MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

PORT MARINE CIRCULAR
NO. 30 OF 2021

09 July 2021

Shipping Community

ENHANCEMENTS TO CREW CHANGE FOR CARGO SHIPS IN THE PORT OF SINGAPORE

Requirements for crew change

1. This circular supersedes Port Marine Circular No. 14 of 2021.

2. In view of the evolving COVID-19 situation globally, MPA has enhanced our crew change requirements to safeguard the wellbeing of seafarers undergoing crew change in Singapore as well as Singapore's populace.

3. MPA will continue to consider the following circumstances for crew change applications:

(a) crew whose employment contract has expired;
(b) additional crew on board whose sign-off would not affect the safe manning of the ship;
(c) change of crew due to the sale or purchase of ship;
(d) personnel who are not part of the ship's crew such as superintendents and service engineers;
(e) compassionate grounds e.g. death of family member; or
(f) the crew is no longer medically fit to work onboard the ship.

4. The requirements for signing-on and -off in Singapore are as follows:

Sign-on

(a) In general, signing-on crew are required to serve 14-day Stay-Home-Notice (SHN) in the crew's originating country/region in the period immediately prior to his/her departure flight/ferry to Singapore. The crew should be completely

isolated in a room with a dedicated toilet with strictly no interaction with others (including family members) at his/her place of residence, or serve the SHN in a dedicated facility/hotel.

(b) Crew from specific low risk countries/regions will either not be required to serve the SHN or serve a shorter SHN of 7 days in his/her originating country/region prior to departure for Singapore. Please refer to ICA's website (https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg/files/SHN-and-swab-summary.pdf) for the latest list of low risk countries/regions where no or 7-day SHN is imposed.

(c) The crew must have a negative result from a COVID-19 test (polymerase chain reaction (PCR) type) taken at a government-approved or ISO 15189-accredited testing facility at his/her originating country not more than **48 hours** prior to departure for Singapore.

(d) The crew must be certified fit-to-travel and have a negative result from an ART (Antigen Rapid Test)[1] certified by a doctor at his/her originating country not more than 24 hours prior to departure for Singapore. **If tested positive**, the crew shall not take further ARTs to obtain a negative result. Instead, the crew should take another PCR test to confirm if he/she is infected with COVID-19. Please refer to Singapore's Health Sciences Authority (HSA) website for the latest list of approved ART kit (https://www.hsa.gov.sg/announcements/regulatory-updates/hsa-expedites-approval-of-covid-19-diagnostic-tests-in-singapore-via-provisional-authorisation).

(e) During the entire crew change process, including during the journey to Singapore, the crew should not be in a group of more than five (5) persons, and must remain in the same group. There must be no interactions between groups.

(f) The crew should only join his/her ship not more than two (2) days before the date of the ship's final departure from Singapore. For ships departing for sea trial and returning to Singapore, the date of departure for sea trial will not be considered the date of the ship's final departure.

(g) Crew shall only join the ship in Singapore after all high-risk[2] shore-based personnel have completed their work on board and disembarked the ship.

(h) Meet-and-greet services must be arranged for sign-on crew arriving at Changi Airport, to escort the crew from the moment they disembark the plane to the point where they are handed over to the agent for the direct transfer to the ship or designated holding facility.

(i) Crew who have recovered from COVID-19 must submit documentary proof of his/her past diagnosis of COVID-19 based on the **earliest positive** PCR test result. If the date of the positive PCR test result is **21 days or fewer** before the date of arrival in Singapore, he/she will not be approved for crew change. If the date of positive PCR test result is more than 21 days before the date of arrival in Singapore, he/she shall comply with the above sign-on requirements.

[1] Applicable for sign-on crew departing his/her originating country on or after 26 July 2021.
[2] High-risk shore-based personnel are persons that interact closely with ship crew in an enclosed space on board such as repair vendors, equipment service providers and superintendents.

Sign-off

(a) The crew must not have gone ashore in the last 21 days before disembarking the ship, must have remained well and not had contact with any known or suspected case of COVID-19 throughout that period.
(b) The crew must refrain from interacting with shore-based personnel at previous ports of call in the last 21 days.
(c) The crew must be certified fit-to-travel by a doctor in Singapore not more than 24 hours before disembarking the ship. Tele-medicine can be used to obtain a fit-to-travel assessment and certification. MPA will accept fit-to-travel certificates issued by Singapore Medical Council-fully registered doctors meeting the requirements in **Annex A**.
(d) During the entire crew change process, the crew should not be in a group of more than five (5) persons, and must remain in the same group. There must be no interactions between groups.
(e) Crew subjected to serology test shall remain onboard until production of a negative COVID-19 serology test result.

