

URACOS surveys notice due to COVID-19

Coronavirus

ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators are required to take necessary precautions and measures and are requested to arrange any due surveys/ audits on time to avoid any issues as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19.

Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors

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Due to the COVID-19 CoronaVirus spread worldwide and further to the latest developments with regards the individual national measures and restrictions adopted almost by all countries as a consequence of Coronavirus pandemic, ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators must notify URACOS Head Office **as a minimum of fifteen (15) days in advance for their intention for any schedule survey/ audit.** This is in order to check availability of our local or closer surveyor.

ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators have to take all measures and to **schedule such surveys well in advance to the expiry dates of their vessel's certificates or the window for the vessel's annual, intermediates and renewal surveys/ audits.**

ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators, which are currently due for surveys/ audits, are requested to inform URACOS Head Office if their vessel has called at any ports in Coronavirus affected countries within the past 14 days, or if any crew member has transited through or from such affected areas in the past 14 days; as further clarification may be required prior to our confirmation of attendance.

Vessels calling Italian ports should take into consideration that any assistance **in Italian ports will not be offered** due to the restrictions the country has imposed and that physical surveys will be conducted where travel restrictions and conditions permit.

Similarly, if there are any crew members onboard with symptoms associated with the virus, e.g. fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath and difficulty in breathing, to advise URACOS Head Office accordingly.

All vessels calling ports in Coronavirus affected countries have to take all necessary measures to avoid any problems and complexities with the local PSC authorities as well as follow all medical advices and precautions to protect their crew.

ICS issues Coronavirus Guidance for shipping industry

The **Guidance** has been produced in collaboration with prominent international bodies including:

- The World Health Organization (WHO)
- The International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
- The International Maritime Health Association (IMHA)

Among a raft of measures highlighted in the guidance, it contains advice on managing Port Entry Restrictions, offers practical Protective Measures Against COVID-19 for Seafarers, including an Outbreak Management Plan. The guidance also provides information around important topics including Port Entry Restrictions, Pre-boarding Screening, Education and what to do in Suspected Cases of Infection. There is also straightforward advice on Hygiene Measures for Seafarers on Ships, Managing High Risk Exposure, Case Handling, Isolation and Cleaning, Disinfection and Waste Management.

The guidance also comes with posters which can be **printed out and placed onboard ships** as well as a Sample Pre-Boarding Passenger Locator Form and a WHO COVID-19 Support and Logistics Supplies List. The guidance has been designed to support all types of ships which operate in international waters with the most up to date and effective information needed to limit the spread of the Coronavirus.

IMO Circular Letters

International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued a number of Circulars regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, as listed below:

- IMO Circular Letter No. [4203/Add.2](#), 2020 containing “Operational Considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships” developed by the WHO. This document inter alia contains guidance on pre-boarding and pre-disembarkation information, pre-boarding screening, crew education, managing a suspected case on board, disembarkation of a suspect case, development and activation of a written outbreak plan for passenger ships as well as obligations of shipowners to inform the authorities of the next port of call of any suspected case;
- IMO Circular Letter No. [4204/Add.3](#), containing the “Joint Statement of the IMO- World Health Organization (WHO) on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak”. While recognizing the need to prevent the introduction or spread of the disease, the Joint IMO-WHO Statement inter alia notes that unnecessary interference with maritime traffic should be minimized. The Joint IMO-WHO Statement further highlights the importance of avoiding causing unnecessary restrictions or delay on port entry to ships, persons and property on board;
- IMO Circular Letter No. [4204/Add.4](#) of 5 March 2020 containing “Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers” prepared by the International Chamber of Shipping in response to the coronavirus outbreak to support all types of ships and help shipping companies follow advice provided by United Nations Agencies, including the IMO, the WHO as well as the International Labour Organization and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Act now

ShipOwners/ Managers/ Operators should take into consideration above notice for their vessels forthcoming surveys/ audits as well as the Guidance and take all necessary measures to prearrange surveys/ audits in order to avoid any problems and complexities with the local PSC authorities as well as follow all medical advices and precautions to protect their crew.