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Circular Letter No.4383
11 February 2021

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

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the Republic of Singapore**

The Government of the Republic of Singapore has sent the attached communication, dated 11 February 2021, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.



VACCINATIONS FOR KEY MARITIME PERSONNEL - SINGAPORE'S EXPERIENCES

11 FEBRUARY 2021

1. As a major transshipment hub and international maritime centre, Singapore has progressively stepped up measures to protect the health and well-being of all who live and work in Singapore against COVID-19, while ensuring we remain fully operational to support global trade and supply chains. Singapore adopts a multi-pronged approach for our maritime stakeholders in responding to the pandemic, from ensuring safe crew change and protection of shore-based personnel, to economic relief measures for maritime companies, Singaporean and permanent resident maritime personnel and seafarers.
2. In particular, Singapore has been facilitating crew change since March 2020 using a set of 'safe corridor' protocols intended to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread, regardless of the crew's nationality or the vessel's flag (Port Marine Circular [5](#) of 2021 and IMO Circular Letter No. [4204/Add.22/Rev.1](#)). More than 95,000 cases of crew change have since been carried out in Singapore. Almost all these crew are of foreign nationalities.
3. Singapore has also enhanced measures to better protect shore-based maritime personnel including contactless operations to minimise physical interactions, proof of requisite test results, SmartEntry@Sea for the purposes of contract tracing and donning appropriate levels of personal protection equipment. More detailed information can be found in the annexed Port Marine Circular [4](#) of 2021.
4. The availability of vaccines is a significant milestone and will help keep both ships and the local community safe. This memo elaborates on Singapore's experiences in the vaccination of maritime personnel including Singaporean seafarers.

Vaccination of frontline maritime personnel and seafarers

5. Singapore seeks to achieve as high a level of population coverage as possible to reduce the risk of transmission, which in turn facilitates a faster recovery. An Expert Committee on COVID-19 Vaccination assesses and submits recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination; thereafter, Singapore's Health Sciences Authority (HSA) will authorise the use of the recommended vaccine.¹ In line with guidance promulgated by the World Health Organization (WHO) on the allocation of vaccines and prioritisation of groups for vaccination while supply is limited, Singapore has identified priority groups who are at greater risk and most in need of COVID-19 vaccination, including healthcare workers and frontline workers (notably in the maritime and aviation sectors).

¹ As of 3 February 2021, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine have been authorised for pandemic use by HSA. Vaccination is free to all Singaporeans and long-term residents in Singapore.

Keeping key maritime personnel protected

6. Singapore recognises the vital role played by our frontline workers in the maritime sector. These frontline personnel include port workers, harbour pilots, cargo officers, marine surveyors and marine superintendents who are required to work on board ships in our port. They carry out essential works – including navigation, refuelling, ship repair and maintenance, and operations to transfer cargos – to keep the Port of Singapore open and ensure the continued flow of essential goods and supplies. These frontline maritime personnel who go on board vessels and/or come into contact with people beyond our borders, are at the greatest risk of infection.

7. Singapore became one of the first countries to prioritise COVID-19 vaccinations for frontline maritime personnel under Singapore’s Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise ([SAVE](#)). These frontline personnel also include harbourcraft and ocean-going crew who are Singaporeans or long-term residents living in the community. Over 97% of 18,000 identified for vaccination have registered for the vaccination to date. As of 8 February 2021, more than 17,000 maritime personnel have received their first vaccination dose and we expect to complete their second dose of vaccination by end of February 2021.

Early and swift response

8. Close coordination amongst government agencies enabled MPA to be kept apprised of requirements associated with the shipment and administering of specific types of vaccine, from how such vaccines would be approved and procured for use in the country to how these specific types of vaccine are packaged, stored and transported. This allowed MPA to start preparations early, in coordination with relevant agencies, and familiarise with the process of storing vaccines in a warehouse cold room when shipments land in the country, the use of portable iceboxes to transport the vaccines to regional centres for vaccination campaigns, and managing applications for vaccinations.

9. MPA’s close cooperation with industry partners and unions is also key to ensuring the smooth administering of vaccination to the frontline maritime personnel. This is to mitigate delays in rolling out vaccinations, given limited supply and stringent logistical requirements in administering the vaccines. It is important to contact companies early to not only identify the frontline maritime personnel that would receive vaccinations and the number of vaccinations to be allocated from the national stockpile, but also to better understand the companies’ operational considerations of taking these personnel away for vaccinations. MPA continues to engage the industry through digital solutions to respond to queries² or concerns as Singapore progressively rolls out vaccination, and to provide assurances.

