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Circular Letter No.4221/Add.9
3 March 2021

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

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the People's Republic of China**

The Government of the People's Republic of China has sent the attached communication, dated 3 March 2021, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

中华人民共和国交通运输部

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

国际海事组织秘书长

林基泽先生

尊敬的林基泽秘书长，

中方结合全球疫情发展最新形势和港口疫情处置的实践经验，更新发布了《港口及其一线人员新冠肺炎疫情防控工作指南（V5.0）》。新版指南增加了对载运冷链货物船舶、接触冷藏货物人员和接触中高风险地区船舶引航员的疫情防控措施内容。

请将该指南散发给 IMO 各成员国、政府间和非政府间组织为荷。

中华人民共和国交通运输部副部长



（刘小明）

二〇二一年三月三日

Courtesy Translation

H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization

3 March, 2021

Your Excellency,

In light of the latest development of the global epidemic and practical experience in port epidemic control, China has developed *Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 for Ports and Its Front Line Staff* (V5.0). The new version has introduced new contents on prevention and control measures for ships engaged in cold chain logistics, front line staff such as those handling imported cold chain cargo and pilots piloting ships coming from medium and high-risk pandemic areas.

I would be grateful if you would circulate this Guidance to all Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Yours sincerely,



Liu Xiaoming
Vice Minister
Ministry of Transport
The People's Republic of China

Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 for Ports and Its Front Line Staff

(Version 5)

For the purpose of preventing the transmission of coronavirus from cargo to human or human to human, this guidance is developed to help port workers, especially those on the front line, to take effective measures to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19.

I. Scope of Application

The guidance is applicable to pilots, port staff, international shipping agents and other field personnel conducting piloting, berthing, loading and unloading operations of ships, as well as port access management personnel that provide services such as ship repair, third-party inspection etc. for the prevention and control of COVID-19 pandemic during winter and spring.

II. General requirements

Ports and related units should, based on the development of COVID-19 pandemic, act according to the targeted deployment of prevention and control of imported COVID-19 cases under the leadership of local governments; make overall plans for epidemic prevention and control, port production, and occupational health to care for the health of front-line staff. The vaccination for personnel in high-risk occupation such as staff handling imported cold chain cargo and international ship operators should be completed as soon as possible with the support of increased epidemic budget.

Port enterprises and pilotage agencies should take on their responsibilities in epidemic prevention and control system and make improvements. They should, based on actual conditions such as the ships' ports of call, loading of cargo and the crew's health conditions, determine relevant risk levels of piloting, port operation and embarkation, and strengthen information sharing, material reserves, ship-shore isolation, access control, ventilation and disinfection, personal protection, last stop sterilization and emergency treatment.

The local transportation authorities should strengthen the management on credibility of shipping companies, shipping agents and other units, and supervise them to provide true information about ships, cargo and crew, and support the pilotage agencies to take measures on ships with infected COVID-19 cases and all other ships operated by the same shipping company according to the local epidemic prevention and control requirements, such as adjust the pilotage order of these ships, to guard against the risk of COVID-19 cases imported into the country via ports.

III. Information reports and boarding access management

3.1 Information on ships, cargoes and crew

Port enterprises and pilot agencies should strengthen information sharing with ship agents, customs, immigration control, port controls and health units etc., and formulate relevant work plans based on the following information of ships, their cargoes and crew:

3.1.1 Information about ports of calls, arrival and departure schedules within 14 days before ship's arrival.

3.1.2 Information about the crew, their health conditions, nucleic acid test results, etc., and information including crew exchange, personnel embarking and disembarking, material delivery and personnel contact during berthing.

3.1.3 Information about ship's quarantine, preventive measures, etc.

3.1.4 Information about the crew's close contacts during berthing.

3.1.5 Treatment information about sewage and ballast water.

3.1.6 Information about refrigerated containers, bulk refrigerated cargoes and others.

3.2 Information on Personnel and vehicles

Information on personnel and vehicles entering and leaving the ports should be registered and checked to form a closed-loop management. People of Chinese nationality who hold *green health codes* (showing no recent trip to epidemic area) will be allowed to travel within the country. Personnel boarding ships sailing international routes, such as ship agent, those provide ship repair service, third-party survey service etc., should be checked for negative result of nucleic acid testing valid within 7 days. Those who hold valid results can pass through the port according to relevant regulations. For international terminals, crew boarding the ships and oversea personnel should be treated in accordance with relevant national regulations.

