an inter industry group with the main UN agencies which meets on a Thursday (next meeting to be Thursday after Easter) to discuss areas of cooperation on various matters, this has proven particularly effective in discussing issues raised by the International NGOS and Welfare agencies and trying to ensure a consistent global approach across UN agencies. It has also been responsible for ensuring necessary circulars have been issued by IMO, ILO and WHO.
- ICS has successfully worked with funders to see how assistance can be given to those most in need as a result of the crisis. This has resulted in various charities establishing much needed Emergency donation funds to assist those providing welfare for seafarers and their families.
- An ICS e-room contains advice and up to date information for shipping companies regarding COVID-19, which ports are open, advice from flag States, Labour Supply Countries and port States as to actions required for vessels and their crew members and citizens. Anyone new wishing to subscribe should contact the undersigned. E room users are encouraged to share and post information about their respective countries directly within the - e room.
- IMO has also set up a dedicated website on Covid-19 which is available at [Link](#).
- ICS would be grateful if we could continue to be notified of: -
 - any information regarding crew members undergoing testing or who have tested positive for COVID-19. It is important for us to be able to track the number of crew affected on all ships and to report this to WHO and IMO to ensure appropriate measures are adopted.
 - issues faced in procuring necessary medical supplies. We will update our list and get advice from WHO if certain items are impossible to obtain to identify potential alternatives.

- any other employment concerns particularly in relation to crew change issues, and discrimination relating to crew nationality.
- any other issues arising in relation to the outbreak to be raised at an international level.

ILO INFORMATION NOTE

Members are invited to note that the International Labour Organisation has produced an Information note which is available at Annex 2. This contains FAQs received by the ILO legal department relating to the MLC 2006 and COVID-19. Members are encouraged to share this document with their member companies.

COVID-19: GLOBAL PORT RESTRICTIONS MAPS

ICS encourages members and shipping companies to review a website of potential ports with restrictions. As countries announce new restrictions on ships and crew that call at vulnerable locations to try to combat spread of Covid-19 staying up to date can be complex. Wilhelmsen Ships Service has produced an online “Coronavirus – Global Port Restrictions Map” updated twice a day demonstrating ports or countries with restrictions but may not be exhaustive. [Link](#).

In addition, ICS have also been advised of another very useful Port Restrictions Map which is also available at [Link](#) and one provided by IAPH which is available at [Link](#).

DIFFICULTIES IN BEING ABLE TO REPATRIATE INDIAN SEAFARERS

ICS is aware of situations where companies have found it difficult to be able to repatriate their seafarers to India due to governmental restrictions. Going forward INSA is willing to contact the Director General of Shipping in India with names of Indian seafarers who are affected and the companies and vessels they have been working on. Please forward crew lists and desired date of repatriation to Mr Anil Devli CEO of INSA, ceo@insa.org.in who will raise this with DG Shipping to see if assistance can be given for these crew members.

DRAFT LETTER TEMPLATE AIMED TO FACILITATE FREE MOVEMENT FOR SEAFARERS TO AND FROM THEIR VESSELS

Please find attached a copy of a letter attached at Annex 1 which has been prepared to assist with the facilitation of free movement for seafarers to and from their vessels. ICS will also be asking ILO and IMO if they are also ok for their logos to be added, if yes ICS

will then send a modified version for use. Please therefore hold off on sharing this until ICS is advised if their logos can be included as well. We will come back to members as soon as possible on this.

IMPACT ON SEAFARERS

Many countries have imposed further visa restrictions and mandatory quarantine for seafarers from countries significantly affected by COVID-19. As over 85% of global flights are affected shipowners are encouraged to obtain daily updated information on the flight situation review the IATA website which gives comprehensive coverage. [Link](#)

Many welfare agencies are now offering virtual ship visiting by video conferencing and associations are encouraged to advise Shipping companies of this resource. Shipping companies should also be encouraged to see if they can offer cheaper or free international calls for seafarers at this time so that they can keep in touch with their families.

