

# Philippine Shipping Update – Manning Industry

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## POEA issues general guidelines on the management of COVID-19

The POEA has issued memorandum Circular No. 03, Series of 2020 prescribing General Guidelines on the Management of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) situation last 27 February 2020.

As the World Health Organization (WHO) declared Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (AITF-EID) has made the following recommendations which were adopted by the POEA. The following are the salient provisions affecting seafarers:

### 1. Travel Ban

The temporary ban on the departure of travelers bound for China has been imposed by the Philippine government for all visa types.

For joining and disembarking crew for international sea-going vessels, all flights should be scheduled without layovers in China and in any other areas that may be subsequently covered by travel bans.

Subsequent travel bans or the lifting thereof would depend on the advice of health authorities.

### 2. Travel Precautions

Seafarers travelling to countries not covered by the travel ban are advised to practice the preventive measures provided by the Department of Health (frequent proper washing of hands, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available, avoid animals (alive or dead), animal markets, and products that come from animals i.e. uncooked meat, follow advisories and public health plans of the country of transit or destination and awareness of nearest health facilities).

### 3. Onsite Precautionary Measures for Seafarers

In addition to the travel precautions, manning agencies and seafarers working in international sea-going vessels are further advised to observe the following:

- a. No disembarkation, no crew change and no shore leave policies are in effect for all Filipino seafarers employed on ships calling on ports of China and in any other areas that may be subsequently added by the Philippine Government and its travel ban;
- b. Ensure personal protective equipment (PPEs) including facial protection is provided for all crew;
- c. Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;

d. For galley workers: Strictly observe strict food hygiene and safety in the storage , preparation and serving of to avoid cross-contamination particularly in the handling of raw meat , milk or animal organs during food preparation.

#### **4. Onsite Employment Conditions**

- a. Seafarers who contracted illness due to COVID-2019 shall be compensable by the Principals/ employers.
- b. All manning agencies must make arrangements to release the final wages of seafarers under quarantine at the soonest practicable time.
- c. Request for extension of contract of seafarers onboard their international sea going vessels due to possible delay in disembarkation and repatriation of seafarers shall be allowed.

#### **5. Quarantine Procedures / Medical Repatriation/ Voluntary Repatriation Procedures**

- a. Seafarers who will be repatriated from vessels with documented COVID-19 infection or the itinerary of which are known to be affected by COVID-19 shall be subjected to the quarantine protocols prescribed by the IAFT-EID, DOH or the Bureau of Quarantine;
- b. If a crew member onboard falls sick and has been travelling to COVID-19 affected areas 2 to 12 days before embarkation, the person must observe self quarantine;
- c. If a crew member is sick onboard a ship, he/ she- must fill out a maritime declaration of health and notify his/ her manning agency, relevant port authority and must immediately consult the nearest available healthcare provider;
- d. Seafarers who finished or are soon to complete their contract of employment from vessels coming from COVID-19 affected areas will be disembarked in the next nearest port / country that allows crew repatriation under their quarantine regulations; and
- e. In the event that the disembarked/ repatriated seafarers who may have come into contact with persons infected with COVID-19, have experienced symptoms of COVID-19, they must immediately inform the manning agent and the designated referral hospitals near their area.

#### **6. POEA OEC Procedures**

For seabased workers, the OECs issued through in-house processing which are affected by the travel ban shall be recognized as valid for deployment upon submission of a report of the respective manning agencies containing the name of the seafarers and their corresponding OEC numbers to the POEA Seabased Accreditation and Contract Processing Center (Seabased Center). The Seabased Center shall coordinate with the POEA's Labor Assistance Center (LAC) and/or Regional and Overseas Coordinating Office (ROCO) to ensure that the validity of such OECs are recognized.

#### **7. Health and Safety Precautions in Manning Agencies in the Philippines**

Manning agencies based in the Philippines are advised to implement DOLE Advisory No. 04, Series of 2020 providing for Guidelines on 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019 N-CoV) Prevention and Control at the

Workplace.

## **8. Lifting of the Travel Ban for Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR**

Pursuant to the recommendations of the IATF-EID contained in Resolution No. 06 Series of 2020, OFWs and seafarers are required to affirm their knowledge on the health conditions in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR through a Declaration as well as other requirements that may be subsequently recommended by the task force, World Health Organization or the DOH.

a. Consistent with POEA Advisory No. 18, Series of 2020, seafarers are allowed to join as well as to be repatriated or to disembark from Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR upon execution of a Declaration signifying their knowledge and understanding the risks involved in the current health developments caused by the COVID-19.

Shore leaves are being discouraged in Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR.

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