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Chinese Ports Update - Development on Foreign Crew Change and Disembarkation

It is reported by Chinese media that foreign crew change operations will resume in ten Chinese ports including Dalian, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Haikou.

Shanghai government recently issued a Notice allowing change and disembarkation of foreign seafarers under certain conditions. Measures of treatment for ill/injured seafarers and Chinese crew change are also clarified in the same Notice.

The main procedures of the measures are summarized as follows for reference:

■ **Treatment of ill/injured crew members:**

An application for rescue shall be submitted to the search and rescue center (maritime department). Upon receiving the rescue request, the maritime department shall notify the Customs, Border Inspection and Health Department where the ship is moored.

Relevant departments shall proceed in the following ways:

1. If not life-threatening:

- a. In principle, the Customs shall complete the inspection and sampling on board the ship and after receiving the test results, the shipping company shall securely transfer the ill/injured members to the relevant medical institutions for treatment.
- b. For the crew members who do not need to disembark for treatment, remote health guidance can be adopted.

2. If life-threatening and urgent medical treatment required:

- a. After the Customs conducts investigation and sampling on the ship, the shipping company should immediately transfer the ill/injured crew members to the isolation ward of the medical institution designated

by the Health Department for treatment.

b. If the Customs fails to take samples on board in case of emergency, the Health Department may arrange for joint sampling and joint testing at the hospital along with the Customs. Further treatment measures will be taken subsequently according to the test results.

3. After the crew's treatment is completed:

In principle, the crew member should return to the ship in time after completing treatment. If it is impossible to return to the ship due to objective reasons:

- a. Chinese crew members should complete the 14-day quarantine requirement;
- b. For foreign crew members, the shipping company shall arrange repatriation by formulating a flight departure plan. If it is necessary to wait for a suitable flight, the crew member should be arranged for quarantined at the designated isolation site. If the flight is difficult to be confirmed and the disembarkation period exceeds 14 days, the shipping company may arrange the crew member to stay at a suitable site and wait for the flight at its own will if the nucleic acid test is negative.

4. If the ill/injured crew members are examined to be the "four categories of personnel":

The Health Department shall take measurements according to the relevant prevention and control plan. The Customs shall immediately arrange testing of other crew members on the ship, and further arrangement of the ship and other crew members shall be carried out according to the testing results.

Note:

Four categories of personnel refer to:

- aa. the COVID-19 confirmed patients*
- bb. suspected COVID-19 infected patients*
- cc. fever patients who cannot be excluded from COVID-19 infection*
- dd. close contacts of COVID-19 confirmed patients*

■ **Change of Chinese crew:**

1. The shipping company shall contact the crew member's dedicated isolation point in advance following the requirements and provide the port supervision department with materials such as the log record, the crew member's health information and the confirmation letter of booking the isolation room.

2. Pass the Customs quarantine and nucleic acid test is negative (the first nucleic acid test).

3. Signed off crew members shall receive centralized quarantine and health observation in this city and make up for the 14 days of quarantine. If the ship had crew change abroad within 14 days, the signed off crew member shall be quarantined at the isolation site for 14 days.

4. Nucleic acid test (the second nucleic acid test) shall be conducted two days prior to the end of the isolation. If the test result is negative, the isolation shall be relieved.

5. After the crew member has made up the isolation time and the second nucleic acid test is negative, the

green health code could be provided.

6. The signed on crew member should have normal body temperature and green health code. Shipping companies are encouraged to arrange nucleic acid testing for sign on crew members to reduce the risk of cross-infection between ship and shore.

■ Change of foreign crew

Signing off crew members:

1. The foreign crew members on board need to change shifts in this city and leave the country due to the expiration or termination of the contract or humanitarian reasons.

2. International ships that have left the last overseas port for more than 14 days, and no crew members have changed their shifts within 14 days before arriving at the port.

3. The shipping company shall formulate the shift plan in advance, submit to the Office of the Municipal Leading Group of Epidemic Situation for approval and book the outbound flights and special vehicles for transshipment.

4. The shipping company shall instruct the crew members to take personal protection measures and check their body temperature at least twice a day. The crew members shall fill in the health record and sign to affirm the information is true, the Master shall review and sign for confirmation. The Master's health record should be reviewed by the Chief officer or other senior officers for confirmation. The shipping company should report crew members' health information to Maritime and other port departments 48 hours before the ship arrives at the port.