MEDICAL ADVICE

ICS has been advised of a new portal produced by Helse Bergen. NCMDM and Radio Medico Norway have developed an interactive, internet based COVID-19 assessment tool aimed at helping seafarer's on board to assess sick crew members or others on board. It also gives guidance on treatment of possible cases of COVID-19 including warning signs to look out for and advice on when to contact TMAS services. This is freely available to all and can be accessed at www.covid19atsea.no

We believe it is a very useful tool for those on board to use and we are trying to ensure that as many people as possible have access to it. Please circulate it to your member companies.

All countries must follow the WHO IHR which apply to all transport sectors including shipping and aviation and give clear advice to follow to avoid global spread of infections and outbreaks of communicable diseases.

Ships with over 100 crew onboard must have a medical practitioner onboard whereas cargo ships and other vessels travelling internationally may have seafarers with limited first aid and medical training.

ICS is conscious of the fluid nature of the situation and will continue to work with international bodies to ensure our guidance reflects up to date developments. Key current messages are to:

- Access advice from telemedical services, internet advice, and port health authorities.
- Carry a copy of the International Medical Guide for Ships or a national equivalent publication with medical advice including a list of equipment and medicines required to be kept onboard.
- Check the WHO suggested equipment for COVID-19. Most is already carried onboard merchant vessels but equipment not carried onboard including testing equipment should be provided by port State health officials.
- Preferably utilise single cabins if the medical room is in use to avoid spreading the disease.
- Check the protocols produced by IMHA which are attached as Annexes 3 and 4 relating to Screening and Testing and Port Access to Medical Care. Please also share these with your member companies.

ICS (COVID-19) Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers [link](#).

This comprehensive document aims to support all types of ships operating in international waters with current effective information to limit spread of COVID-19. It has been produced together with WHO, IMO, ECDC and IMHA and highlights a raft of measures including advice on:

- managing Port Entry Restrictions,
- practical Protective Measures Against COVID-19 for Seafarers,
- an Outbreak Management Plan.
- pre-boarding screening,
- education and what to do in Suspected Cases of Infection.
- hygiene measures for seafarers on Ships,
- managing high risk exposure,
- Case handling,
- Isolation
- Cleaning, disinfection and waste management.

The guidance also comes with posters which can be printed out and placed onboard ships and which can be downloaded from the ICS Covid-19 website at [link](#).

In addition, ICS would like to express its thanks to the Chamber of Marine Commerce in Canada for sponsoring translations of these posters into French. If any other member associations wish to translate these please contact the undersigned.

SHIP ACCESS TO MEDICAL SUPPORT IN PORTS

ICS is continuing to become aware of reported situations where ships are continuing to find it impossible dock in certain ports. Each incident we know of, is reported to WHO and we will continue to press for countries to honour their IHR obligations. Please feel free to share information on cases arising with ICS.

It is very important also for us to know of cases where seafarers with reported symptoms cannot access medical assistance from shore side personnel so that these issues can be raised at an international level.

WHO

ICS continues to support WHO's strategic objectives relating to COVID-19 through a mix of public health measures, such as rapid identification, diagnosis and case management, identification and follow up of contacts, infection prevention and control in health care settings, implementation of health measures for travelers, awareness-raising and risk communication. Additional information is being posted up on the WHO website daily and ICS is continuing to review this to see what can be shared with our members.

The ICS secretariat will produce an update on Monday 20th April 2020.

Natalie Shaw
Director Employment Affairs

To Whom this might concern

Date

Dear Sir/ Madam,

CERTIFICATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKER – SEAFARER

I am writing for your assistance in ensuring that we can continue to supply the goods on which we all rely in our everyday lives and that you will allow the seafarer whose details are set out below to transit between their home country and their ship and vice versa.

In these unprecedented circumstances, it is imperative to ensure that the flow of essential goods, energy, food, medicines and many other products is not disrupted by measures impeding the safe and efficient movement of ships and the seafarers who operate them. Therefore the United Nations bodies, namely the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), along with the European Commission, have stated that Seafarers should be officially recognized as key workers and granted exemptions from travel restrictions so they can join and leave their ships and return home without impediment, while complying with infection control.

It is important for State representatives and relevant authorities to recognize the need of the highly globalized shipping industry, with its multinational workforce, to smoothly undertake crew changes around the world, to enable ships to continue to operate and to enable the swift embarkation, disembarkation and repatriation of crew members.

