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Circular Letter No.4306
25 June 2020

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

Subject: **Communication from the Government of Belize**

The Government of Belize has sent the attached communications, dated 18 June 2020, with the request that they be circulated by the Organization.

June 18, 2020

Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary-General
International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

Dear Secretary General,

Recognizing that the Corona Virus (COVID -19) has created unprecedented impacts on the smooth running of the Maritime Operations globally, the Administration of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) is updating the Organization of the approach adopted by IMMARBE concerning the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Administration of IMMARBE developed Circulars and Notices that provide guidance, issue support and consider temporary solutions for our shipowners, their ships and seafarers affected by COVID-19. We kindly request His excellency's assistance in providing this information to be communicated to all IMO Member States and inter-governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER (No. ICL-20-001) issued on the 11th February 2020, promulgated the information of the IMO Circular Letter No. 4204 on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Also, it lays out the procedure where a Seafarer or Passenger on board a vessel registered with IMMARBE is Suspected of being infected with COVID-19.

Merchant Marine Notice (MMN-20-002) issued on the 17th March 2020, informed all concerned parties of the current situation and temporary measures to be taken by IMMARBE's Technical Department due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Some of these measures include, the decision to grant extensions on mandatory surveys and audits (SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, 2006, etc.), up to May 31st, 2020 based on certain requirements. Also, the decision to grant a dry-docking extension up to May 31st, 2020 based on the given requirements.

IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER (No. ICL-20-002) issued on the 19th March 2020, established further guidance and important information originating from IMO and other organizations such as the World Health Organization relating to the COVID-19 outbreak which has been declared by WHO as a pandemic on March 11th, 2020. On the circular, attached were the links to the Circular letters and useful documents, such as the International Maritime Organization Circular Letter No. 4204, which highlights the necessary precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others onboard ships.



IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER (No. ICL-20-003) issued on the 25th March 2020, informed all interested parties about the measures established by the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize to assist all the Seafarers on-board Belize's registered vessels during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The circular issues instructions on how the companies are to handle the Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA) that expires or is due to expire between 1st April 2020 and 31st August 2020. The Administration of IMMARBE is prepared to extend the SEA may be up to 6 months from the date of expire with the approval of the seafarer and witnessed by an individual not a party to the Agreement.

IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER (No. ICL-20-004) issued on the 20th April 2020, from the desk of the Senior Deputy Registrar addressing the different measures and arrangements which were established to continue providing a high-quality service to our Deputy Registrars, Registered owners, registered bareboat charterers, Managers and Representatives of ships flying the Belize Flag and relevant parties without significant disruption.

It was also mentioned, that all staff working at the Head Office obtained the equipment needed for them to work remotely. Thus, ensuring our services and operations to remain uninterrupted by any external factor. While the staff had set up their stations remotely, we continued using our global presence through our designated offices abroad to be able to respond on time on issues relating to our fleet of ships and its crew. In addition, due to some challenges being faced by some countries on lockdown, we implemented a QR Code system to have our certificates being provided electronically without having the need to have the printed and dispatched to the ship.

Merchant Marine Notice (MMN-20-003r1) issued on the 29th April 2020, but revised on the 5th June 2020, informed all concerned parties of the updated temporary measures to be taken by the Belize Flag Administration through its Technical Department due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Whereby the grant of extensions on mandatory surveys and audits (SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, 2006, etc.), up to July 31st, 2020 based on certain requirements. Also, the decision to grant a dry-docking extension up to July 31st, 2020 based on the given requirements.

IMMARBE would like to take this opportunity to display our continuous commitment in upholding our responsibilities and duties as a flag state as we closely monitor the developments and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and considering all international and industry guidance relating to this matter.


