

RUSSIAN BLACK SEA PORTS TO ADOPT MEASURES AGAINST COVID-19

Ingosstrakh's P&I Correspondent for Russian Black Sea ports AXIS Ltd reports that new strict prevention and control measures have been implemented by the Russian ports located on the Black Sea coast in response to the latest outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) in many countries and following the High Alert regime introduced in Krasnodar region from 15 March till 1 May, 2020.

Port administrations and immigration authorities follow the guidelines of the Russian Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing¹ (Health authorities also referred to as 'Rosпотребнадзор').

Health authorities regularly update a list of countries considered as 'coronavirus-affected' and requiring new measures, among which are screening, testing or disinfection necessary to obtain free pratique.

The first list of coronavirus-affected countries included Italy, Iran, People's Republic of China, and the Republic of Korea. The list was shortly afterward extended to France, Spain and Germany.

On 18 March Health authorities issued the new list of 141 countries² and clarified that the list was not final and control measures could be applied to vessels coming from any country, subject to the actual number of confirmed coronavirus cases in that country, condition of the crew, date of departure and other factors.

All vessels heading to the Russian Black Sea ports must be ready to comply with the requirements of Health authorities, which are subject to risk assessment on an individual basis, with a focus on the 14-day incubation period and health condition of the crew.

When at port, the vessels should follow the orders imposed by Immigration authorities and Harbour Master.

Although ports have different regulations in terms of the shore leave or sanitary control, there are some common procedures at Novorossiysk, Kavkaz, Taman, Tuapse (Black Sea) and Temryuk (Sea of Azov).

These main requirements can be summarized as follows:

1. Pre-arrival check of documents

Maritime declaration of health, crew list and list of the last ten ports of call are provided by Agents to Health authorities, Immigration authorities and/or Harbour Master not later than 2 days before vessel's arrival.

2. Shore leave

The shore leave is officially limited for the following persons:

☒ Citizens of the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Italy and Iran arriving as crew members.

☒ Crew members – foreign citizens, who visited ports of Italy, People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, and Iran during the last 14 days before arrival at Novorossiysk seaport.

On 18 March the immigration authorities at Taman port advised that the shore leave would be limited for all foreign citizens, including crew members and passengers.

In view of the newly updated list of 141 coronavirus-affected countries, similar restrictions may be applied to any vessel at the other ports.

Black Sea ports, Russia – new preventive measures for COVID-19

3. Screening of the crew members

According to the algorithm of vessel's handling released by Health authorities on 10 March, the examination and temperature screening of the crew members may not be required when vessels come from epidemiologically safe country, 14 days have passed since vessel's departure from coronavirus-affected countries or after the last crew change with the new seafarers arriving from the affected country, ill persons are absent onboard.

Despite this official position, de-facto Health authorities tend to prescribe screening on vessels arriving from any country before free pratique is granted, and this measure also applies to vessels matching 'safe' criteria.

4. Testing for coronavirus

If presence of ill persons or persons allegedly infected is reported by vessel, or high temperature or other symptoms of respiratory disease are confirmed during screening, the vessel and crew are subject to the enhanced sanitary-quarantine control such as preliminary diagnostics, transportation of the infected person to a hospital for examination, medical tests and treatment, taking blood samples from the crew for further testing.

The only one regional laboratory dealing with COVID-19 is situated in Krasnodar, 140-200 km from the Black Sea ports. Coronavirus test results are available in 1-2 days, causing delays in obtaining free pratique.

5. Disinfection

Disinfection will be required in case of arrival of the vessel from coronavirus-affected countries within incubation period of 14 days and/or presence onboard the persons who arrived from these countries within 14 days, in the absence of ill persons onboard.

Disinfection will be followed by a temperature screening of the crew members before the vessel could pass the inward clearance formalities.

In case of presence of ill persons or persons allegedly infected onboard, disinfection will be carried out at outer roads or at sanitary berth under control of Health authorities.

Disinfection is arranged and paid by Ship's Agents.

Certificates of disinfection from the other countries are no longer accepted.

CORONAVIRUS –UPDATE FOR CYPRUS, LEBANON, EGYPT, AND LIBYA.

Ingosstrakh's P&I Correspondent for Mediterranean region EMCO Group reports on developments and preventive measures implied due to COVID-19 pandemic in Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt and Libya as on 17th March 2020.

Cyprus

Travelling to Cyprus:

A. As of 16th March 2020 (18:00 hours) until 30th April 2020, entry into Cyprus will only be permitted to citizens - regardless of nationality - who fall into the following categories provided that they hold a medical certificate confirming that they are free of the virus (issued within 4 days prior to the date of travel). Such certificate may only be obtained from designated centres in each country. Furthermore, upon arrival to Cyprus such persons will be quarantined for a period of 14 days in government quarantine facilities. It should be noted however, that practical difficulties in many countries are inhibiting the issuing of the required medical certificates thereby making travelling to Cyprus almost impossible.

- Cypriot citizens.
 - Legal residents in the Republic of Cyprus.
 - European nationals or third-country nationals working in the Republic.
 - Nationals of countries who are in a designated diplomatic service or mission under bilateral or international conventions.
 - Individual cases of European nationals or third-country nationals for unavoidable professional obligations, provided that the relevant authorization has been obtained from the competent Ministry.
 - European or third country citizens attending educational institutions in the Republic of Cyprus.
- B. The suspension of attendance to all public and private educational institutions (which commenced on 14th March 2020) is extended until 10th April 2020.
- C. Gatherings of more than 75 persons is banned.
- D. All borders with the Turkish occupied territory of Cyprus have closed until further notice.