This letter certifies that this seafarer should be allowed free passage to travel between their home and their vessel and has participated in a medical screening.

Seafarer's Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Passport Number _____

*Seaman's Book Number _____ (if applicable)

*Seafarer's Identity Document Number _____ (if applicable)

Position on board ship _____

Company Name _____

Ship Name _____

Ship IMO Number _____

[Type here]

Is joining the ship in (name of port) _____(as applicable)

Is leaving the ship in (name of port) _____(as applicable)

Yours faithfully,

Name _____

Company _____

Position _____

This letter is supported by



International
Chamber of Shipping



International
Transport Workers
Federation

ⁱ This document is a modified copy of Annex 3 of the Communication of the European Commission of 23rd March 2020 on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and to ensure the availability of goods and essential services:

https://ec.europa.eu/transport/sites/transport/files/legislation/2020-03-23-communication-green-lanes_en.pdf

[Type here]

▶ **Information note on maritime labour issues and coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Including a joint statement of the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended

International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) / Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR)

Geneva, 7 April 2020

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1. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created a global crisis which has impacted all aspects of life and badly affected the world of work. ¹ In the maritime sector, it has severely disrupted the functioning of shipping and affected the work of nearly 2 million seafarers worldwide.
2. Numerous governments and seafarers' and shipowners' organizations have turned to the International Labour Office (hereinafter the Office) for guidance on how best to address the complexities of the current crisis in light of the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006).
3. This information note aims to respond to such requests by referring to the MLC, 2006, the work of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR),² a statement of the Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006, (STC)³ and, when relevant, the recommendations published by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It should be noted that both the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers' Federation have been active since the beginning of this crisis to support seafarers and shipowners worldwide and provide advice to their members. ⁴

¹ See ILO, [COVID-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses](#). For more general information on international labour standards see [ILO Standards and COVID-19 \(coronavirus\), FAQ](#).

² The competent body to supervise the application of the MLC, 2006.

³ The Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (STC) is the tripartite body established under Article XIII of the MLC, 2006, to keep the working of the Convention under continuous review. The Officers of the STC have been appointed by the ILO Governing Body for a period of three years. They currently are Ms Julie Carlton from the United Kingdom (Chairperson), Mr Martin Marini from Singapore (Government Vice-Chairperson), Mr David Heindel from the United States (Seafarer Vice-Chairperson) and Mr Max Johns from Germany (Shipowner Vice-Chairperson). On 26 March 2020, the Officers adopted a [statement on the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#).

⁴ The International Chamber of Shipping published [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers](#). The International Transport Workers' Federation published [COVID-19 advice to ships](#) and seafarers.



4. In general, it is recalled that under the MLC, 2006, derogations, exemptions or other clauses allowing for flexible application of the Convention by governments must be decided in consultation with shipowners' and seafarers' organizations, with any determinations that are made reported to the Office by the government concerned. The CEACR has on numerous occasions underlined the importance of these consultations for the implementation of the MLC, 2006.⁵ This is seen as a necessary and important approach to ensuring that all countries, irrespective of national circumstances, can engage with the international legal system and that international obligations are respected and implemented, to the extent possible, while efforts continue to be made to improve existing conditions. Governments are thus strongly encouraged to consult national seafarers' and shipowners' organizations in order to address a number of issues in the current context created by the COVID-19 pandemic in light of the MLC, 2006.

5. Finally, it is noted that the current circumstances might render compliance with some of the obligations set out in the MLC, 2006, materially impossible. As noted on a few occasions below, these circumstances could constitute cases of force majeure. Force majeure is "the occurrence of an irresistible force or of an unforeseen event, beyond the control of the State, making it materially impossible in the circumstances to perform the obligation" and which excuses non-compliance with an obligation.⁶ These circumstances "do not annul or terminate the obligation; rather they provide a justification or excuse for non-performance while the circumstance in question subsists" and entail that compliance must resume as "soon as the factors causing and justifying the non-performance are no longer present".⁷ There must be a causal link between material impossibility and the unforeseen circumstances. In short, the parties involved should make every attempt to comply with their obligations under the MLC, 2006, non-compliance

⁵ See for example the [direct request](#) adopted in 2019 by the CEACR concerning Honduras.