Moving forward together

10. Singapore strongly encourages IMO Member States to prioritise the vaccination of maritime personnel, especially their seafarers. International cooperation is vital as IMO Member States continue to address challenges posed by the pandemic. Singapore has

² MPA has set up a portal (<https://covidvaccination.mpa.gov.sg>) for maritime personnel that MPA, Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) and Enterprise Singapore (ESG) have approached to make or cancel bookings, and familiarise with the vaccination process. This has also allowed MPA to better monitor and track the sign-up rate and vaccination progress.

been engaging bilateral and multilateral partners to explore ways to minimise disruptions to trade facilitation and movement of people. We urge IMO Member States to share their experiences in seafarer vaccinations including the acquisition, storage, transportation, administering of vaccines, and rostering of seafarers and key maritime personnel. In doing so, many countries can learn from such protocols for vaccination.

11. We further urge international organisations and industry partners to secure the allocation of vaccination doses for seafarers. Industry partners and port authorities should also begin discussions on ensuring the smooth operationalisation of vaccine transportation and storage when available.

12. Singapore looks forward to working with as many like-minded stakeholders through the Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (STAR) Fund Taskforce to support initiatives towards the development of a global vaccination programme for the maritime sector.



MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

PORT MARINE CIRCULAR NO. 04 OF 2021

14 Jan 2021

REQUIREMENTS FOR SHORE-BASED PERSONNEL BOARDING VESSELS AT ANCHORAGES, SHIPYARDS, TERMINALS AND MARINAS, IN THE PORT OF SINGAPORE

1. This circular supersedes Port Marine Circular No. 35 of 2020 with effect from 15 Jan 2021.

Proof of requisite test results (Rostered Routine Test results or PCR/ART test results) before allowed to go on board a vessel in port

2. Any shore-based personnel¹ who is going on board a vessel² must produce proof that he/she has a valid negative test result from a COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test taken as part of the rostered routine testing (RRT) programme, within the last 7 days before boarding the vessel. Details of the RRT programme are in **Annex A**.

3. Shore-based personnel who are not on a RRT programme will be required to show a valid negative test result from a COVID-19 PCR test or Antigen Rapid Test (ART) within 72 hours prior to boarding the vessel. The COVID-19 PCR test or ART may be done at any of the MOH-approved COVID-19 test providers (<https://www.moh.gov.sg/licensing-and-regulation/regulations-guidelines-and-circulars/details/list-of-covid-19-swab-providers>). After disembarking, these shore-based personnel must take a PCR test between the 5th and 7th day, and a final PCR test on the 11th day. The costs of these tests for shore-based personnel who are not on a RRT programme would be at the shore-based personnel's own or their

¹ "Shore-based personnel" in relation to a relevant vessel, means an individual who is not a passenger or member of the crew of the vessel and (a) is delivering goods or performing services connected to the business of the vessel; (b) is providing any service to any passenger or member of the crew of the vessel on board the vessel; or (c) is effecting the arrest or detention of a vessel or service of any other legal process, whether or not a contractor or an employee or agent of the owner or agent of the relevant vessel.

² "Vessel" includes harbour craft and pleasure craft.

employers' expense.

4. Proof of the tests may be on paper or by electronic means (e.g. HealthHub SG app, SGWorkPass app etc.). The proof of the test must show the date/time of the test and the test result.

5. All owners, occupiers and managers of any waterfront facility – i.e. any pier, wharf, dock, terminal, marina – must ensure that any shore-based personnel going on board a vessel in the port, produce proof of the requisite test (described in paragraph 2 or paragraph 3), before allowing the shore-based personnel to go on board. The owner, occupier or manager of any waterfront facility must also not allow any shore-based personnel who has any specified symptom (coughing, sneezing, breathlessness, a runny nose, loss of sense of smell or anosmia) or is otherwise physically unwell, to go on board the vessel.

6. The owner, agent and master of the vessel which the shore-based personnel is boarding, must check and not allow the shore-based personnel to board if the personnel does not have the requisite test result (described in paragraph 2 or paragraph 3) or if the personnel has any specified symptom (coughing, sneezing, breathlessness, a runny nose, loss of sense of smell or anosmia) or is otherwise physically unwell.