3.3 Information Submission

Reports should be made to the local transportation (port) authorities on the epidemic prevention and control activities according to relevant requirements.

3.4 Boarding access management

Units such as ship agency, ship repair, third-party inspection service and other relevant units that caused infected cases due to ineffective implementation of epidemic prevention and control measures, their personnel will be restricted to enter the specific area of the port for a

period of less than 14 days, and relevant reports should be made to immigration and border inspection, customs, and port controls.

IV. Operation procedures

4.1 The pilot agencies, port enterprises and other relevant port units should hold a pre-meeting before a ship enters the port to evaluate the risk in regards of epidemic prevention and control. Strict measures of “avoiding unnecessary boarding” should be developed and strict control of the number of boarding personnel should be conducted, especially for ships that need comparatively more boarding personnel for the purpose of loading and unloading of bulk and general cargo. Meanwhile, teams/groups rotation is needed, and detailed protective measures and precautions must be clarified, and the person in charge of epidemic prevention and control must be designated as well.

4.2 Port enterprises, through shipping companies, ship agency and other organizations, should urge ships to conduct disinfection, ventilation and other related works, have personnel on duty during this period, accurately record the identity information of the persons embarking and disembarking, their reasons for getting on and off the ship, and contact information to ensure that the information of these people can be traced. Cooperation must be made with immigration and frontier inspection and other port control departments to strengthen the on-site management of boarding personnel, to strengthen the prevention and control of the epidemic situation at the entrance of boarding ladder, to urge the boarding personnel to enhance personal protection, and to prohibit boarding when personnel is without personal protection as required.

4.3 Ships engaged in international voyages should be allowed to conduct loading and unloading operations only after showing proof of completion of quarantine provided by the customs with relevant documents showing that the crews are healthy. Among them, ships that intend to switch from international voyages to domestic voyages should be allowed to start the loading and unloading operations at the port of entry only after the crew members obtain negative result of nucleic acid testing. For ships engaged in international voyages whose crew members are required to take nucleic acid tests, the loading and unloading personnel and other relevant personnel will be allowed to board for operation only when their nucleic acid testing results come out negative. The operation personnel boarding the container liner ahead of the afore-mentioned time arrangement for the line schedule should take due personal protection measures; they should not enter the crew's living area or ship's confined space, and should be under strict access control without leaving the port until the crew's nucleic acid test results arrive.

4.4 Strict prevention and control measures should be implemented such as non-direct contact between personnel on board ship and those on shore. The port facility security plan should be completely implemented in ports. The management of entry and exit personnel, vehicles and ship port interface should be strengthened. The management of boarding and disembarking channels should be strengthened. The ship-shore communication activities on

the international ships should be strictly controlled. Crew members are recommended not to disembark unless extremely necessary.

4.5 Port enterprises should cooperate with relevant local joint control mechanism units during crew shifts, ship supply and inspection, emergency rescue work to deal with injured and sick seafarers under the customs permission while these operations meet epidemic prevention conditions. Personnel and vehicles entering and leaving the port should be notified in advance by the shipping agency and other relevant units, and the body temperature check of relevant personnel should be strictly carried out before entering the port. Persons whose body temperature exceeds 37.3 °C are strictly prohibited from entering the port, and should be reported to the local health department according to the procedures.

V. Preventive requirements for operators

5.1 Protection requirements for terminal operators

5.1.1 Body temperature check equipment shall be provided at the entrance of the workplace and working area. Necessary protective equipment such as masks, gloves, goggles and the other materials shall be serviced for the wharf operators and proper guidance on usage shall be provided according to the risk level and their different positions.

5.1.2 Body temperature checks and nucleic acid tests shall be properly conducted. Personnel who have to make close contacts with the crew should be relatively fixed and their activities should leave a paper trail and they shall have their nucleic acid tests regularly conducted according to the local regulations.

5.1.3 No terminal operator shall be allowed to board the ship or make direct contact with the crew. If it is extremely necessary for work to have near contact with the crew, a safe distance of at least one meter must be kept and self-protection measures taken.

5.1.4 Notice boards and warning lines should be arranged during operation, and crew are principally excluded from terminal operation area. The crews are required to wear mask, gloves etc. for personal protection, and arrangements of alternative operation or safe working spaces should be made if it is necessary for crew and ashore staff to work together, in order to avoid direct contacts between the terminal operators and crew. All the crew who have to work on-shore should have their body temperatures checked.