⁶ United Nations, *Yearbook of the International Law Commission, 2001*, Vol. II, Part Two, Article 23, p. 27.

⁷ United Nations, *Yearbook of the International Law Commission, 2001*, op. cit., p. 71.



only being excused when compliance is materially and objectively impossible by reason of the occurrence of an irresistible event. While authorities are encouraged to be pragmatic in their approach under the current circumstances, they should also ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic is not used as an excuse to breach the MLC, 2006.

6. The explanations provided below are subject to the usual understanding that the Constitution of the ILO confers no special competence upon the Office to give an authoritative interpretation of an international labour Convention and that the opinions expressed are without prejudice to any position that the ILO's supervisory bodies might take with respect to its subject matter.

1. Seafarers' safety and health

7. Under Article IV, paragraphs 1 and 4, of the MLC, 2006, every seafarer has the right to a safe and secure workplace that complies with safety standards and to health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection.
8. According to Regulation 4.1, paragraph 1, of the MLC, 2006, flag States must ensure, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and bearing in mind current global shortages in some medical equipment, that all seafarers on ships that fly their flag are covered by adequate measures for the protection of their health – including the provision of alcohol-based handrub and personal protective equipment – and that they have access to prompt and adequate medical care whilst working on board. As the Office has received allegations⁸ of cases where seafarers did not receive the same protection as passengers on board cruise ships,

⁸ For example, on 7 February 2020, the ILO received a request for urgent help from the Seafarers' Union of Russia and the International Transport Workers' Federation concerning the situation of the crew on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship, quarantined with more than 3,500 persons on board. Seafarers were concerned about their possible exposure to COVID-19 and the availability on board of personal protective equipment (such as masks and disinfectants) and medical care.

the need to respect these provisions of the MLC, 2006, is to be emphasized.

9. Pursuant to Regulation 4.1, paragraph 3, of the MLC, 2006, port States must ensure that seafarers on board ships in their territory who are in need of immediate medical care are given access to the Member's medical facilities on shore. The exceptional measures adopted by some governments to contain the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be invoked as such as a valid reason not to comply with this international obligation.
10. Seafarers, shipowners and maritime authorities are encouraged to refer to the WHO [Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships](#). This document, among others, contains information on the measures to be adopted prior to boarding a ship and to manage suspected cases on board.
11. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC indicated that "It is imperative that Member States do all that they can to facilitate the delivery of essential **medical supplies, fuel, water, spare parts and provisions** to ships. It is disturbing that ports in some parts of the world have refused to allow some ships to enter because they had previously called at ports in areas affected by the coronavirus, which has prevented vessels from obtaining such essential supplies. It is also extremely alarming to hear reports that suppliers have been prevented from boarding ships in some parts of the world and from supplying masks, overalls and other personal protective equipment to crews. It is essential that seafarers have access to plentiful supplies and equipment, in line with the *International Medical Guide for Ships*, third edition, and the guidance provided by the International Maritime Health Association, the International Chamber of Shipping and the World Health Organization".



Seafarers' individual claims

The following resources are available to obtain information or raise concerns concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on seafarers.

ITF Seafarers' support team

Email – seafsupport@itf.org.uk

SMS – +44 7984 356573

WhatsApp/Viber – +44 7523 515097

Facebook

ITF Seafarers' Support page – <https://www.facebook.com/itfseafarerssupport>

ITF Seafarers' Support group –

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/191907568040511>

ITF Wellbeing page – <https://www.facebook.com/ITFWellbeing>

Website

ITF Seafarers – www.itfseafarers.org

COVID-19 Country Map (Information for seafarers) –

<https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/embed/covid-19-country-information-seafarers>

Mobile phone apps

ITF Seafarers' app – available on iOS and Android

ITF Wellbeing app – available on iOS and Android

ITF Global app – available on iOS and Android

ISWAN – International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network

Phone – +44 (0)3000124279

Email – iswan@iswan.org.uk

Seafarers' help

Website – <https://www.seafarerhelp.org/>

Phone – +44 207 323 2737 (Free International, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families)