Annette Garel (Mrs)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE HEAD OFFICE



IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER No. **ICL-20-001**

Issuance Date: 11 February, 2020

To: Deputy Registrars, Registered owners, registered bareboat charterers, Managers and Representatives of ships flying the Belize Flag

Subject: Novel Coronavirus- Precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships

Reference

- 1.1. IMO Circular Letter No. 4203 – Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
- 1.2. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204- Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
- 1.3. MSA, China: Announcement of the Maritime Safety Administration of the People's Republic of China on Issues Related to Ship Management during Epidemic Prevention and Control
- 1.4. WHO-International Medical Guide for Ships (Table-23.2)

Purpose: The purpose of this Circular is to promulgate IMO Circular Letter No. 4204 on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

Overview

1. On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that the outbreak of 2019-nCoV constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). On 31 January 2020, IMO issued Circular Letter No. 4204 to provide information and guidance, based on recommendations made by the WHO, on the precautions for minimizing risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).
2. The circular letter as attached to this Note provides information of the symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection, the risks of outbreak, WHO advice to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections as well as helpful links for available guidance to seafarers and shipping.
3. Shipowners, ship managers, ship operators and masters are urged to promulgate information to ensure that seafarers, passengers and others on board ships are provided with accurate and relevant information on the coronavirus outbreak and on the measures to reduce the risk of exposure if they are likely to be engaged on ships trading to and from ports in coronavirus-affected States.

4. Due to the continued spread of coronavirus, many cities have been closed in China and people are not allowed to go outside unless for daily supplies, for this reason MSA, China has issued the following announcement for the Chinese domestic vessels during the epidemic prevention and control period:
 - a. “Relevant certificates of ships, crews, shipping companies, etc. issued (Audited) by the Maritime administrations and Recognized organizations, if they expire during the epidemic prevention and control period and cannot perform annual inspections, audits or reissues on schedule, they can be postponed. No Maritime administration shall impose administrative penalties”.(MSA,China)
 - b. “For "four types of ships" (i.e. passenger ships, dangerous goods ships, gravel ships, fluidized bulk cargo ships) and transportation ships of epidemic prevention and control material , if certificates expire due to epidemic prevention and control, that it is impossible to carry out on-site inspection, ship owners or operators shall strengthen the safety self-inspection of the ship. Ship owners/operators may submit the self-inspection report to the ships’ Recognized organizations in a timely manner and take full responsibility for the self-inspection report. The ship Recognized organizations shall carefully review the self-examination report, and shall promptly correct any problems found, guide ship owners and operators to make corrections, and ensure that ships are well equipped with technical conditions for safe navigation”.(MSA,China)

Preventive/Precautionary Measures

In view of the above mentioned, the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) recommends implementing the following Preventative/Precautionary measures on board ships:

Vessel Owners, Company Security Officers, Designated Persons Ashore, Masters and Ship Security Officers of Ships flying the Belizean flag trading in areas which are experiencing an outbreak of 2019-nCoV are encouraged to implement measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Seafarers calling at Chinese ports are advised to wear masks and take precautionary measures to avoid getting infected and prevent its potential spreading.

When entering Chinese ports, seafarers may be required to remain on board their ships and disembark their vessels only where absolutely necessary.

It is reported that local Chinese authorities are requiring all vessels to report the temperature and condition of vessel's crew before entry into the port.

Ships' crews are also advised to alert the authorities in the event coronavirus is suspected on board, and take precautions to reduce the possibility of the spread of any virus, including minimal interpersonal exchanges with persons from ashore, avoiding contact with people who show symptoms of flu or high temperature and taking care of personal hygiene including more frequent handwashing, etc.

Establishing preventive measures against security incidents may also be effective in preventing the spread of the virus to ships and seafarers. These include conducting a risk assessment prior to entry into an affected port, assessing the preventive measures taken by those ports, and diligent application of access controls. Such measures may serve to support other actions aimed at preventing the spread of 2019-nCoV and thus enhance the safety of seafarers and persons with whom they may come into contact.

1. Only those cleared by the port authorities should be allowed on board.
2. Limit visitor access to the vessel and to the crew as much as possible.
3. Avoid shaking hands.
4. Wipe down areas and items visitors have touched or may have touched with disinfectant wipes and/or sprays.
5. Handwashing is the best way to reduce the risk of infection being transmitted from one person to another:
 - a) hands should be washed before and after every contact with a patient, using alcohol-based gels or liquids rather than soap to disinfect the hands;
 - b) the use of gloves does not replace the need for hand-washing.

It is also worth noting that additional port control measures may adversely impact the rate of loading and discharging operations leading to delays. Besides seaports, there are strict restrictions on the land side in China such as lockdown of some cities and stoppage of public transport operations. As a result, ship operators could face operational issues, such as arranging for surveyors, service engineers and supplies, or even delays in port operations, due to labor shortage.