5.1.5 During the unpacking operation of imported refrigerated containers, the personnel who directly contact the refrigerated cargo should be relatively fixed with rigorous access control, regular body temperature check, strict protective measures such as wearing protective suits, masks, protective gloves, protective masks and other items throughout the process, to avoid having the cargo closely pressed against one's face, also to avoid one's hands touching one's nose or mouth. Nucleic acid tests should be conducted to the above mentioned personnel at least once within 7 days and be conducted at a more frequent pace to those

working in the infected region. In case of any positive test result on refrigerated cargo, the loading and unloading personnel shall immediately have their nucleic acids tested according to the regulations and be kept in lockdown. Before the lockdown is lifted, nucleic acids tests should be conducted according to the requirements of local joint prevention and control mechanism units.

5.1.6 The use of telephone, Wechat App, online meeting is advised to help avoiding staff gathering.

5.2 Preventive requirements for pilots

5.2.1 The pilot agencies should strengthen the reserve and supply of anti-epidemic materials, increase the provisions of medical masks, gloves, goggles, protective suits, infrared thermometers, and disinfectants etc., and establish an epidemic prevention supply system. The pilot's health monitoring should be strengthened and a daily health status reporting system should be established.

5.2.2 Pilots, vehicles for pilot transfer, pilot vessels and pilot boats should be relatively fixed with closed loop management. The pilots shall have their body temperature checked, and have their nucleic acid tests regularly conducted (at least once every 7 days) according to the local requirements. The pilots piloting ships coming from medium and high-risk pandemic areas shall strengthen their protection measures with rigorous access control management. If there are crew tested positive in nucleic acid testing on the pilot ship, the pilot shall have his nucleic acid test conducted immediately with lockdown management, and have his nucleic acid test conducted according to the requirements of local joint prevention and control mechanism before the lockdown is lifted.

5.2.3 During the pilotage, the pilot should wear personal protective equipment correctly throughout the whole process under the guidance of the local health department. The protection level shall be determined by the risk level of the ship.

5.2.4 When boarding and disembarking the ship, the pilots should choose stairs and corridors outside the accommodation as far as possible to avoid the crew living area.

5.2.5 During the pilotage, the vessel should be notified to control the number of crew on the bridge, and the bridge should be well ventilated. The pilot should avoid contacting with the crew, and maintain a safe social distancing when contacting is necessary. If condition permits, specialized communication devices such as walkie-talkies should be used to avoid cross use of communication tool with the crew.

5.2.6 The pilots, except for the Yangtze River ones, should not eat on board in principle, and should try to avoid going to the toilet or resting on board.

5.2.7 The pilot should take disinfection measures in accordance with regulations after

disembarking from the ship. Waste such as disposable personal protective equipment should be collected and processed in accordance with the regulations.

5.2.8 The drivers who are transferring the pilot and the crew of pilot boat should wear masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment correctly when transferring, and have nucleic acid tests conducted in a regular manner according to the requirements of local joint prevention and control mechanism.

5.3 Protection requirements for personnel boarding ships from units such as port enterprises, international shipping agencies, marine fuel supply enterprises, etc.

Personnel vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine should be given priority consideration in embarkation arrangements made by port enterprises, international shipping agencies, ship fuel supply enterprises, ship repair enterprises, and third-party inspection organizations.

5.3.1 Boarding personnel shall wear their masks, gloves, goggles and other personal protective equipment, and have their body temperature checked and have their personal information recorded. The operators who directly contact the imported bulk refrigerated cargo shall wear their protective suits, masks, gloves, masks and other protective items throughout the process, and avoid having the cargo closely pressed against one's face, also avoid one's hands touching one's nose or mouth. At the same time, work shifts should be arranged reasonably to avoid icing of masks caused by long-time work, which will affect the protection.

5.3.2 All boarding personnel are prohibited from entering the crew living areas and should reduce their direct contact with the crew. If contact is extremely necessary, the personnel should meet the crew in an open area and maintain a safe distancing that exceeds 1 meter.

5.3.3 All boarding personnel should not eat on board in principle, and should try to avoid going to the toilet or resting on board. Once the work is finished, these personnel should disembark as soon as possible.

5.3.4 All boarding personnel should take disinfection measures in accordance with regulations after disembarking the ship. Wastes such as disposable personal protective equipment should be collected and processed in accordance with regulations.