Email – help@seafarerhelp.org

2. Facilitation of transit and transfer of seafarers and repatriation

12. Two ILO Conventions deal with the importance of facilitating the transit and transfer of seafarers.⁹ In particular, under Article 6, paragraph 7, of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185), "Each Member for which this Convention is in force shall, in the shortest possible time, also permit the entry into its territory of seafarers holding a valid seafarers' identity document supplemented by a passport, when entry is requested for the purpose of: (a) joining their ship or transferring to another ship; (b) passing in transit to join their ship in another country or for repatriation; or any other purpose approved by the authorities of the Member concerned".
13. Under Regulation 2.5 of the MLC, 2006, seafarers have a right to be repatriated at no cost to themselves in the circumstances and under the conditions specified in the Code of the Convention. Pursuant to Standard A2.5.1, paragraph 7, each Member shall facilitate the repatriation of seafarers serving on ships which call at its ports or pass through its territorial or internal waters, as well as their replacement on board.
14. It is critical that the right of seafarers to return home is guaranteed during the pandemic in accordance with the provisions of the MLC, 2006, without prejudice to the need for competent authorities to take proportionate and specifically adapted measures to minimize the risk of contagion.¹⁰

⁹ The Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185), ratified by 35 countries, and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108), ratified by 64 countries.

¹⁰ Along the same lines, see the [Communication](#) from the European Commission on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services, 23 March 2020.



15. Following travel bans, border closures and quarantine measures, numerous seafarers cannot travel to and from ships. The maritime industry called upon the ILO and the international community to make sure that, in these unprecedented circumstances, member States ensure that the flow of essential goods, energy, food, medicines and many other products is not disrupted by measures that impede the safe and efficient movement of shipping and of the seafarers who operate them. While welcoming the coordinated efforts undertaken by social partners and the international community to respond to the crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic in the maritime sector, this request was recently echoed by the ILO Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, who called upon governments “to ensure that, in these challenging times, seafarers are adequately protected from the COVID-19 pandemic, have access to medical care, and can travel to and from their ships, as necessary, in order to continue to play their crucial role”.¹¹ The IMO Secretary-General, Mr Kitack Lim, stated in this regard that “In these difficult times, the ability for shipping services and seafarers to deliver vital goods, including medical supplies and foodstuffs, will be central to responding to, and eventually overcoming, this pandemic”. The IMO recently published a Circular Letter regarding a preliminary list of recommendations for governments and relevant national authorities on the facilitation of maritime trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²

16. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC addressed the issue of crew change during the COVID-19 pandemic and indicated that: “Seafarers should be officially recognized as **key workers**, and be granted exemptions from any travel restrictions and special considerations to enable them to join and leave their ships and return home without impediment, while complying with good practice in infection control.” “It is important that Member States recognize the need for a highly globalized industry like shipping, with its multinational workforce, to be able to smoothly undertake **crew changes** and **repatriation** around the world.” “Clear directions should be given to port authorities and local health authorities to enable ships to continue

¹¹ ILO, [Treat seafarers with “dignity and respect” during COVID-19 crisis](#).

¹² IMO, [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6](#), 27 March 2020.

trading, and to enable the swift disembarkation and repatriation of crew members.” “It is vital that labour supply countries facilitate the return home of those seafarers who have completed their contracts, and allow seafarers to leave their home country to join their ships, after appropriate medical screening”.

3. Expiry of seafarers’ employment agreements

17. As a result of the measures taken by governments in the current crisis, numerous seafarers have been requested to stay on board beyond the period originally foreseen in their seafarers’ employment agreements. The extension of seafarers’ employment agreements must be conducted in accordance with applicable national laws and regulations. It is to be underlined that, in all cases, the seafarer’s consent remains a fundamental requirement for any such extension. Regulation 2.1, paragraph 2, of the MLC, 2006, states in this regard that seafarers’ employment agreements shall be agreed to by the seafarer under conditions which ensure that the seafarer has an opportunity to review and seek advice on the terms and conditions in the agreement and *freely accepts them before signing*.
18. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC affirmed that: “In cases where seafarers’ tours of duty have to be extended beyond the duration specified in their employment agreements or under national laws applying the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, a pragmatic approach is needed to enable them to remain on board for a reasonable period beyond their scheduled tours of duty”.

