

UNITED KINGDOM MARITIME PILOTS' ASSOCIATION

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To: ALL UKMPA MEMBERS

Circular 8/2020
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Dear Colleague,

Pilotage Operations during COVID-19

The guidance relating to Category 1 / Category 2 areas has now been withdrawn and replaced by general 'stay at home' guidance (<https://bit.ly/3akUfpP>)

The UK Department for Transport (DfT), in consultation with Public Health England (PHE), has issued updates on the spread of the virus and guidelines for the necessary steps to prevent the spread of the virus. (<https://bit.ly/395R0Rx>)

Some Competent Harbour Authorities (CHAs), have issued additional procedures via Notices to Mariners (NtoM), example (<https://bit.ly/2xdJAOY>). *It is recommended that Pilot Representatives consult with their respective CHA's to request these prudent additional measures to be implemented.*

Before boarding a vessel, the DfT advise that crew should be asked if they have a new, continuous cough or a high temperature. *It is recommended that individual pilots should undertake this themselves by VHF prior to boarding.* If there is any doubt, boarding should be delayed.

Suspected Cases On-board Vessels

In the coming days and weeks, it is anticipated there may be vessels with suspected cases on-board who request pilotage services.

It is recommended that Pilot Representatives consult with their respective CHA's to undertake planning on a risk assessment basis, for this scenario.

In planning this scenario, some general considerations are offered:

- In the absence of testing, advice received is that suspected cases should be treated as confirmed cases. Any person on-board a vessel should be isolated to a cabin and have been advised to follow the stay at home guidance, that is vessel and crew isolation for 14 days. ⁽¹⁾
- The CHA should consider therefore, if a pilot order is necessary for a particular vessel, or if commercial considerations can be delayed in order to protect health of the wider community.

- There may be scenarios where a vessel has a cargo considered critical to the supply of national infrastructure (i.e. fuel/food). In this scenario, the DfT may offer advice, support, and where necessary, direction.
- There may be a need for a vessel to medically disembark serious cases. In this scenario, Health Protection Teams (HPT), at Port Health and Public Health England (PHE), can advise on how close contacts (such as Pilots), can be managed. ⁽²⁾
- Asymptomatic carriers have been classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO), as the most prolific spreaders of the virus. ⁽³⁾ As vessels are confined environments, and pilots would be entering an isolation area, consideration should be given to the impact on pilot service availability of pilots self-isolating after attending vessels with cases on board.
- Employers and contractors have a general duty of care which extends to not placing employees or service providers at undue risk. ⁽⁴⁾
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be used as a control measure of last resort in accordance with general principles of risk assessment and the hierarchy of hazard control. ⁽⁵⁾ Pilots may have no training in infection control which may limit the potential effectiveness of any PPE.
- Pilot groups should identify those able to undertake pilotage services at the lowest possible risk, taking into account age, underlying health conditions, and ability to self-isolate without further risk to others or the wider community.
- Pilot groups should consider the impact to the provision of pilotage service if any pilots are required to self-isolate after contact with a vessel under Port Health isolation.

Yours faithfully,



Mike Morris
Chairman UKMPA

References

- (1) UK GOV – "Guidance for shipping and sea ports on coronavirus (COVID-19)" <https://bit.ly/2Wv6Rqc>
- (2) UK GOV - "Disembarkation" <https://bit.ly/2Wv6Rqc>
- (3) WHO - "Novel coronavirus bulletin" https://www.who.int/bulletin/online_first/COVID-19/en/
- (4) Health & Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/workers/employers.htm>
- (5) Health & Safety Executive <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/ppe.htm>