



REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping
3rd Floor, Ken Lee Building
Edith Cavell Street
Port-Louis

MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE Ref: 5 of 2020

**Title: Instructions to deal with Novel Coronavirus
(COVID-19)**

Notice to: **Ship Owners/Masters/Seafarers/Operators/Port Authorities/
Managers of Mauritian Flagged vessels/Maritime Training Institutions and
the whole Shipping Community**

The objective of this Merchant Shipping Notice is to issue instructions to deal with Covid-19 with regard to minimising the risks of its spreading onboard ships under the Mauritius flag.

1. Following Merchant Shipping Notices Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 of 2020 on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), many cases have been confirmed in a large number of countries and as a result, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared its outbreak pandemic.
2. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the WHO have issued circular letters and Guidelines providing instructions and guidance (available on the website of the Ministry) to the shipping community.
3. Considering the gravity of the situation and believing that isolation may be the most important way to prevent the spread of the virus, this Ministry is issuing the following instructions to be complied as far as is reasonable and practicable by all stakeholders within the Shipping community.
4. **Shipping Companies & Ships;**
 - 4.1 All Mauritian vessels are advised to develop a disease outbreak management plan for dealing with outbreak taking into consideration the interim guidance issued by WHO (as mentioned at Paragraph 2 above). While developing the plan, vessels may consider using onboard ship's hospitals for isolating suspected cases until they are disembarked and transferred to a shore medical facility.

Also, adequate protocols need to be developed for managing suspected cases on the vessel including clinical management, cleaning and disinfections of possible contaminated areas as appropriate. Any case of COVID-19 occurring onboard a Mauritian flagged vessel should be reported to the Director of Shipping.

4.2 The plan may also need to include provisions regarding pre-boarding and screening procedures, sensitizing crewmembers on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of the disease, reporting procedures, disinfecting garbage to be landed ashore and others.

5. Manning, Recruitment and Placement Agencies;

5.1 All the above especially those who are located overseas are advised to ensure that the requirement of physical presence of seafarers in their offices for the purpose of seafarers' 'signing-on' and 'signing-off from ships are kept to the minimum'. Other means of communication may be used as appropriate.

6. Seafarers

6.1 Shore Leave:

All seafarers need to avoid going ashore in infected regions and consider the high risks involved while he/she will be mingling with people within the affected country/ies. It is strongly advisable to remain onboard and to go ashore just in case of extreme necessity; for example, in case of signing-off or for medical purposes.

6.2 Extension of contract period:

In case a seafarer is not able to leave his/her ship after his/her contract period, a request for further extension shall be made to the Director of Shipping for any extension of the contract. Seafarers shall take into consideration that for their own benefits, it might not be possible to repatriate them as soon as their contracts of employment are over due to various reasons caused by the COVID-19 situation and should try to cooperate with owners, managers of ships in charge of their repatriations. However, whenever possible, owners shall sign-off the seafarers as soon as possible after the termination of their contracts of employment and should not take advantage of the situation to delay the sending home those who are eligible.

6.3 Expiration of Certificates of Competency and/or Proficiency while on board:

It may happen that because of the unavailability of repatriation means, a seafarer may be obliged to continue to serve onboard a Mauritius vessel with an expired CoC or CoP. In such circumstances, the Director of Shipping is to be informed well in advance with full particulars of the seafarer concerned so that the appropriate administrative procedures may be initiated for re-issue of Endorsement letter or in the case of Mauritian CoCs, flag administration letter to

allow the seafarer to continue to serve onboard in his respective capacity. In the case of Mauritian CoPs, same procedures will apply.

7. Ship's mandatory surveys, audits and expiry of statutory certificates:

7.1 In the very case that mandatory surveys, inspections or audits cannot be conducted on time, the Director of Shipping will entertain application for extension after consultation with the appropriate recognised organisation (RO) that has issued the relevant certificates on behalf of the Republic of Mauritius. In any case extensions will be granted for not more than two (2) months to complete the relevant survey(s) or audit(s).

7.2 To avoid any Port State Control issues, Owners are hereby advised to apply for any extension well in advance prior to the expiry date(s) of the statutory certificates.

8. All stakeholders are also advised to continue to closely monitor the IMO, WHO, this Ministry's websites on regular basis and be guided with the updated guidelines and information which are being issued on a regular basis.

9. Those measures are being implemented due to the exceptional circumstances caused by the spread of the COVID-19 and shall only be temporary.

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