4. Maximum period of service on board and safeguards

19. Some seafarers, due to prohibitions on crew changes or on travel to and from ships, have to remain on board for periods that go beyond the default 11-month maximum period of service that is derived from the

provisions of the MLC, 2006.¹³ In response to a specific question formulated by one government in this regard, the Office considered that competent authorities may authorize – within specific limits – exceptions to the prohibition on forgoing annual leave under Standard A2.4, paragraph 3, of the MLC, 2006, for imperative reasons of public health emergency such as the need to contain the current COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, exceptions should be accompanied by appropriate safeguards to avoid any risk of abuse, including provisions to require the seafarer’s consent, to ensure no loss of repatriation or annual leave entitlements and to review the situation at regular short intervals.

20. Taking into account the danger posed by the fatigue of seafarers, especially of those whose duties involve navigational safety and the safe and secure operation of the ship, the extension of the period of service on board beyond the default 11 months should be authorized only when strictly necessary to face the emergency situation created by the pandemic.
21. Furthermore, the Office considered that, even in the absence of an exception specifically authorized by the competent authority, the maximum continuous period of shipboard service may be exceeded in situations of force majeure or necessity, in other words in situations where an unforeseen event (or events) beyond the control of the State and/or shipowner make it materially impossible in the circumstances to perform the obligations arising out of the provisions of Standards A2.4 and A2.5.1 of the MLC, 2006 (for instance, in the event that a ship is placed under quarantine).

¹³ The CEACR has “consistently considered that, from the combined reading of *Standard A2.4, paragraphs 2 and 3*, on annual leave and *Standard A2.5.1, paragraph 2(b)*, on repatriation, that the maximum continuous period of shipboard service without leave is in principle 11 months. Indeed, as it has clearly been indicated by the Committee, *Standard A2.4, paragraph 3*, of the MLC, 2006, does not lay down an absolute prohibition as exceptions may be authorized by the competent authority. While the Convention is silent about the nature and scope of permissible exceptions, the Committee considers that this provision needs to be read restrictively in order not to defeat the purpose of *Regulation 2.4*. ... However, exceptions are indeed permitted on the basis of specific cases provided for by the competent authority taking into account the needs of seafarers and the particularities of sea voyage itself.” See ILO, *Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations*, ILC.108/III(A) (2019), paras 105–113 (General Report).

22. In March 2020, the [Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Asia-Pacific Region](#), the [Indian Ocean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control](#) and the [Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control](#) each adopted temporary guidance for their respective member authorities on dealing with the impact of the outbreak of COVID-19.¹⁴

5. Reduction of minimum manning

23. Under Standard A2.7, paragraphs 1 and 3, of the MLC, 2006, every ship shall be manned by a crew that is adequate, in terms of size and qualifications, to ensure the safety and security of the ship and its personnel, under all operating conditions, in accordance with the minimum safe manning document or equivalent issued by the competent authority, and taking into account requirements concerning food and catering.
24. Travel bans, border closures and quarantine measures are disrupting crew changes. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, some maritime administrations have envisaged the reduction of the minimum manning levels as a possible solution to the difficulties encountered by shipowners in respect of having the required number of seafarers on board. However, taking into account that the current situation has led to extensions of the periods of service on board for numerous seafarers, the Office is of the view that a reduction of the minimum manning levels could only contribute to increasing the fatigue of seafarers, thereby jeopardizing the safe, efficient and secure operation of ships. Administrations must therefore continue to comply with Standard A2.7, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁴ In general, they call for a pragmatic approach to be adopted on a case-by-case basis, for periods of up to three months, with regard to medical and competence certification, the extension of seafarers' periods of service onboard and the delay of periods for inspections.

