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Circular Letter No.4306/Add.2  
1 October 2020

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

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

The Government of Belize sent the attached communication, dated 29 September 2020, with the request that it be circulated by the Organization.

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September 29, 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 continued to create 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 current situation and temporary measures being taken by the Belize Flag Administration through its Technical Department on the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

IMMARBE would like to take this opportunity to demonstrate 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.

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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Annette Garel", is written over a horizontal line.

Annette Garel (Mrs)

Senior Deputy Registrar

IMMARBE HEAD OFFICE





## Merchant Marine Notice **MMN-20-003r3**

### **BELIZE (IMMARBE) Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Temporary Measures**

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

MMN Superseded: 20-002

Revision No.: 3 (23 September 2020)

ISSUE DATE: **29 April 2020**

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#### **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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 31<sup>st</sup>, 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 19<sup>th</sup>, 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 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020 another addendum (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2) was issued containing the Joint Statement IMO-WHO dated February 13<sup>th</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 two more addendums (Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3 and Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4/Rev1 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 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 State, 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/Rev1](#) (29 May 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/Rev.2](#) (22 July 2020) - Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance for flag States regarding surveys and renewals of certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.20](#) (5 June 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Accelerating digitalization of maritime trade and logistics – A call to action.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.21](#) (8 June 2020) – Joint statement IMO-UNCTAD – Call for collaborative action in support of keeping ships moving, ports open and cross-border trade flowing during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.22/Rev1](#) (25 June 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Singapore Crew Change Guidebook.



- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.23](#) (1 July 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommendations for port and coastal States on the prompt disembarkation of seafarers for medical care ashore during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.24](#) (13 July 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Outcome of the International Maritime Virtual Summit on Crew Changes organized by the United Kingdom.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.25](#) (24 July 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Outcome of surveys by ICS and ITF on health protection measures on board ships in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.26](#) (3 August 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Guidance on the gradual and safe resumption of operations of cruise ships in the European Union in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.27](#) (26 August 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Protocols to mitigate the risk of cases on board ships.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.28](#) (26 August 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – WHO guidance to promote public health measures on cargo ships and fishing vessels.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.29](#) (4 September 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Communication from the Secretary-General regarding the crew change crisis.
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.30](#) (11 September 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement calling on all Governments to immediately recognize seafarers as key workers, and to take swift and effective action to eliminate obstacles to crew changes, so as to address the humanitarian crisis faced by the shipping sector, ensure maritime safety and facilitate economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.31](#) (17 September 2020) – Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Joint Statement on the contribution of international trade and supply chains to a sustainable socio-economic recovery in COVID-19 times.

**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 on case by case basis 3 months extension starting from the date of authorization on mandatory surveys and audits (SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, 2006, etc.) based on the evolution of the pandemic and 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. In the event a remote survey is to be performed, applicable procedures must be submitted to the Technical Department.

4.1.3. Shipowners/Operators shall submit the current location of the vessel, next port of calls and current restrictions (if any) of these countries for proper verification.

4.1.4. 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.

4.1.5. 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 3 months starting from the date of the dry-docking extension authorization 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.

4.2.3. Compliance with above item 4.1.

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-20-003r2) must comply again with the requirements of above items 4.1 and 4.2. In addition, to the above the following shall be submitted:

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. For those vessels that are entitled to receive another and it goes **beyond 3 months** from the mandatory due date, 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 for authorized period 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 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.

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The Notice was issued in Belize city, Belize 23/09/2020

A blue ink signature of Eng. Eduardo Simon.

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Eng. Eduardo Simon  
Technical Manager  
IMMARBE



A blue ink signature of Annette Garel (Mrs.).

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Annette Garel (Mrs.)  
Senior Deputy Registrar  
IMMARBE