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Marine Circular № 4/34

To: Ship-owners/Operators managers and individuals

Subject: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

The purpose of this circular is to provide information and guidance, based on recommendations developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

It is prudent to remind populations and health workers of the basic principles to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections by following the below-mentioned key preventative measures:

1. avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections;
2. frequent handwashing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment;
3. avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals;
4. people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practise cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands); and
5. within healthcare facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.

Advise provided to shipowners highlights the need for:

1. exit screening at ports in the affected areas to detect symptomatic travellers and prevent the exportation of the disease. This includes checking for signs and symptoms and keeping confirmed cases under isolation and treatment.
2. Implementing health information campaigns to raise awareness on how to receive assistance if someone is showing symptoms.
3. Collaborating with public health authorities for case management on board ships, should a traveler with symptoms be detected.

Travellers who had contact with confirmed cases or direct exposure to a potential source of infection should be placed under medical observation. High-risk contacts should avoid travel for the duration of the incubation period (up to 14 days).

Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) advice for the public published on the WHO website contains WHO standard recommendations for the general public to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, to protect yourself and others from getting sick, and to stay healthy while travelling. WHO provides novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) travel advice here: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>

With the information currently available for the novel coronavirus, WHO advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation or importation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions on international traffic.

Guidance available:

The following links provide advice and guidance to seafarers and shipping (non-exhaustive list):

International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) advice for shipping companies on the new type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

USCG Novel Coronavirus Precautions 15 WHO issues advice on international travel and health.

This information is regularly reviewed and updated by WHO and can be found at the following address: www.who.int/ith/updates

Additional information can also be found at:
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1056031>
https://www.who.int/ith/other_health_risks/en/

The publications listed below may also be helpful:

WHO International Health Regulations

WHO Guide to ship sanitation

International Medical Guide for Ships

Sincerely Yours,


TUVSHIMTUR Saranjav
General Director