We expect that most port health authorities will, as a precautionary measure, be on a heightened state of alert in order to identify crewmembers displaying relevant symptoms for ships and crews that have previously called at any Chinese port.

Many countries and ports have already implemented specific quarantine measures for ships arriving from China. One example is Singapore. The Maritime Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has implemented temperature screening of passengers and crew at all

sea checkpoints. In addition, persons with a travel history to China in the previous 14 days will not be allowed to enter Singapore. However, the MPA does emphasize that “ships can continue to berth at terminals to carry out operations”. Other countries, such as the US, also require ships to proactively report any suspect or actual illness cases to local health authorities after arrival. Some ports authorities, such as the Port of New Orleans, may even impose a fine on ships that do not accurately report the health condition of crew members.

Suspected infection

In the event a Seafarer or Passenger on board a vessel registered with IMMARBEL is Suspected of being infected with 2019 nCoV the following actions should be taken:

1. Suspected infected seafarer or passenger (see Table 23.2 of “International Medical Guide for Ships” issued by the World Health Organization).
 - a) Isolate the infected person in a single-berth cabin: door may be open; masks (N95) to be worn within one meter of patient.
 - b) Contacts to wear disposable gloves; for close contact (e.g. to bathe or turn the patient); plastic overalls or aprons also essential
2. Vessel operators and Masters are reminded that they are required to report sick seafarers prior to entering port.

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)
- ✓ IMO Circular Letter No. 4203 – Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
- ✓ USCG Novel Coronavirus Precautions
- ✓ 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/
- ✓ https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1056031https://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

Further Recommendations for Registered owners, registered bareboat charterers, Managers and Representatives of ships registered with IMMARBE:

We recommend checking with the Port Agents and Authorities for further information especially when calling on ports in China, Hong Kong, and Singapore and other port areas where the infection has been reported. We also recommend reviewing the following:

- ✓ WHO: www.who.int/ith/2020-24-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/; [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-01-2020-statement-on-the-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-01-2020-statement-on-the-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov))
- ✓ Hong Kong: <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202001/22/P2020012200982.htm>
- ✓ Singapore: <https://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/media-centre/news-releases/detail/1a8e0ea3-4a09-4a66-8357-12e1ff06d534>

We recommend monitoring the situation by consulting webpages maintained by the WHO and other public health authorities and evaluate the risks present in the next port of call. WHO-website: <https://www.who.int/ith/2020-27-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-newcoronavirus/en/>

In consideration of the current circumstances faced in China where our Designated offices are currently closed, vessel owners, managers, representatives etc. are encouraged to contact head office for any queries regarding the registration of vessels, seafarers certification and statutory certification services in the event Designated offices cannot be reached.

For any questions or queries on this matter, kindly contact Mrs. Annette Garel, Senior Deputy Registrar of Ships at deputyregistrarbze@immarbe.com or Mr. Albert Melendez at albertmelendez@immarbe.com. General queries can be sent to immarbe@immarbe.com.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Annette Garel'.

Annette Garel (Mrs)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE HEAD
OFFICE

IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER No. ICL-20-002

Issuance Date: 19 March, 2020

To: Deputy Registrars, Registered owners, registered bareboat charterers, Managers and Representatives of ships flying the Belize Flag

Subject: Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19)

Reference

1. IMO Circular Letter 4204- Novel Corona Virus
2. IMO Circular Letter 4204/Add.1- COVID-19 – Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments
3. IMO Circular Letter 4204/Add.2- Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak
4. IMO Circular Letter 4204/Add.3- Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships
5. IMO Circular Letter 4204/Add 4- ICS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers
6. IMO Circular Letter 4204/Add 5- Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers
7. Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak
8. International Chamber of Shipping Guidelines- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers
9. WHO Guideline- Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases and outbreaks on board ships

Purpose: The purpose of this circular is to disseminate useful and important information originating from IMO and other organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) relating to the COVID-19 outbreak which has been declared by WHO as a pandemic on March 11th, 2020.