6. Expiry of medical certificates

25. The current crisis has also interfered with the possibility to renew the medical certificates of seafarers. These certificates are dealt with under Regulation I/9 of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW Convention), and Regulation 1.2 of the MLC, 2006. Under both international treaties, the maximum validity of medical certificates is two years. If the period of validity of a medical certificate expires in the course of a voyage, then the medical certificate shall continue in force until the next port of call, where a medical practitioner recognized by the Party is available, provided that the period shall not exceed three months.
26. The Office recognizes that restrictions imposed to contain the pandemic may, under certain circumstances, constitute a situation of force majeure in which it becomes materially impossible to renew a medical certificate within the maximum period of three months foreseen by the MLC, 2006, and the STCW Convention.
27. In this regard, issuing administrations are encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach with regard to the extension of medical certificates, as strictly necessary, and to notify ships, seafarers and relevant administrations accordingly. Port State control authorities are also encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach in relation to medical certificates and their acceptance in the exercise of control procedures in accordance with Title 5 of the MLC, 2006.¹⁵
28. Medical certificates must be renewed as soon as the situation improves. Maritime administrations are requested to regularly review the evolution of the situation.

¹⁵ See in this regard the joint statement by the IMO, the WHO and the ILO on medical certificates of seafarers, ship sanitation certificates and medical care of seafarers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, to be published soon.

7. Certification in respect of training and qualifications

29. According to Regulation 1.3 of the MLC, 2006, seafarers shall not work on a ship unless they are trained or certified as competent or otherwise qualified to perform their duties. Training and certification in accordance with the relevant provisions of the STCW Convention shall be considered as meeting this requirement.
30. The Office refers to the guidance provided by the IMO in this regard, which states that the actions taken worldwide as a result of the outbreak pose a serious challenge for maritime administrations in respect of allowing the continued training of seafarers, revalidating certificates and issuing endorsements attesting recognition of certificates in accordance with the STCW Convention.¹⁶ In this context, issuing administrations are encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach with regard to the extension of such certificates and endorsements, as strictly necessary, and to notify ships, seafarers and relevant administrations accordingly. Port State control authorities are also encouraged to take a pragmatic and practical approach in relation to these certificates and endorsement extensions and their acceptance in the exercise of control procedures in accordance with article X (Control) and regulation I/4 (Control procedures) of the STCW Convention and Title 5 of the MLC, 2006.
31. The Office recognizes that restrictions imposed to contain the pandemic, including travel bans, quarantine and the cancellation of courses, may, under certain circumstances, constitute a situation of force majeure in which it becomes materially impossible to allow the continued training of seafarers, to revalidate certificates and to issue endorsements attesting recognition of certificates in compliance with Regulation 1.3 of the MLC, 2006, and the relevant provisions of the STCW Convention. Nonetheless, although the current situation would seem to call for some flexibility with

¹⁶ IMO, [Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5/Rev.1](#), 2 April 2020.

regard to the extension of certificates, it would not in principle allow for a departure from the requirements applicable to the initial issuance of such certificates.

32. Competence certificates must be renewed as soon as the situation improves. Maritime administrations are requested to regularly review the evolution of the situation.
33. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC indicated that: “A similarly pragmatic approach is required to support seafarers who may face problems in undertaking training or refresher courses for certification. Flag States and port States should work with other maritime nations to extend the validity of seafarers’ certificates for at least three months, or until further notice when the situation has eased.”

8. Maritime labour certificate and inspections

34. The outbreak of COVID-19 has meant that the shipping industry and maritime authorities are facing challenges in respect of conducting the inspections required in accordance with Title 5 of the MLC, 2006.
35. The Office recognizes that the current circumstances may at times lead to situations of force majeure in which it becomes materially impossible to conduct the intermediate and renewal inspections required under Title 5 of the MLC, 2006, within the time frame foreseen by the Convention.
36. Some governments and port State control regimes have referred to the possibility to extend the validity of certificates for periods that shall not exceed three months from the date of expiry of the original certificate. Others have opted for the possibility to issue interim certificates when the renewal inspection required under Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 3, cannot take place. While these possibilities are not foreseen in the Convention, the Office is of the view that situations of force majeure

created by the pandemic could justify such measures, when and as strictly necessary.