Ports in the Republic of Cyprus:

1. No passenger vessels are to enter the ports as from 15.03.2020 for a period of 15 days. The same applies for pleasure crafts at small ports and marinas.
2. For commercial vessels, we have been advised that whether there will be any issues depends on where the vessel has come from and the circumstances e.g. if the ship has come from a low risk country and there are no reported illness onboard within the last 14 days, then there should not be any problems. Regardless of this, all surveyors and agents have been advised by the Cyprus Ports Authority that they are not permitted to go onboard vessels if they can carry out their work electronically (e.g. dealing with forms). Those who must attend onboard (e.g. for loading/discharge operations, taking samples etc) must do so only once the Master confirms in writing to the relevant port authority that the crew will be isolated and kept away from those going onboard.

3. No crew changes are permitted (embarkation / disembarkation) within the territorial waters of the Republic of Cyprus.

4. For crew of commercial vessels (e.g. tugs) that have a permanent base within the ports and are operating international ships outside of territorial waters and come into contact with other ships and international ports they must strictly comply with the directions of the medical services i.e. self-isolation for 14 days.

5. Naval vessels: are permitted to berth after verbal notice but the crew cannot be disembarked.

6. In the event of emergencies for passengers or crew onboard a vessel, at anchorage or within the port, agents will be permitted to carry out the relevant measures only upon co-operation with the medical services which will arrange for transport and care.

Whoever enters any port of the Republic for work must comply strictly with the instructions of the medical services.

Courts

Courts are permitting entry to their premises for urgent matters only and most hearings have been postponed.

Lebanon

Travelling to Lebanon:

1. On 15th March 2020 the Lebanese government announced a medical state emergency, obliging all citizens to remain at home except for extreme necessity until 29th March 2020.

2. The Government has declared the airport, airspace and all sea and land borders as closed for passengers as from Wednesday 18th March until 29th March 2020, except for UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force In Lebanon), diplomatic missions and cargo aircraft.

C. The government has also announced the closure of public institutions, municipalities and private companies and independent professions until 29th March 2020, with the exception of those shops selling food supplies.

D. Banks were also exempt from the closure order but to function at minimum capacity.

E. All Educational institutions in Lebanon have been closed since early March.

Ports in Lebanon:

Will be closed to passengers, but cargo is still permitted entry.

The measures applied at the Lebanese ports for commercial vessels consists of members of the Ministry of Health attending onboard the vessels arriving from countries at risk and prior to their berthing checking the body temperatures of all crewmembers onboard to verify whether any of them are suffering from any of the symptoms of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Depending on the findings of the Ministry's representatives, measures are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Courts

The Courts in Lebanon are closed.

Libya

Travelling to Libya:

1. As of 16th March 2020, Libyan Authorities announced that due to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic all air, ground and maritime Libyan borders will be closed for 3 weeks (with potential extension).
2. AS from 13th March 2020 Educational institutions have suspended their activities for a period of 14 days in order to mitigate the possible spread of Corona Virus.
3. As at 16th March 2020 there were no known cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Libya.

Ports in Libya:

Are closed to passengers, but cargo is still permitted entry.

An order issued by the Marine Authority provides that it:

1. prevents direct contact with arrived ships and ships must deal with the agent only. The agent will handle all paper work;
2. except for emergency cases, the crew of arrived ships must stay onboard their ships when they are in Libyan ports.

In addition, from a case we are dealing with first hand, if a vessel is calls to Libya from a country that has recorded COVID-19 cases, the vessel will go into quarantine for 14 days at anchorage. The quarantine period starts to count from the date the vessel sailed from her previous port of call. Thereafter, she will undergo an inspection by the Health Ministry. If she is found "clean", she will then be permitted to enter the port.

Courts:

The courts in Libya have postponed most cases until June and only urgent matters are being dealt with.

Egypt

Travelling to Egypt:

1. Egypt will halt all air traffic at its airports from Thursday 19th March until 31st March.
2. Egypt closed schools and universities for two weeks on Sunday 15th March 2020.

Ports in Egypt /Suez Canal:

- Egyptian ports are open but are implementing precautionary and preventative measures.
- So far there have been no reports of disruption to shipping through the Suez Canal.
- The east side of Port Said is closed, while the west side remains open with limited operations. The port of Alexandria is only accepting vessels to discharge cargoes and the port of Damietta is restricted to container ship activity only.

- Surveyors have not been told of any restrictions imposed on boarding vessels to carry out surveys.

Courts:

Most hearings have been postponed and access to the courts has been limited.

PRC MSA ISSUED "OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR SHIPS AND SEAFARERS FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF COVID-19 EPIDEMIC (V1.0)"

Chinese Correspondents Huatai Insurance Agency & Consultant Service Ltd. reports on recently issued operational guidance for prevention and control of Covid-19 pandemic. The Guidance was issued by the MSA of the People's Republic of China on March 2, 2020, with reference to the WHO and IMO Guidance on the prevention and control of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic on ships, and based on the practical experience of shipping companies on the prevention and control of the epidemic. The Guidance aims to provide advice for the prevention and control of COVID-19 epidemic on ships and guidance for the personal protection of crew.

The Guidance puts forward the operational Guidance for prevention and control of COVID-19 on board systematically, meanwhile for passenger ships, it raises specific suggestions on the epidemic prevention and control measures according to different area and different level.

The operational Guidance for prevention and control of COVID-19 mainly includes 7 aspects as follow:

1. To establish and improve the epidemic prevention and control management system.
2. Ships implementing management measures for epidemic prevention and control.
3. To strengthen personal protection of crew.
4. Emergency operation in the event of suspected cases.
5. Reporting on suspected case.
6. Mental intervention on crew.
7. Access to epidemic information.

Suggestions on the epidemic prevention and control measures of passenger ship were divided into 3 parts according to high-risk area, medium-risk area and low-risk area. For more details, please kindly [click here](#) for free-translation of the Guidance.