Checking in and out using SafeEntry@Sea; vessels to keep records of shore-based personnel

7. Apart from showing proof of the requisite test result, all shore-based personnel must check-in and check-out with SafeEntry@Sea at the departure points or the waterfront facilities, as appropriate. These departure points are the gazetted public landing steps (i.e. Marina South Pier and West Coast Pier), cargo, oil or cruise terminals, wharves, marinas and shipyards.

8. All owners, occupiers and managers of the departure points or the waterfront facilities, as appropriate, must ensure that all shore-based personnel comply with the SafeEntry@Sea requirements.

9. Pursuant to regulation 61B(3)(b) of the MPA (Port) Regulations, the owner, agent or master of a vessel in port must maintain full and complete records, for the purposes of contact tracing, of all shore-based personnel embarking and disembarking the vessel. The records must contain: (a) date and time of embarkation and disembarkation, (b) person's name in full, passport/NRIC/FIN number, (c) person's mobile number(s), and (d) enterprise's or company's name in full.

Additional requirement for shore-based personnel going on board harbour craft or pleasure craft to do a job

10. Shore-based personnel who have carried out a job on board an ocean-going vessel in the port of Singapore must not, in the next 7 days, go on board a harbour

craft or pleasure craft, to carry out a job. Enterprises must not deploy any of their shore-based personnel to do a job on board any harbour craft or pleasure craft where that personnel had gone on board an ocean-going vessel in the past 7 days. The owner, master or agent of the harbour craft or pleasure craft must check that the shore-based personnel coming on board to do a job, must not have been on board an ocean-going vessel in the past 7 days; and the owner, master or agent of the harbour craft or pleasure craft must disallow boarding if the shore-based personnel has been on board an ocean-going vessel in the past 7 days.

Compliance with all applicable measures to combat COVID-19

11. Enterprises which deploy their shore-based personnel to go on board vessels in the port to carry out a job must ensure that the personnel wears an appropriate level of personal protection equipment, and that the personnel does not (a) remain on board for longer than necessary and does not, in any case, stay on board overnight, (b) consume any food or drink from the ship's stores and (c) convene or take part in any gathering while on board.

12. The shore-based personnel him/herself must also comply with the measures stipulated in **Annex B**.

13. The owner, agent or master of the vessel must, as far as is reasonably practicable, when the shore-based personnel is on board, minimise physical interaction between the shore-based personnel and members of the crew. The owner, agent and master must establish and apply procedures and adequate controls, when any shore-based personnel are on board, to comply with the measures in **Annex B**.

14. Employers of shore-based personnel are reminded to take note of all available health advisories and bring it to the attention of their employees. Employers are responsible to brief their employees on the COVID-19 requirements and measures, i.e. applicable requirements and measures before boarding and while onboard vessels and/or harbour craft in port.

Compliance with port marine circular

15. Failure to comply with the requirements in this port marine circular may result in a breach of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (Port) Regulations or the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020.

16. For clarifications, please write to Duty Officer, Marine Safety Control Centre, email: pms@mpa.gov.sg or contact Tel: +65 6325 2488/9.

CAPT KEVIN WONG
PORT MASTER
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

Rostered Routine Testing for Maritime Frontline Workers

1. Singapore continues to take a calibrated and risk-based approach in determining the precautions and measures for the COVID-19 pandemic. Maritime frontline workers who are in direct contact with foreign ship crew or travellers will need to undergo rostered routine testing (RRT) to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infections as more economic and social activities are allowed to resume. The RRT will allow for early intervention to protect the maritime frontline workers as well as their families.
2. The RRT costs will be borne by the Government till end March 2021 and companies should plan and be prepared to bear the costs from 1 April 2021 onwards.
3. The Health Promotion Board (HPB) Swab Registration System (SRS) will facilitate the booking of COVID-19 test appointments for your employees. SRS will allow the company representative (limited to one account per company) to book test appointments for eligible employees at the available dates and testing centres.
4. You would need to register for a login account to access SRS by nominating a company representative to fill in the SRS account registration form at this [LINK](https://go.gov.sg/7kcjrn) or <https://go.gov.sg/7kcjrn>. If your submission is accurate and complete, you will receive an email to login and book new or regular swab appointments on SRS.
5. Please take note that there will only be a single account created per UEN and no sharing of the same email login ID for different UENs (i.e. one email for one UEN). Kindly follow the steps in the infographics as shown below.