37. The inspections required under Title 5 must be conducted as soon as the situation improves. Maritime administrations are requested to regularly review the evolution of the situation.
38. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC affirmed that: “It is also important to stress the need for a pragmatic approach and for special consideration in cases where ships cannot undertake vetting and inspection or receive externally provided maintenance and support as a consequence of travel restrictions affecting specialized staff, surveyors and technicians. Similarly, flexibility in ship certification may be necessary, to respond to difficulties in meeting dry-docking intervals.”

9. Social protection: Seafarers’ entitlement to paid sick leave in case of infection or quarantine

39. According to Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 1 (a), of the MLC, 2006, shipowners shall be liable to bear the costs for seafarers working on their ships in respect of sickness and injury of the seafarers occurring between the date of commencing duty and the date upon which they are deemed duly repatriated, or arising from their employment between those dates. According to paragraph 3 of the same Standard, where the sickness or injury results in incapacity for work the shipowner shall be liable: to pay full wages as long as the sick or injured seafarers remain on board or until the seafarers have been repatriated in accordance with the Convention; and to pay wages in whole or in part as prescribed by national laws or regulations or as provided for in collective agreements from the time when the seafarers are repatriated or landed until their recovery or, if earlier, until they are entitled to cash benefits under the legislation of the Member concerned. In this context, seafarers who have contracted COVID-19 should be entitled to paid sick leave or sickness benefits as long as they are incapacitated to work, in order to compensate them for the suspension of earnings that they suffer as a consequence.

Quarantine periods on board and ashore for seafarers – whether they have symptoms, have been exposed or are quarantined as a safety precaution – are equally covered by the above-mentioned provisions of the MLC, 2006.

40. Importantly, before or during the process of repatriation, the expense of medical care and board and lodging for periods spent by seafarers in self-isolation or in quarantine – whether the seafarers have symptoms, have been exposed or are quarantined as a safety precaution – must be covered by the shipowner until the seafarers are considered to be duly repatriated, unless the expense is assumed by public authorities in accordance with the applicable national legislation.¹⁷

10. Shore leave and welfare facilities during the pandemic

41. Under Regulation 2.4, paragraph 2, of the MLC, 2006, seafarers shall be granted shore leave to benefit their health and well-being and consistent with the operational requirements of their positions.
42. Maritime authorities must continue to respect this obligation, without prejudice to the proportionate and specifically adopted measures to minimize the risk of contagion. Access to port-based welfare services should also be ensured, as far as possible, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁷ According to Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 1(c), of the MLC, 2006, shipowners shall be liable to defray the expense of medical care, including medical treatment and the supply of the necessary medicines and therapeutic appliances, and board and lodging away from home until the sick or injured seafarer has recovered, or until the sickness or incapacity has been declared of a permanent character. Also relevant in this context is Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 6, according to which national laws or regulations may exempt the shipowner from liability to defray the expense of medical care and board and lodging and burial expenses in so far as such liability is assumed by the public authorities.

43. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC indicated that: “In recent times, there has been widespread and welcome acknowledgement of the inherent stress, isolation and social pressures that seafarers experience. COVID-19 clearly exacerbates these problems, and has an adverse impact on the mental and physical well-being of seafarers and their families. It is worrying to hear of port-based welfare services being closed or curtailed as a response to the current situation, and it is vital that full support is given to seafarer welfare services.”

11. Abandonment of seafarers

44. The measures adopted to contain the pandemic are creating additional challenges with regard to resolving the cases of abandonment that occurred before the outbreak of COVID-19. Such measures might, in the near future, lead to new cases of abandonment. It is recalled that, even against the background of the COVID-19 crisis, flag States, port States and labour-supplying States remain bound by the requirements concerning repatriation set out in Regulation 2.5 of the MLC, 2006, and the relevant provisions of the Code of the Convention. Member States must deploy all necessary efforts to promptly resolve situations of abandonment and ensure that seafarers affected by this plight are repatriated as soon as possible and receive the payment of outstanding wages, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the MLC, 2006.
45. In their joint statement, the Officers of the STC indicated that: “The social partners express concern about a potential increase in cases of abandonment due to shipowners not having the financial ability to support their fleet operations. It is essential to monitor the situation and emerging trends and to have effective reporting on abandonment, as this is the only way of understanding the impact and the measures necessary to assist seafarers in view of the restrictions in place during the COVID-19 crisis.”