Overview:

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. The virus did not match any other known virus. This raised concern because when a virus is new, we do not know how it affects people. One week later, on 7 January, Chinese authorities confirmed that they had

identified a new virus. The new virus is a coronavirus, which is a family of viruses that include the common cold, and viruses such as SARS and MERS. This new virus has been named COVID-19.

On January 31st, 2020 the International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued the **Circular Letter No. 4204** to provide information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). IMO then issued several addenda to the aforementioned circular encouraging member states and international organizations to disseminate the very useful information to all concern parties. For your reference **below are links to the Circular letters and useful documents** that highlights the necessary precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships.

Appendices:

1. IMO Circular Letter No.4204 – Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), dated 31st January 2020
 - <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/PublishingImages/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204%20%20Novel%20Coronavirus%202019-Ncov%20Secretariat.pdf>
2. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1 – COVID-19 – Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments, dated 19th February 2020
 - <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/CL.4204-Add.1%20English.pdf>
3. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.2 – Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak, dated 21st February 2020
 - [http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.2%20-%20Joint%20Statement%20Imo-Who%20On%20The%20Response%20To%20The%20Covid-19%20Outbreak%20\(Secretariat\).pdf](http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.2%20-%20Joint%20Statement%20Imo-Who%20On%20The%20Response%20To%20The%20Covid-19%20Outbreak%20(Secretariat).pdf)
4. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.3 – Operational Considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships, dated 2nd March 2020
 - <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.3.pdf>
5. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.4 – ICS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers, dated 5th March 2020
 - <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/Circular%20Letter%20No.4204-Add.4.pdf>
6. Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5- Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers, dated 7th March 2020.

- <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/CL.4204-Add.5.pdf>
- 7. Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak
 - http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Documents/Joint%20Statement_COVID-19.pdf
- 8. International Chamber of Shipping Guidelines- Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers
 - [https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6](https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/resources/coronavirus-(covid-19)-guidance-for-ship-operators-for-the-protection-of-the-health-of-seafarers.pdf?sfvrsn=6)
- 9. WHO Guideline- Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases and outbreaks on board ships
 - <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/operational-considerations-for-managing-covid-19-cases-outbreak-on-board-ships>



Annette Garel (Mrs)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE HEAD
OFFICE





IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER No. ICL-20-003

Issuance Date: 25 March, 2020

To: **Deputy Registrars, Vessel Managers, Ship Owners/Operators, Seafarers,
Seafarers Crewing Agents, Port State Control and Maritime Stakeholders.**

Subject: **IMMARBE Seafarer's Department Covid-19 Assistance 2020**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Circular is to inform all interested parties about the measures established by the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize to assist all the Seafarers on-board Belize's registered vessels during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

GENERAL:

In view of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Administration of IMMARBE has been diligently working with all our counterparts in providing the necessary services, guidelines and assistance for the safety and security of our crew.

The effects of this outbreak are having a repercussion to the seafarers on board whose Employment agreements have expired or will expire soon. The companies are facing significant operational constraints, because their planned disembarkation of the seafarers cannot be safely completed at Ports affected by the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus.

In light of these challenges, the Administration of IMMARBE in solidarity with the IMO, WHO, ILO guidelines have made the following decisions:

1. Where a Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA) expires or is due to expire between 1st April, 2020 and 31st August, 2020, and a seafarer has reached the maximum period of service and/or repatriation of the seafarer is difficult due to current travel restrictions, the SEA may be extended to 6 months from the date of expiry. The contract will be extended under the same terms and conditions as agreed on the original agreement. However, the Agreement to such an extension, must be agreed and signed by the seafarer and witnessed by an individual not party to the Agreement.

For the interim, if a pressing issue regarding any of our personnel on-board arises, kindly send us the details to seafarersofficer1@immarbe.com or Seafarersmanager@immarbe.com so we can provide you an authorization letter to prevent this case from causing any difficulties with Port State.

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2. Additional assistance will be given to officers who find themselves in a position where it is absolutely impossible to renew their medical certificates before embarking or in case they become invalid in voyage. These queries will be handled on a case by case basis and anyone found in these situations must apply to the IMMARBE Seafarer Manager for support at Seafarersmanager@immarbe.com.

