South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref. SM 6/5/2/1

Date: 12 May 2020

Marine Notice No. 26 of 2020

Coronavirus Information and Emergency Contact Details

TO ALL REGIONAL MANAGERS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SURVEYORS, VESSELS, MASTERS, SEAFARERS, PASSENGERS, STEVEDORES, SHIP AGENTS, SHIP MANAGERS, SHIP OWNERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

In addition to Marine Notice No. 24 of 2020 Medical Evacuations from Vessels (MEDEVAC)

Summary

This marine notice serves to inform vessels, Masters, Crew, Passengers, Ship Agents, Stevedores, Surveyors, Ship Managers, Ship Owners and all other stakeholders with additional information in order to manage any suspected outbreak of Covid-19 onboard a vessel in the best possible way.

The following Marine Notices are hereby cancelled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>NOTICE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14 of 2020</td>
<td>CORONAVIRUS Information and Emergency Contact Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15 of 2020</td>
<td>COVID-19 - Update No1 - Government Announcement with Regard to Port Calls from Vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18 of 2020</td>
<td>South Africa - 21-Day Lockdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22 of 2020</td>
<td>Lockdown- Small Vessel and Essential Fishing Vessel Operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. BACKGROUND

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a significant threat to the health of seafarers. This infection is similar to the seasonal flu, except it spreads more easily than flu and has a higher death rate, especially in older people who also have other illnesses like heart problems, high blood pressure and diabetes.

2. DISEASE TRANSMISSION

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs, speaks or exhales. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person.

Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch COVID-19 if they breathe in droplets from a person with COVID-19 who coughs out or exhales droplets. This is why it is important to stay more than 1.5 meters away from other people, especially people who are sick, and to wash your hands regularly with soap and water.

3. SYMPTOMS

The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

.1 High Fever (Consistent Temperature of 38.5° over 2 days)
.2 Dry Cough
3. Shortness of breath
4. Fatigue

4. SUSPECTED CASE OF COVID-19

Any person with flu-like symptoms with sudden onset of at least one of the following: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or fever should seek medical advice and arrange to be tested for the virus causing COVID-19. Any person with suspected COVID-19 infection should be isolated (if practical) and wear a mask until test results become available.

If COVID-19 infection is confirmed, further guidance should be sought from health authorities. Refer to Marine Notice 24 of 2020 – Medical Evacuations from Vessels for further information and contact details. It is important to obtain radio medical advice, prior to sending a seafarer to either a doctor and/or hospital.

5. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

a. Seafarers and vessels

The COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Measures in Workplaces directive, dated 28th April 2020 does not apply on board ships. However, owners and masters have a duty to ensure the health and safety of seafarers and to put in place measures to reduce risks as far as is reasonably practicable.

The wearing of cloth masks, implementation of social distancing and good hand hygiene are essential to reduce risk within the workplace and should be incorporated as far as is practicable. Where all of these measures are not practical, other mitigation measures should be considered (e.g. screening of staff prior to joining, reducing crew changes, monitoring crew temperatures regularly, etc).

Masters and owners of fishing vessels should be particularly aware of the increased risks of disease transmission due to the close proximity in which seafarers work and sleep and the need to put measures in place to mitigate risk.


Section 6 of the abovementioned IMO circular provides specific guidance on board ship.

b. General Measures

.1 The wearing of a cloth mask is required in a public and work place. Avoid touching the mask while using it, if you do, immediately clean your hands with soap and water. Cloth masks must be washed on a daily basis and ironed if possible. Disposable face mask can only be used once.
.2 Regularly and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
.3 Cover your cough with the bend of elbow or tissue
.4 Maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metre from people at all times.
.5 Regularly clean surfaces with simple disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others.

The virus may persist on surfaces up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is low.

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6. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

a. Coronavirus public hotline - 08 000 29999
b. Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (24/7/365)
   - +27 (0) 21 938 3300
   - mrcc.ct@samsa.org.za

c. Transnet National Ports Authority
   - +27 (0) 83 378 8877
   - +27 (0) 83 306 1228

7. GENERAL INFORMATION

Regular updates regarding COVID-19 are available on:

.1 The National Institute of Communicable Diseases:

.2 World Health Organisation:

.3 International Maritime Organisation:

.4 International Chamber of Shipping Guidance Book:

12 May 2020

SM6/5/2/1

ANNEXFollows: Posters for Use onBoard
Masters and Safety Officers to regularly remind crewmembers of the need to wash hands regularly for 20 seconds or more before daily operations begin, during toolbox talks and after completing a task.
Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

Masters and Safety Officers to regularly remind crewmembers of the need to wash hands regularly for 20 seconds or more before daily operations begin, during toolbox talks and after completing a task.
Remember that masks alone cannot protect you from Covid-19. Maintain at least 1.5 metre distance from others and wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for 20 seconds or more, even while wearing a mask.
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