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Reporting Abnormal Health Condition of the Crewmember When Calling Chinese Ports

Dear Sirs/ Madam,

During the Covid-19 pandemic over the world, it is reported that the number of imported cases found with the crew onboard international sailing vessels has increased in Chinese ports.

Recently, one vessel (last calling port was in Indonesia) calling the port of Yangtze River of PR China (Jiangsu province) was found crewmembers on board infected with Covid-19. It was initially suspected by the inbound pilot that one crew had a fever, and after instant PCR test upon vessel's berthing, several crewmembers were unfortunately confirmed positive. Eventually, local CDC, port authority and terminal immediately took relevant response actions, which brought unexpected burden to local government's epidemic prevention and control, as well as a large amount of costs and expenses incurred charged against shipowners. (the "Case")

After investigation, local governmental authorities deemed that the crewmembers' abnormal health condition had not been reported by Vessel to local port when she went through the port entry formalities. Therefore, local authorities and Epidemic Prevention and Control Group considered the vessel and her shipping company had a weak risk awareness and failed to strictly fulfill the responsibilities of epidemic prevention and control. So the governmental authorities decided and issued Notice circulating within their territorial ports to suspend the operation of all vessels owned and managed by shipowners for 30 days immediately at Jiangsu Province.

Relevant Requirements Raised by the Local Authorities after the Case

1. All localities and departments must convey the notification to international shipping companies, crew manning agencies, ship agencies, pilot station, port operators, shipyard, and boarding personnel, supervise and urge relevant units to increase their sense of responsibility and risk, and fully, strictly and effectively implement various regulations on waterway epidemic prevention and control.
2. All localities and departments should urge international shipping companies and crew manning agencies to strictly implement the "Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on board (V5.0)" so as to effectively reduce the risk of overseas infection of crew members.
3. Tighten the crew health condition declaration system. All localities and departments should urge international sailing vessels, international shipping companies, and ship agencies to truthfully provide the necessary materials for epidemic prevention and control such as ship dynamic information, crew health condition, crew shift status, and negative nucleic acid test certificates, and timely report when information changes to ensure that when the crew's health condition is abnormal, the epidemic prevention department can grasp the situation in time and take emergency measures quickly. For behaviors that do not fulfill the responsibilities of epidemic prevention and control in accordance with regulations or hinder the order of epidemic prevention and control, especially those suspected of falsely reporting or concealing epidemic prevention and control information, all localities and departments must maintain high pressure: Any case found shall be punished, and relevant responsibilities shall be held in accordance with the law.

Reporting Suspected Case(s) in the "Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on board (V5.0)"

We abstract the paragraphs about Reporting suspected case(s) in the "Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on board (V5.0)" for your reference.

Quote//

V Reporting suspected case(s)

5.1 Reporting time

Ships should immediately report any death on board or illness (including fever, cough or short of breath)

of the crew member or passenger that has traveled to epidemic areas within the past 14 days to the nearest port or health authority or inspection and quarantine agency ashore and inform the maritime administration.

5.2 Reporting the following information:

5.2.1 Ship's name, type, flag state, port of registry, IMO number or distinctive number or letters, number of crew members and passengers on board;

5.2.2 Ship's ports of call during the last 14 days, including the list of ports of call where the suspected case disembarked;

5.2.3 Suspected cases' onset dates, time and location of the ship:

5.2.4 Patients' information including name, gender, position, birth date, nationality and embarkation date;

5.2.5 The patients record of measured temperature, signs and symptoms (including the time when each symptom appears), the number of deaths (if any), possible causes, measures taken and the growth of the disease.

For ships trading on international voyages, if a suspected case occurred on board, complete the Maritime Declaration of Health and send to the competent authority, according to the 2005 International Health Regulations as well as the national laws and regulations applicable to the country of disembarkation.

Unquote//

Our Comments

In view of above, we would like to recommend that all ships entering China waters should strictly follow up with local government's "Guidance on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 on board (V5.0)", and properly report the abnormal health condition to local port authority via local agent, in order to avoid the unnecessary troubles incurred.

Meanwhile, please kindly note that China Embassy in Indonesia issued Notice calling that Dual Tests of the COVID-19 nucleic acid and serum antibody shall be required for all the crew from Indonesia to China on international sailing vessels.

Hope the above is of assistance. Any query, please contact us at any time.

We are always here to be of assistance to the Clubs and their Members.

Best regards,



Yu Limin
President