



PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

Merchant Shipping Notice 157

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

The Directorate wishes to draw the attention of all concerned to the recent identification of a cluster of Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan City, China and the statement issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO said that the outbreak does not yet constitute a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), but would review the situation on an ongoing basis. At the same time, the WHO assessed the public health risk of this event to be very high in China, high at regional level and high at global level.

According to the latest information, Chinese competent authorities have now closed transport within and out of Wuhan, China and there is information that all operations in Wuhan port have been suspended. Transport in and out of some other Chinese cities has also been suspended and there is a general travel advice to avoid all non-essential travel to affected areas.

In view of the foregoing, ship operators may experience similar challenges to those encountered during previous disease outbreaks. In addition due to the risk of crew members contracting the illness at ports in infected areas, port authorities may require ships that have previously called at affected ports to comply with additional reporting and quarantine measures to prevent the further spread of the disease.

Ship masters and ship operators are recommended to monitor the situation by continuously consulting advisories issued by WHO and other public health authorities and evaluate the risks present in the next port of call. Moreover, ship operators may consider implementing the following recommendatory measures:

- Ship masters should ensure that the crew are aware of the risks, how the virus can be spread and how to reduce the risk;
- Strictly enforce the ISPS requirements on ensuring that unauthorized personnel do not board the ship throughout the ships port call;
- Ship masters should give careful consideration to the current situation before granting any shore leave or planning crew changes whilst in affected areas;
- Upon departure from port, the crew should be aware of the symptoms and report any occurring symptoms immediately to the person in charge of medical care onboard;

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- Ship masters should seek immediate expert medical opinion, in the event of a suspected diagnosis of Coronavirus. Ship masters are to report the event as soon as possible to the next port of call;

Furthermore, ship operators and masters may consider implementing the following list of measures onboard the ship when a crew member or passenger shows symptoms compatible with the disease:

- Keep the patient's cabin doors closed, if not placed in a medical isolation room onboard;
- Provide information about the risk of disease transmission to persons who will take care of the patient or enter the isolation area;
- Maintain a log listing everybody who enters the cabin;
- Anyone entering the cabin to provide care to the person in isolation or to clean the cabin must wear appropriate PPE. A surgical protection mask and gloves are particularly important;
- Limit the movement and transport of the patient from the cabin for essential purposes only. If movement is necessary, the patient should be wearing a surgical mask;
- Start case investigation immediately. Wear appropriate PPE when interviewing the patient;
- Identify the patient's close contacts and ask them to do passive self monitoring of any symptoms.

The Directorate urges all parties concerned to take the necessary precautionary measures, as well to remain vigilant and adopt good hygiene practices at all times. Furthermore, it is important that all concerned refer to the WHO's latest situation report for its most current risk assessment, to take the necessary precautionary measures and to be aware of the latest information regarding this disease on <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>.

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