Designated crew change holding facilities in Singapore

5. Sign-on crew and sign-off crew may stay at the designated holding facilities in Singapore for up to 24 hours. Please refer to **Annex B** for details of the designated holding facilities.

CrewSafe accredited facility

6. The Singapore Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience Fund Taskforce (SFTF) has developed a CrewSafe audit programme that endeavours to assist crew source nations to bring a higher level of confidence and quality control checks into crew change processes such as quarantine/holding, medical and swabbing facilities. Please refer to this website (https://www.ssa.org.sg/mediaimg/publications/sg-star-fund-crewsafe-facilities.html) for more information regarding the CrewSafe audit programme and a list of CrewSafe accredited facilities.

7. For sign-on crew who undergo the protocol under these CrewSafe accredited facilities located overseas, his/her crew change application may be given the following concessions:

(a) Submission of crew change application must be made at least 7 days in advance, instead of 14 days.
(b) If a sign-on crew undergoing the CrewSafe protocol is cancelled, direct replacement for this crew will be allowed if the replacement has been undergoing CrewSafe protocol for the same required duration, instead of having to re-submit a new application and re-start the process.
(c) At Singapore, sign-on crew who had undergone the CrewSafe protocol may stay at the designated holding facilities for up to 3 days, if required.

Holding areas at Marine South Pier and West Coast Pier

8. All crew that utilises Marina South Pier (MSP) or West Coast Pier (WCP) shall remain at the designated holding areas while waiting to clear immigration. Should the holding area be full, the crew shall remain in their private transportation.

9. For sign-off crew, the private transportation shall be ready and waiting so that the crew can depart MSP/WCP immediately upon clearing immigration and do not need to crowd up the holding area.

10. Agents and appointed drivers are responsible for ensuring that the crew remain in the holding area or private vehicle at all times. At no time should the crew be loitering outside the holding area and interacting with the general public.

Precautionary measures for service providers facilitating crew change

11. Service providers that facilitate crew change in Singapore shall comply with the minimum level of personal protective equipment (PPE) as follows:

- Meet-and-greet staff shall don PPE in accordance with the prevailing requirements set by the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and Changi Airport Group.
- Land transport drivers shall don full PPE (N95 mask, gloves, gown) when transporting crew between the airport and vessel.
- Launch boat operators shall don full PPE (N95 mask, gloves, gown) when transporting crew between the pier and vessel.

12. Land transport drivers and launch boat operators shall be on 7-day Rostered Routine Testing (RRT) and vaccinated (at least one dose).

13. Land transport drivers and launch boat operators shall keep all windows open when ferrying sign-on/off crew, as far as practicable. They shall always maintain safe distancing and shall not handle the crew's belongings at any time. The seats and other frequently touched surfaces shall be disinfected after each trip.

14. The agent shall charter a dedicated launch boat for conveyance of sign-on/off crew between the pier and vessel. No other personnel (e.g. boarding agents, technicians) shall take the same launch boat as the sign-on/off crew.

COVID-19 Pre-Departure Testing in Singapore

15. MPA notes that some countries require travellers to take a COVID-19 pre-departure test (PDT) and present a valid negative test result before they are allowed to transit through or enter. Similar requirements are also imposed by some airlines before allowing travellers to board their flights.

16. MPA has been facilitating COVID-19 pre-departure testing for sign-off crew in Singapore on a case-by-case basis. Please be reminded that MPA's approval shall be sought for signing-off crew to take PDT in Singapore.

17. For crew change applications where the sign-off crew requires PDT before departing Singapore, in addition to the existing sign-off requirements as stated in paragraph 4 of this circular, the sign-off crew that require PDT in Singapore shall produce a negative test result from a COVID-19 PCR test taken at the vessel's last port of call before Singapore provided no crew change has been carried out in the last 21 days before the vessel's last port of call. The test results shall be submitted to MPA as soon as they are available and before the vessel arrives in Singapore. However, if crew change has been carried out in the last 21 days before the vessel's last port of call, all crew on board[3] (i.e. not only the sign-off crew that require PDT in Singapore) shall produce a negative test result from a COVID-19 PCR test taken at the vessel's last port of call before Singapore. **The test results shall be submitted to MPA as soon as they are available and before the vessel arrives Singapore.**

18. The COVID-19 PCR test(s) should be taken as close to the time of the vessel's departure from its last port as possible before heading to Singapore. The COVID-19 PCR test shall be carried out by a government-approved or ISO 15189-accredited testing facility.