5. After the ship arrives at the port, if there is no abnormality in the Customs quarantine and the nucleic acid test is negative, it shall be notified to the Frontier Inspection Department, which shall handle the temporary entry and disembarkation formalities.

6. In principle, the foreign crew members that being disembarked should "depart immediately after disembarkation" and detention in this city is not permitted. The shipping company shall arrange point-to-point transfer by special vehicles (cannot take public transportation) to directly transfer the sign off crew members from the vessel to the airport and depart taking the transfer flight or to other international ships in this port for departure.

7. Before the crew member's repatriation, the ship shall wait at the port and may shift to the anchorage designated by the Maritime Department. The ship may leave the port after the crew member leaves the country. Container ships with tight shipping schedule or other ships with objective reasons may leave the port first subject to the approval of the Group for the Prevention and Control of Epidemics. The shipping company will transfer the sign off foreign crew to the crew isolation point with reception capacity to wait for the transfer flight, and then repatriate the crew to his own country.

8. If the entry nation or exit flights require nucleic acid testing reports for the foreign crew, the shipping company should contact qualified testing institutions in advance to conduct nucleic acid testing for foreign crew and issue reports.

Signing on crew members:

1. If the foreign crew members need to enter the country and change their shifts in the city, the shipping company shall formulate a plan in accordance with the requirements and apply to the Foreign Affairs Office of the Municipal government through the Municipal Communications Commission. Visa invitation letters can be issued for foreign crew members who meet the requirements and liaise with our embassies abroad to issue Visas.

2. Shipping company should confirm the crew's health condition is normal 14 days before boarding the ship and make sure of personal protection, body temperature should be taken twice a day. The crew member shall fill in the health record and sign for confirmation. The shipping company shall sign and seal the record for confirmation.

3. The sign on crew members shall arrive in Shanghai by flight as required. After arriving in Shanghai, the crew member shall join the ship after passing the entry quarantine. The shipping company shall arrange special vehicles (cannot take public transportation) from centralized isolation and inspection points to the ship. If it is necessary to postpone the sign on procedure, under special circumstances, the crew member shall wait at the centralized isolation point and transfer to the ship through the point-to-point secure transfer by special vehicles.

Circuit-breaker mechanism

If the total number of crew members from one shipping company whose nucleic acid tests are positive on international sailing ships reaches the relevant provisions of the country, circuit-breaker mechanism shall be implemented immediately.

Note:

Circuit-breaker mechanism is:

aa. For the same shipping company's international ships, if a total of 5 people found positive for nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be suspended for 15 days.

bb. If a total of 10 persons are positive in nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be suspended for 30 days.

cc. If there were more than 10 persons are positive in nucleic acid test, all foreign crew shift-changing for this shipping company will be stopped. Operation will not be permitted until the shipping company pass a fresh assessment conducted by the relevant authorities.

■ **Foreign crew landing:**

Who:

1. Foreign crew members who need to stay in Shanghai for a long time due to ship repair or other reasons and have stayed in Shanghai for more than 14 days.
2. The crew members from Russia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland or the foreign crew members holding other entry-exit certificates within the scope of the agreement on mutual exemption of visas with China have left the last overseas port for more than 14 days, and the ship has no crew change 14 days before arriving at the port.

Procedures:

1. Upon the approval of the Office of the Leading Group for Epidemic Prevention and Control of the area where the shipyard is located, if there is no abnormality in the Custom's quarantine and the nucleic acid test is negative, it shall be notified to the Frontier Inspection Department. The crew member shall be allowed to temporarily disembark the ship for rest after the Frontier Inspection Department completes the boarding and disembarkation formalities for the crew.
2. During the landing period, the scope of activities of the crew member shall be limited to the area where the shipyard is located. The details shall be specified by the Office of the Leading Group for Epidemic Prevention.
3. Crew members who have been landing for rest shall leave the country with the ship, and shall not leave the country in other ways without approval.

It is known that Qingdao has issued similar Notice on dealing with foreign crew change. Ships planning to have crew change in China are suggested to contact local agent or our local offices for the latest requirements implemented by the port in question.

Best regards,



Yu Limin
President