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Circular Letter No.4233
25 March 2020

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

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**
i Ireland; and
ii the Republic of the Marshall Islands

The Governments of Ireland and the Republic of the Marshall Islands have sent the attached communications, dated 25 March and 24 March 2020, respectively, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.



25 March 2020

International Maritime Organization
4, Albert Embankment
London
SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

COVID-19 Contingency Measures – Irish Maritime Administration

Dear Secretary General,

I wish to update you on the temporary contingency measures the Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has put in place in order to allow the shipping industry to continue to operate as easily as possible given the impacts to the industry from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IMA has issued three Marine Notices setting out temporary processes and procedures to be followed as a result of the pandemic.

[Marine Notice 6 of 2020](#) issued on 12 February 2020 – last updated on 18 March 2020 sets out procedures to be followed for submission of Maritime Declarations of Health and crew and passengers lists for all ships arriving in Ireland from outside the island of Ireland. In addition, the notice sets out procedures to be followed where there is a suspected case of COVID-19 on board.

[Marine Notice 14 of 2020](#) issued on 20 March 2020 sets out the temporary contingency measures for the extension of seafarer documents. A general extension of 6 months from the date of expiry has been provided for Irish issued seafarer Certificates of Competency and Certificates of Proficiency which expired or are due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020. An extension of 3 months has been provided for medical certificates where a seafarer is unable to secure an appropriate medical examination by an approved doctor. Flexibility has also been provided to shipowners and seafarers to extend a seafarer's employment agreement by up to 6 months in agreement with both parties where the maximum period of service has been reached or repatriation is proving too difficult due to travel restrictions.



[Marine Notice 15 of 2020](#) issued on 23 March 2020 sets out temporary contingency measures in relation to surveying and certification of ships. An extension of 3 months is provided to ship certificates for ships involved in international voyages where survey, verification and certification is not possible due to restrictions on personnel movements and travel. The extension also applies to intermediate/renewal surveys. Surveys for vessels involved in domestic voyages will be considered on a case by case basis as will surveys and certifications for new build ships under the Irish flag. The notice also sets out advice on the issuing of ships radio licences and servicing of life saving equipment.

Ireland also notes the temporary guidance issued by the Paris MoU on Port State Control to its member authorities related to COVID-19 and where a ship does not comply with the requirements of surveys, inspections and audits contained in the relevant conventions, Ireland will accept evidence from the shipowner that the flag State has agreed to an exceptional delay specific to COVID-19.

As an island nation, it is vitally important to Ireland that the supply chain remains open and as far as possible the safety of ships and crew is protected in line with national and international standards.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D O'Keeffe', is written over a horizontal line.

Deirdre O'Keeffe

Director General

Irish Maritime Administration

ANNEX 2



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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24 March 2020

Letter by Email:

International Maritime Organization
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

Attention: H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim
Secretary-General

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Excellency,

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) is informing the Organization, according to the invitation in Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5, of the following general information on the practices adopted by RMI concerning the impacts on shipping caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the escalating situation, the Administrator has consolidated its policies, guidance, and important information regarding COVID-19 onto a dedicated webpage, which will continue to be updated based on the rapidly changing circumstances:

<https://www.register-iri.com/covid-19/>

The webpage describes the various measures instituted by the Administrator to ensure precautions are in place to minimize risks to seafarer and public health, and to support continued commerce. Owners, operators, masters, and seafarers on RMI-flagged vessels are notified of relevant policies to facilitate implementation and enforcement of associated IMO instruments relating to statutory surveys/certification issues, ship inspections, and seafarer documentation matters consequential to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the Administrator fully endorses your call in Circular Letter No. 4224, issued 19 March 2020, urging a practical and pragmatic approach in response to issues associated with crew changeovers, resupply, repairs, survey and certification, and licensing of seafarers. The health and safety of seafarers must remain a top priority to keep vital supply chains open during these

challenging times. To this end, we remain ready to engage in an active dialogue with all stakeholders towards developing pragmatic solutions to facilitate the repatriation of seafarers, ensure crew well-being, while at the same time minimizing potential risk to public health due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Administrator is most grateful for this information to be communicated to all IMO Member States and wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to renew to you the assurances of its highest consideration.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Makar
Deputy Commissioner of Maritime Affairs
Republic of the Marshall Islands