3. Finally we are also giving assistance in case COE's must be extended for officers that are unable to take refresher courses or extended their CoC's. Again, we stand ready to assist in this matter. Kindly forward to us the details of your request so we can facilitate forthwith.

Kindly also note that as a part of the support relief package IMMARBE's Administration will be providing the extension letter free of cost. We know that there are some strains felt because of the inherent shift in operations due to unforeseen circumstances.

For SEA Extensions we will need information regarding:

1. Copy of the affected SEA;
2. Copy of the COE's of seafarers affected;
3. Copy of a crew list form the vessel on which the seafarers are currently employed;
4. an official letter of request from the captain signed by the crew members affected; and
5. The vessel particulars.

We would like to ask all our representatives copied herein that may have access to manning companies or vessel managers or operators that may have crew faced with these issues to forward to them this information in aide of this very helpful program being implemented.

IMMARBE makes all efforts to keep all stakeholders informed of any developments and technical guidelines proposed by the IMO, ILO and WHO. You should expect for us to provide this information to you on a continuous basis as they become available to us.

Annette Garel (Mrs)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE HEAD
OFFICE



Edmond Staine (Mr)
Seafarers Manager
IMMARBE HEAD OFFICE



IMMARBE CIRCULAR LETTER No. ICL-20-004

Issuance Date: 20 April, 2020

COVID-19 Contingency Measures International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (Update APRIL 2020)

From the office of the Senior Deputy Registrar of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize, Mrs. Annette Garel, Ministry of Finance, Government of Belize.

Dear Deputy Registrars, shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, masters and all seafarers,

The COVID-19 pandemic is at alarming statistics worldwide, and it has had a substantial impact on the shipping industry, crew, and other related services. As a Ship Registry, IMMARBE, is being conscious of the instructions and recommendations issued by the Government of Belize, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other relevant sources.

Taking into consideration that there is no definitive timeframe for this current pandemic, rest assured that IMMARBE will continue providing the same high level of services from our staff throughout our operations as it will not be interrupted by any external factor, considering that we have the necessary hardware and technologically advanced software platforms to allow our staff to work remotely, giving them the ability to offer swift responses to our clients as the needs may arise.

While we have set up our stations remotely, we are using our global presence through our designated offices abroad to be able to respond on time on issues relating to our fleet of ships and its crew. All authorized designated offices/Deputy Registrars situated in global strategic countries are also working remotely from their homes. However, the Management team of IMMARBE can be reached directly at mobile numbers detailed below. For any

seafarers matters Edmond Staine (+501-614-6710);

For any technical matters: Eduardo Simons at (+34-663-50-0882); and I, the Senior Deputy Registrar,

remain available for any Registration or related matters at (+501-610-1071).

IMMARBE empathizes with the situation faced by the owners, managers and operators of Belize Registered Ships and desires to take a pragmatic approach to assist the industry in overcoming these challenges. In order to inform you of our plans and specifically how they may affect you during this period we have produced this information note for your reference.

Ship Registration

All Registration services will continue to be available and all requests are responded within 24hours. Subsequently, all key personnel are equipped with the technology necessary to receive, authorize and issue requested services through proper coordination with the Belize city main office. In view of some of the difficulties being faced by some countries on lockdown, we are working towards the implementation of a QR Code system to have our certificates being provided electronically without having the need to have the printed and dispatched to the ship.

Apostille of Documents: Due to the closure of this Government office for the legalization of documents emanating from the Belize Register, we are unable to legalize any document by Apostille, until further notice. We are open to discuss alternative measures, where necessary.



Seafarers

IMMARBE recognizes the potential threat to seafarers and vessels calling at ports in countries directly or indirectly affected by the outbreak. Companies, managers, crewing agents, etc. are encouraged to promulgate information given by webpages maintained by the WHO and public health authorities on the coronavirus outbreak and on the measures to reduce the risk of exposure if they are likely to be engaged on ships trading to and from ports in coronavirus-affected States. The Seafarers Manager is closely monitoring and following up on daily bases with our International Regional Offices and fully aware of any problem which may surge and provide the adequate solutions. One can refer to the **Circular Letter No. 4204/Add,5** (issued on 17 March 2020) on any guidance relating to the certification of seafarers.