Swab Registration System



Employers to take note:

- Book swab test appointments for your employees
- Monitor and ensure employees do not miss appointments



Go to the [Swab Registration System \(SRS\)](#) to schedule your employees' swab test appointment

6. For all RRT enquiries, please email: swab@mpa.gov.sg.

Measures for vessels when shore-based personnel are going on board

The owner, master, or agent of the vessel in the port, must establish and apply procedures and adequate controls, to comply with the following:

- a. All crew members and shore-based personnel must wear a mask³ at all times (unless the work activity requires that no mask be worn) and, as far as is reasonably practicable, keep a distance of at least one metre apart from each other. In addition, the shore-based personnel are to wear other appropriate personal protective equipment, where necessary, such as gloves and gown, without jeopardising operational and personal safety.
- b. All crew members must take and record their temperature twice daily.
- c. All crew members must maintain good hygiene in the vessel's accommodation areas by cleaning frequently touched surfaces (e.g. desk, chart tables, dining tables, bridge/engine room consoles, door handles, handholds, switches, telephones/VHF handsets, faucets, etc.)
- d. The vessel must have a safe management plan for management of shore-based personnel boarding the vessel. Crew members to be briefed on the plan and to comply with the precautionary measures.
- e. Unwell crew members and/or passengers must be isolated onboard the vessel.
- f. Shore-based personnel who are unwell must be denied access to the vessel.
- g. Records of all embarkation/disembarkation of shore-based personnel must be maintained.
- h. Briefing on the safe management measures must be carried out for the shore-based personnel boarding the vessel and/or harbour craft and logged down for record purposes.
- i. A responsible officer onboard must be appointed to monitor/ensure the compliance of safe management measures by all crew and shore-based personnel onboard his vessel.
- j. Minimise interaction of crew with shore-based personnel as far as reasonably practicable.
- k. Designate a separate, clean and disinfected place that is a fully enclosed as a rest area, and dedicated toilets for only shore-based personnel to use.
- l. No loitering in the crew living or common areas.
- m. Ensure that shore-based personnel do not remain onboard for a longer period than necessary to discharge their duties, and not in any case, stay onboard overnight.
- n. Ensure that shore-based personnel do not consume any food or drinks from the ships' stores.
- o. Ensure that the shore-based personnel consumes only his/her own food or beverage that the shore-based personnel brought along, using his/her own utensils.
- p. Ensure that shore personnel consume his/her own food or beverage in an area

³ As far as reasonably practicable, the shore-based personnel should wear a fitted N95 mask.

- separate, and at a safe distance, from the crew.
- q. Upon shore-based personnel disembarking the vessel, disinfect the areas that have been used and especially the frequently touched surfaces. National Environment Agency's guidance for disinfecting common areas and rooms should be followed.

Measures for shore-based personnel boarding a vessel in the Port of Singapore

Shore-based personnel boarding a vessel must comply with the following:

- a. Must have a valid negative test result from a COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test from his/her rostered routine testing (RRT), taken within the last 7 days prior to boarding a vessel;
- b. If the shore-based personnel is not enrolled on a RRT programme, he/she must have a valid negative test result from a COVID-19 PCR test or Antigen Rapid Test (ART) within 72 hours prior to boarding a vessel. After disembarking, these shore-based personnel must take a PCR test between the 5th and 7th day, and a final PCR test on the 11th day.
- c. Must check-in and check-out with SafeEntry@Sea.
- d. Must not board a vessel if he/she does not have (a) or (b), or did not check-in with SafeEntry@Sea; in any case, shore-based personnel who are unwell must not board a vessel.
- e. Must always wear a mask⁴ (unless the work activity requires that no mask be worn). In addition, shore-based personnel are to wear other appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves, and gown, without jeopardising operational and personal safety.
- f. Must minimise interaction with the vessel's crew, as far as reasonably practicable.
- g. Must bring and consume his/her own food and beverages, using his/her own utensils; and consume his/her meals in an area separate, and at a safe distance, from the vessel's crew.
- h. Must not consume any food and beverages from the ships' stores.
- i. Must ensure a safe distance of at least 1 metre between himself or herself and any other individual on board.
- j. Must not convene or take part in any gathering when on board except where necessary or in the course of the performance of his or her duties as shore-based personnel.
- k. No loitering in the crew living or common areas.
- l. Not remain onboard for a longer period than necessary to discharge his or her duties as a shore-based personnel, and not in any case, stay onboard overnight.

⁴ As far as reasonably practicable, the shore-based personnel should wear a fitted N95 mask.