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Circular Letter No.4250
6 April 2020

To: All IMO Members
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**
i **Barbados; and**
ii **Hong Kong, China**

The Governments of Barbados and Hong Kong, China have sent the attached communications, both dated 6 April 2020, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.

Barbados Maritime

% Barbados High Commission
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06 April 2020

The Secretary General
The International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR

Dear Sir

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers
& General Guidance to Operators & Owners of Barbados registered ships**

On behalf of the Government of Barbados, I have the honour to notify you of the measures taken to address areas of concern regarding the certification of seafarers, and other matters affecting the normal operations of Barbados flagged ships.

Please find attached details of the measures this administration is taking to address current concerns affecting international shipping as a result of the current COVID-19 crisis.

We should be obliged if this may be circulated to all members.

Yours faithfully



Capt. Peter Green
Principal Registrar
Barbados Maritime Ships' Registry



COVID-19: GUIDANCE

Application: All shipowner/operators, masters and officers of merchant ships and authorised classification societies

SUMMARY

The outbreak and proliferation of COVID-19 has caused major disruption on a global scale. Barbados Maritime is offering this guidance, which we plan to update as and when there are further developments.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Sources of information are available to the maritime industry, on the websites shown below:

- International Maritime Organisation
- International Maritime Health Association.
- World Health Organisation
- International Chamber of Shipping

IMO Circular letter No. 4204(Add.4) offers specific guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers. This is regularly updated and the latest version can be accessed on the IMO website. (<http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>)

SEAFARER CERTIFICATES

In the case of the documents below expiring or already expired and renewal is not possible as a consequence of COVID-19 related issues, the following action should be taken:

- (1) STCW Certificate of Competency (CoC): seafarers should contact their CoC issuing authority and request an extension to their existing CoC.
- (2) Barbados Maritime Endorsement: the STCW Compliance Officer will issue a Flag State Endorsement to CoCs that have been extended by their issuing authority, and use the new expiry date on the CoC. The Endorsement application should be made in the usual way. If evidence is submitted that the Endorsement is required to be extended due to COVID-19 related issues, there will be no fee for issue of the Endorsement.
- (3) Medical Certificates: A medical certificate that expires while the seafarer is at sea, shall remain valid until the next port of call where a medical practitioner may be available to issue a new medical certificate, but should not usually exceed three months. Any request for a seafarer without a valid medical certificate to join a ship as a matter of urgency must be cleared first with the Barbados Maritime administration by emailing 'ops@barbadosmaritime.com'.

MINIMUM SAFE MANNING DOCUMENT

Where COVID-19 is responsible for a seafarer being unable to join or leave a ship, and this impacts on the MSMD, operators should contact BMSR for permission to sail with less than the minimum number of seafarers stated on the MSMD. Contact ops@barbadosmaritime.com if this is the case to request a temporary dispensation.

MLC: Ship-owners should check urgently with their insurance providers that the insurance or other financial security covers seafarers for COVID-19 related issues. Coverage should be extended if necessary. This applies to both MLC Standard A2.5.2 and Standard A. 4.2.1.

SEA Extension

BMSR is aware that travel restrictions in place due to COVID-19 are having profoundly disruptive effects on previously arranged crew changes. BMSR does not need to be contacted where the SEA is extended and

- (a) the extension is agreed between the seafarer and shipowner
- (b) a new SEA is made, or an addendum to the present SEA is signed by both parties
- (c) the period of service does not exceed 12 months (or, if there is a CBA in place, the alternative limit agreed therein)

Should the service period exceed 12 months or whatever limit has been agreed in a CBA, operators should contact ops@barbadosmaritime.com for further advice.

QUARANTINE & SELF-ISOLATION

All seafarers are to follow the guidance from relevant health authorities concerning quarantine and self-isolation. Any such isolation/quarantine counts towards the seafarer's service period.

SURVEY & CERTIFICATION

BMSR accepts that ROs may not be able to undertake statutory surveys or audits during the current COVID-19 crisis period. ROs should submit recommendations to BMSR for an extension to the validity of survey certificates and this will be reviewed and authorised on a case by case basis.

DELAYS TO DRY DOCKING

We recommend that owners/operators should submit applications to the RO if an extension is required for a vessel's dry docking, or servicing of critical equipment as required under IMO applicable Convention. Such applications should be submitted before the due date or expiry date of the statutory certificate, to avoid PSC issues.

INTERNAL ISM AUDITS

Please note that Reg. 12.1 of the ISM Code allows up to 15 months between audits, where there are exceptional circumstances. If a Company cannot undertake ISM Audit within the allowable time scale, BMSR will consider extending this period on a case by case basis. Contact ops@barbadosmaritime.com for further advice.

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6 April 2020

(Letter by Email)

The Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

Attention: His Excellency Mr. Kitack Lim

Dear Secretary-General,

**Special Arrangements by the Hong Kong Marine Department
under COVID-19 Pandemic Situation**

With reference to the Circular Letter No. 4224 (19 March 2020), Hong Kong, China expresses full support to the IMO's appeal to members for a practical and pragmatic approach to issues such as survey, certification, licensing etc. under the unprecedented situation due to the spread of the coronavirus.

In this connection, we would like to inform the Organization that the Marine Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China ("HKMD") has made a series of special arrangements to assist the industry to tackle challenges, as summarized in below.

Seafarers' Agreement and Certification

HKMD has given special consideration to allow seafarers to continue to serve on board Hong Kong registered ships beyond their intended repatriation. Upon

receipt of an application, we may allow the extension of the validity period of seafarers' certifications and employment agreements.

Surveys, Audits and Statutory Certificates

HKMD recognises that owners may encounter difficulties arranging surveys, repairs or dry-docking to facilitate the periodical endorsement or renewal of relevant statutory certificates. For Hong Kong registered ships, companies may apply to extend the validity or survey window of statutory certificates for a period of up to three months.

Port State Control in Hong Kong

HKMD accepts exemption documents or other relevant circular letters issued by the respective flag States of non-Hong Kong ships when these vessels are subject to port State control inspection during their stay in Hong Kong.

HKMD has developed a dedicated webpage to provide detailed information of the above special arrangements, including application procedures and useful contacts. This webpage will be kept updated, and is accessed through the following link:

<http://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/news/COVID19.html>

It would be highly appreciated if the Organisation could communicate the above information to all IMO Members.

We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of our highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



(Q SHI)

for Director of Marine

- c.c.:
- Maritime Counsellor, Embassy of the People's Republic of China
 - Permanent Representative of Hong Kong, China to IMO