5.3.5 Personnel boarding ships engaged on international voyages should be relatively fixed, have their body temperature checked regularly, and have their nucleic acid tests conducted at least once within 7 days. Personnel who may have direct contact with imported bulk refrigerated cargo should be relatively fixed, have their body temperature checked regularly, and have their nucleic acid tests conducted at least once in 7 days with strict access control management. In case of any positive test result on refrigerated cargo, the loading and unloading personnel shall immediately have their nucleic acids tested according to the regulations and be kept in lockdown. Before the lockdown is lifted, nucleic acids tests should

be conducted according to the requirements of local joint prevention and control mechanism units.

Under the guidance from the local health authority, the port enterprises, pilotage agencies, ship agency companies, ship repair enterprises and third-party inspection institutions should strengthen the professional training for operators who may have direct contact with bulk refrigerated cargo, personnel that have close contact with crew members, embarking personnel such as pilots, field service agents and ship repair workers, to train them on how to wear and take off protective suits correctly, and ensure that key protection measures are effective.

Personnel working in high-risk occupations such as terminal operator, pilot, ship agent, ship repair worker that received vaccination with COVID-19 vaccine, should have nucleic acid tests conducted regularly according to the relevant regulations developed by local health departments.

VI. Environment sanitation

Epidemic protective materials, disinfection and sterilization products and related equipment should be adequately supplied and priority should be given to safeguarding both the protective equipment and the manpower. Purchasing, configuring and using of all protective equipment for front line workers should be in the spirit of strictly following the high-risk standards in order to make sure to reserve, distribute and use in place. Epidemic prevention materials include but are not limited to: ordinary masks, medical high-level protective masks, protective suits, safety goggles or protective face screens, disinfectants (chlorine-antiseptic from 250 mg/L to 500 mg/L of chlorine disinfectant or 75% (mass fraction) alcohol, which should not be mixed in use and in storage), disinfectant hand sanitizers, disinfectant paper tissues, disposable gloves, rubber gloves, thermometers, infrared thermometers, emergency vehicles, emergency medicines, etc.

6.1 Ventilation and environment sanitation requirements

6.1.1 Environmental ventilation should be strengthened. Reception halls, waiting rooms, canteens, conference rooms, office areas and other spaces should be equipped with alcohol, disposable hand sanitizer and other supplies, and their windows should be opened regularly for ventilation, to maintain indoor air circulation with ventilation frequency of no less than 5 times a day and no less than 30 minutes each time.

6.1.2 Air conditioners should be properly used. Natural ventilation is preferred. If an air conditioner is used, the air supply of the air conditioning system should be ensured, and sufficient fresh air input should be ensured. All exhaust air is discharged directly to the outdoors. When the air conditioner is not in use, the air return duct should be closed.

6.1.3 Surroundings should be kept clean and tidy. Garbage should be cleaned up and transported in time.

6.1.4. Cooperation should be made with relevant units to transfer and treat wastes from international ships.

6.2 Cleaning and disinfection

6.2.1 Vehicles and boats for staff transfer should be disinfected every time.

6.2.2 The surface of frequently contacted objects (reception windows, elevator buttons, handrails, door handles, etc.) should be sprayed with chlorine disinfectant containing effective chlorine 250 mg/L ~ 500 mg/L, or wiped with disinfectant wet towels.

6.2.3 Personnel gathering areas (such as reception halls, waiting rooms, meeting rooms, office areas, dormitories, etc.) should be cleaned and disinfected at least 3 times a day at regular intervals. Elevators and bathrooms should be cleaning and disinfected at least 6 times a day at regular intervals. The disinfection operation should try the best to avoid the operation times. These areas should be sprayed with chlorine-containing disinfectant (using 84 disinfectant at a ratio of not less than 1:50) to ensure that the disinfection concentration is 30 mL per cubic meter, or wiped with disinfection in a mass fraction of not less than 75% alcohol for the related equipment and areas touched by many people. Never use a mixture of chlorine-containing disinfectant and alcohol disinfectant. Greater cleaning and disinfection frequency is required in closed spaces used for workers handling imported cold chain cargo, such as their living rooms, dining and rest areas.

6.2.4 The areas should be kept relatively closed to achieve the disinfection effect during spraying the disinfectant. Windows should not be opened until 20 minutes later after spraying the disinfectant to keep natural ventilation again. These areas can resume normal working after at least 10 minutes.

6.2.5 Garbage containers such as trash cans should be cleaned more often and disinfected regularly. These garbage containers can be sprayed with a chlorine-containing disinfectant containing chlorine 250 mg/L to 500 mg/ L, or wiped with disinfected wet towels.