A general extension of 6 months from the date of expiry of the certificate is acceptable and is being provided by the Administration to ensure that our seafarers are not working onboard our ships with expired or invalid Belize certificates.

Moreover, A general six-month extension from the date of expiry has been provided to Seafarers holding Belizean certificates of endorsements which expire or are due to expire between 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020 may be extended as necessary.

Annette Garel (Mrs)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE HEAD
OFFICE



Flexibility is extended for those shipowners and seafarers who require an extension to seafarer agreements for up to six months in full accordance with the agreement of both parties concerned. Please feel to contact our Seafarer's Department for any case for consideration.

Technical Department

In addition, IMMARBE's Technical Department decided to take temporary measures related to Implementation and Enforcement of IMO Instruments due to force majeure as reflected in the Merchant Marine Notice 20-002 launched on 17 March 2020. Our Technical Staff is instructed to analyze case by case with a different approach, so we are fully familiar with any particular situation.

Conclusively, we want to take the best decisions, so any affected client receive our best support while we go through this worldwide pandemic. All in all, reiterating the fact that IMMARBE is making everything possible to continue delivering the high level of our services from our side.

We all have a shared responsibility in containing this outbreak and promoting a sense of awareness amongst ourselves and others. We hope that these guidelines will spread the message that basic human acts can go a long way in protecting each other as well as containing the spread of this disease.



To: DEPUTY REGISTRARS, SHIP OWNERS/ISM OPERATORS/RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS/
SHIPPING AGENTS/GENERAL SAFETY INSPECTORS

Reference: Technical Department Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Temporary Measures.

Issuance Date: 17/03/2020

MSN Superseded: N/A
ISSUE DATE: 17 March 2020

Revision No.: N/A

1. PURPOSE

To inform all concerned parties of the current situation and temporary measures to be taken by the Technical Department due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. BACKGROUND

On December 31st, 2019, the first outbreak known globally as the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China.

On January 30th, 2020 the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations.

On January 31st, 2020 the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued the Circular Letter No. 4204 to provide information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This information and guidance are based on recommendations developed by the WHO.



On February 19th, 2020 an addendum to above mentioned circular was issued (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.1) providing advice on Implementation and Enforcement of Relevant IMO Instruments.

On February 21st, 2020 another addendum (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2) was issued containing the Joint Statement IMO-WHO dated February 13th, 2020 on the response to the COVID-19 Outbreak and encourages Member States and International Organizations to disseminate it as widely as possible.

On the 2nd and 5th of March 2020 two more addendums (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3 and Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4 respectively) were issued containing Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships and International Chamber of Shipping Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially declared the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, a pandemic.

3. CONTENT

In view of the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) causing complications for the regular shipping operation, traveling restrictions and the fast spread extended to several countries, IMMARBE's Technical Department decided to take temporary measures related to Implementation and Enforcement of IMO Instruments due to force majeure.

4. TEMPORARY MEASURES

4.1. IMMARBE's Technical Department is prepared to grant extension on mandatory surveys and audits (SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, 2006, etc.) up to May 31st, 2020 based on the following:

4.1.1. Requests shall be submitted by the Recognized Organization in charge of the mandatory certification supporting this extension.

4.1.2. Recognized Organizations shall submit temporary measures based on their procedures and requirements to be followed on board in order to keep the vessel in good standings during this period.



4.1.3. Shipowners/Operators shall submit the Self-Inspection Checklist in accordance with our Merchant Marine Notice 20-001 through the Recognized Organization as evidence of the proper self-inspection onboard confirming the good standing of the vessel.

4.2. IMMARBE's Technical Department is prepared to grant dry-docking extension up to May 31st, 2020 based on the following:

4.2.1. Request shall be submitted by the Deputy Registrar of the vessel using the form TDF-006.

4.2.2. The request shall contain a shipyard rejection letter due to COVID-19 along with a written confirmation of acceptance issued by the Recognized Organization.

Any request for dry-docking extension not related to the COVID-19 must comply with the parameters stated in our Merchant Marine Notice 18-001.

Note: These temporary measures will be ceased to be valid as soon as the World Health Organization (WHO) declares that the pandemic is finalized, and the risk is over but might be revised and the period extended if the situation remains.

5. ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES

Any vessel falling under above detailed temporary measures shall be provided with electronic certificates by the authorized RO to be valid until May 31st, 2020 with the intention to keep a valid certificate on board.

Upon completion of above period and as soon as all mandatory surveys/audits can be performed in accordance with Item 5.6 "Revalidation of Certificates" of IMO Resolution A.1053(27) "Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC), 2011, any electronic certificate issued under these temporary measures must be replaced by a compliance certificate maintaining the current ship's certification cycle.



Merchant Marine Notice MMN-20-002

6. ACTIONS REQUESTED

This Administration would like to encourage all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrar and Recognized Organizations to take note of the contents of this Notice and to ensure its provisions are enforced on board vessels registered at IMMARBE as deemed necessary.

This Merchant Marine Notice is to be brought to the attention of Owners/ISM Operators, Masters and Recognized Organizations and be implemented forthwith.

Look forward for your cooperation and assistance.

The Notice was issued in Belize city, Belize: 17 March 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Simon".

Eng. Eduardo Simon
Technical Manager
IMMARBE



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "AnnetteGarel".

AnnetteGarel(Mrs.)
Senior Deputy Registrar
IMMARBE



Merchant Marine Notice MMN-20-003r1

To: DEPUTY REGISTRARS, SHIP OWNERS/ISM OPERATORS/RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS/
SHIPPING AGENTS/GENERAL SAFETY INSPECTORS

Reference: BELIZE (IMMARBE) Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Temporary Measures.

Issuance Date: 29 April 2020

MMN Superseded: 20-002 & 20-003
ISSUE DATE: **29 April 2020**

Revision No.: 1 (5 June 2020)

1. PURPOSE

To inform all concerned parties of the current situation and temporary measures to be taken by the Belize Flag Administration through its Technical Department due to the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. BACKGROUND

On December 31st, 2019, the first outbreak known globally as the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China.

On January 30th, 2020 the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations.

On January 31st, 2020 the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued the Circular Letter No. 4204 to provide information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This information and guidance are based on recommendations developed by the WHO.



Merchant Marine Notice MMN-20-003r1

On February 19th, 2020 an addendum to above mentioned circular was issued (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.1) providing advice on Implementation and Enforcement of Relevant IMO Instruments.

On February 21st, 2020 another addendum (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2) was issued containing the Joint Statement IMO-WHO dated February 13th, 2020 on the response to the COVID-19 Outbreak and encourages Member States and International Organizations to disseminate it as widely as possible.

On the 2nd and 5th of March 2020 two more addendums (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3 and Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4 respectively) were issued containing Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships and International Chamber of Shipping Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) has officially declared the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, a pandemic.

After the declaration of a COVID-19 pandemic by the WHO, the IMO had launched the following addendums to the Circular Letter No. 4204. These addendums are listed below:

- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5 rev1](#) (2 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) –Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers and fishing vessel personnel.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6](#) (27 March 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) –Preliminary list of recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on the facilitation of maritime trade during COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.7](#) (3 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) –Guidance concerning unforeseen delays in the delivery of ships.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.8](#) (14 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Video meeting with port State control (PSC) regimes (includes joint statement and statements and/or relevant temporary guidance issued by the United States, the Acuerdo de Viña del Mar and the Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, Paris and Tokyo MOUs.



- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.9](#) (16 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Joint Statement IMO-WCO on the integrity of the global supply chain during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.10](#) (22 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Joint Statement IMO-WHO-ILO on medical certificates of seafarers, ship sanitation certificates and medical care of seafarers in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.11](#) (24 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – EC Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board ships.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.12](#) (27 April 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Declaration by Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) members in view of the global COVID-19 situation.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.13](#) (5 May 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on facilitating the movement of offshore energy sector personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14](#) (5 May 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.15](#) (6 May 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Personal protective equipment.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.16](#) (6 May 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – COVID-19 related guidelines for ensuring a safe shipboard interface between ship and shore-based personnel.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.17](#) (21 May 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID 19) – Preparing for post COVID-19 operations: considerations and practicalities for port community systems, single window and other electronic exchange platforms.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.18](#) (26 May 2020) – Joint Statement IMO-ICAO-ILO on designation of seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel and service provider



personnel at airports and ports as key workers, and on facilitation of crew changes in ports and airports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.19](#) (2 June 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for flag States regarding surveys and renewals of certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: Circular Letter No.4202 with its addendums can be revised by accessing the following link:

<http://www.imo.org/en/mediacentre/hottopics/pages/coronavirus.aspx>

3. CONTENT

In view of the outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) causing complications for the regular shipping operation, traveling restrictions and the fast spread extended to several countries, the Belize Administration (IMMARBE) through its Technical Department has taken decisive temporary measures related to Implementation and Enforcement of IMO Instruments due to force majeure.