General

19. Ship owners/managers/agents must apply for crew change in Singapore by filling up the online form at www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/port-of-singapore/operations/crew-change or scan the QR code below.

20. Ship owners/managers/agents shall submit applications at least 14 days before the planned crew change, especially if the application includes sign-on crew. For foreign-flagged ships, crew change will be considered if the ship meets all prevailing requirements, and is in Singapore for cargo operations, bunkering and/or other marine services.

21. For crew changes to take place safely, MPA continues to expect all owners, agents, ships and individuals to ensure that the COVID-19 preventive measures are followed strictly. Any breach will be taken seriously.

[3] Includes the sign-off crew as well as crew that will remain on board and sail off with the vessel.

22. Any queries relating to this circular should be directed to crew_change@mpa.gov.sg.

CAPT KEVIN WONG
PORT MASTER
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

ANNEX A

Tele-medicine requirements

1 MPA accepts fit-to-travel certificates issued by Singapore Medical Council (SMC)-fully registered doctors meeting all following requirements:

- The doctor conducting the assessment must have completed the tele-medicine e-training provided by Singapore Ministry of Health (MOH). A copy of the doctor's e-training participation statement must be submitted with the fit-to-travel certificate to MPA;

- The doctor must conduct the clinical assessment over real time video (i.e. no asynchronous video, voice calls or text will be permitted);

- The assessment of the crew should be based on the prevailing suspect case definition set out by the MOH (e.g. MOH Circular 119/2020), which includes:
  - History taking;
  - Self-reported symptoms;
  - Visual assessment of symptoms; and
  - Real-time taking of temperature and Sp02 (Doctors should provide guidance on the proper use of such devices during the assessment).

- The doctor should also include, in his assessment of the crew's general health, his consultations with the captain/senior officer and the signing-off crew lead, taking into consideration the prevailing suspect case definition.

2 If any of the above requirements cannot be met for any reason (e.g. no proof of statement of participation, concerns that self-reporting is not accurate, crew meet the prevailing suspect case definition, technology issues such as poor video call quality, or no on-board thermometer/Sp02 device), a shipboard assessment of the crew by the doctor must then be done.

3 The doctor shall continue to take responsibility for the accurate completion of the fit-to-travel certificate regardless of the modality of assessment.

<u>Technical advisory for enhancing the conduct of tele-medicine onboard ships</u>

4 As the tele-medicine consultations require real time video and audio, it is recommended that users utilise end-point devices (laptops, smartphones, or tablets) equipped with the following:

- Devices with front-facing cameras or webcams;
- Headphones/earphones with in-built microphones; and
- Local 4G/LTE cellular connectivity, as on-board WiFi may not have sufficient bandwidth to support real time video and audio.

5 In terms of device settings, the device system clock's time zone should be set to Singapore Standard Time (GMT +8).

6 For the **conduct** of the tele-medicine consultations, the recommendations to enhance the user experience are as follows:

- Cell phone reception can be affected by the metallic structure of the vessel. Therefore, for consultations using cellular service, it should be conducted at the ship's bridge where the cellular connectivity is usually strongest.
- Choose a location with sufficient lighting for the video session.
- There should be minimal crowding so as to respect personal privacy and maintain social distancing.
- Ambient noise should be kept to a minimum, e.g.turn down/off nearby air-conditioning units, reduce the volume of nearby walkie-talkies.
- Speak slowly and clearly, and refrain from speaking at the same time as the doctor.

Annex B

Designated holding facilities for sign-on crew

Copthorne King's Hotel Singapore
Rooms: Air-conditioned with *en suite* bathroom
Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner included. Meals will be delivered to the room.

For reservations, please contact:
+65 6318 3130
reservations.ckc@millenniumhotels.com

Designated holding facilities for sign-off crew

Seacare Hotel
Rooms: Air-conditioned with *en suite* bathroom
Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner included. Meals will be delivered to the room.

For reservations, please contact:
Phang Jing Huei
+65 6818 2680
reservations@theseacarehotel.com.sg

Hotel Re!
Rooms: Air-conditioned with *en suite* bathroom
Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner included. Meals will be delivered to the room.

For reservations, please contact:
+65 6827 8288
reservations@hotelre.com.sg