6.2.6 The disposable protective equipment used should be collected and disposed in a concentrated way, and the protective equipment repeatedly used by high-risk personnel for cold chain operations should be collected and disinfected in a concentrated way.

6.3 Hygiene protection

6.3.1 One or two non-contact body temperature check points should be established at entrances to minimize entrances and exits, or maintain one-way entrance and exit. When conducting the body temperature check, the staff should try to keep a distance of more than

1 meter from the person checked and wear working clothes, protective masks, disposable gloves or rubber gloves, and if possible, protective glasses or protective screens.

6.3.2 Some operating workers, visitors, business personnel who need to enter the working areas should make an appointment in advance. The personnel who boarded the ships engaged on international voyages through port should hold the negative nucleic acid results within 7 days. Both sides should wear protective masks, reduce physical contacts such as shaking hands and hugging, and wash their hands in a timely manner.

6.3.3 The personnel gathering areas should implement spacing and segregation measures, and people in those areas should keep a reasonable distancing.

6.3.4 Virtual meetings are recommended over physical gathering. All participants of the meeting should wear protective masks with social distancing of more than 1 meter. Meeting time should be controlled, and windows are kept open should the meeting time be too long. The meeting venue, furniture, tea cups must be disinfected after meeting adjourned.

6.3.5 Serving of individual dishes is recommended in canteens to avoid personnel gathering, and dining rooms should be disinfected each time before and after use. All personnel should wear protective masks, and avoid as much as possible any contacts with public goods and parts, and wash hands frequently. Use alcohol-based disinfection products (such as 75% alcohol solution) to clean hands if there is no clean water.

6.3.6 Disinfection wet towels are used to wipe door handles, phones, keyboards, mice, office stationery, etc.

6.3.7 Alcohol spraying and operation equipment wiping are prohibited in open fire operation areas, and alcohol disinfection of hands, shoes, and clothes is prohibited. Disinfection solutions and disinfection wet towels are recommended for these situations.

6.3.8 During the operations of dangerous goods, attention should be paid to the electrostatic hazards that may be caused by wearing protective suits (if any). Static elimination procedures must be performed when entering dangerous goods operation areas.

6.3.9 According to the requirements of the customs, the port operators who cooperate with the customs in the quarantine of imported refrigerated cargo and imported high-risk cold chain container cargo should be relatively fixed and controlled in a concentrated way. They shall correctly wear protective suits, goggles, masks, gloves and other personal protective equipment throughout the whole process, and focus personal protection. At the same time, nucleic acid test shall be conducted regularly in accordance with the provisions of the customs and local joint prevention and control mechanism.

6.3.10 The passenger terminals should implement the prevention and control in accordance with the latest edition of the *Guidance on COVID-19 Epidemic Prevention and Control in Passenger Terminals with Different Risk Categories*.

VII. Proper Emergency Planning

7.1 Units such as pilot agencies and port enterprises should have emergency plans in place and improve them accordingly, strengthen sharing of information and cooperate with units such as the customs, immigration, port control, local health, transport and others.

7.2 The embarking pilot should take the strictest protective measures such as wearing protective suits, safety goggles, medical high-level protective masks, gloves if some crews are found with fevering, coughing and other abnormal health conditions. Meanwhile, the ship is required to ventilate and be disinfected and all crew members are to wear high-level protective masks, personnel isolation and other preventive measures. If necessary, professional personnel should be arranged to guide pilots to wear/take off protective suits and disinfect on site. Port enterprises should adopt strict ship-shore isolation measures, and cooperate with relevant departments to deal with investigation and isolation of close contacted personnel of their own units.

7.3 When a person is found vomiting with symptoms of suspected COVID-19 case, the vomit should be covered and disinfected immediately with a sufficient amount of disinfectant (such as chlorine-containing disinfectant) or effective disinfecting dry towels with disposable absorbent materials. After the vomit is removed, chlorine-containing disinfectants must be used to disinfect the surface of the object.

7.4 After the suspected infected persons are isolated, the temporary observation rooms and other areas that may be contaminated shall immediately be fully disinfected by disinfection personnel. Ships and vehicles used for transfer of the suspected infected persons should be thoroughly disinfected after the transfer is completed.

7.5 If there are confirmed cases of crews onboard the ship to be embarked, the pilot agencies and port enterprise should immediately report to the local joint prevention and control mechanism, and cooperate with relevant departments to have them held in lockdown, to have the nucleic acid tests conducted, and to have their travel routes surveyed. Meanwhile, reports in writing must be submitted to the transport authority in a timely manner.