4. TEMPORARY MEASURES

4.1. IMMARBE is prepared to grant extension on mandatory surveys and audits (SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, 2006, etc.) up to July 31st, 2020 based on the following:

4.1.1. Requests shall be submitted by the Recognized Organization in charge of the mandatory certification supporting this extension.

4.1.2. Recognized Organizations shall submit temporary measures based on their procedures and requirements to be followed on board in order to keep the vessel in good standings during this period.

4.1.3. Shipowners/Operators shall submit the Self-Inspection Checklist in accordance with our Merchant Marine Notice 19-006 through the Recognized Organization as evidence of the proper self-inspection onboard confirming the good standing of the vessel.

4.1.4. Shipowners/Operators shall submit a photo report addressing the actual condition of the vessel. The photo report must include, but not limited to photos of the Main Deck, Mooring Stations, Cargo Spaces, Navigational Bridge, Accommodations and Machinery Spaces.



4.2. IMMARBE is prepared to grant dry-docking extension up to July 31st, 2020 based on the following:

4.2.1. Request shall be submitted by the Deputy Registrar of the vessel using the form TDF-006.

4.2.2. The request shall contain a shipyard rejection letter due to COVID-19 along with a written confirmation of acceptance issued by the Recognized Organization.

Any request for dry-docking extension not related to the COVID-19 must comply with the parameters stated in our Merchant Marine Notice 18-001.

4.3. All extensions granted in accordance with the previous version of this notice (MMN-20-002 & MMN-20-003) can be further extended until July 31st, 2020 based on the previous compliance with all requirements set in above items 4.1 and 4.2 by submitting the following:

4.3.1. An affidavit signed by owners/operators confirming unavailability to comply with the previous date granted and that the situation remains unchanged.

4.3.2. Written statement from the Recognized Organization confirming not to have any inconvenience with the new extension.

4.3.3. For those vessels that are entitled to receive an extension beyond 3 months, the Recognized Organization in accordance with the **Guidance for flag States regarding surveys and renewals of certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic** published by the IMO shall review and approved a Risk Assessment. This Risk Assessment will include mitigation measures.

Note: These temporary measures will be ceased to be valid as soon as the World Health Organization (WHO) declares that the pandemic is finalized, and the risk is over but might be revised and the period extended if the situation remains.



5. ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES

Any vessel falling under above detailed temporary measures shall be provided with electronic certificates by the authorized RO to be valid until July 31st, 2020 with the intention to keep a valid certificate on board.

Upon completion of above period and as soon as all mandatory surveys/audits can be performed in accordance with Item 5.6 "Revalidation of Certificates" of IMO Resolution A.1140(31) "Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC), 2019, any electronic certificate issued under these temporary measures must be replaced by a compliance certificate maintaining the current ship's certification cycle.

6. ACTIONS REQUESTED

The Belize Administration would like to encourage all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrars and Recognized Organizations to take note of the contents of this Notice and to ensure its provisions are enforced on board vessels registered at IMMARBE as deemed necessary.

Any queries related to this Notice should be directed to:

Eng. Eduardo Simon
Technical Manager
IMMARBE HEAD OFFICE
E-mail: technicalofficer@immarbe.com



Merchant Marine Notice MMN-20-003r1

This Merchant Marine Notice is to be brought to the attention of Owners/ISM Operators, Masters and Recognized Organizations and be implemented forthwith.

Look forward for your cooperation and assistance.

The Notice was issued in Belize city, Belize 29/04/2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eduardo Simon".

Eng. Eduardo Simon
Technical Manager
IMMARBE



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Annette Garel (Mrs.)
Senior Deputy Registrar
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