

# Maritime Sector

## Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions

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## General Information on Covid-19

### **Question**

#### **Where can I get information about Covid-19**

#### **Answer**

Detailed information and guidance about Covid-19 can be obtained from the HSE website by visiting

[www2.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus)

Or by calling

1850 24 1850

Information on Covid-19 and supports available can be found here [Citizens Information](#)

### **Question**

#### **Where can I access information and guidance for Seafarers on Covid-19?**

#### **Answer**

All updates in relation to COVID-19 and the maritime sector are available on

<https://www.seafarers.ie/Home>

### **Question**

#### **Where can I access information on the supports available to business impacted by Covid-19?**

#### **Answer**

Information on the Government supports for Covid-19 impacted business can be found at

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/COVID-19-supports/>

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has established a Business Support Call Centre for information on the government supports available to businesses and enterprises affected by COVID-19.

**Tel:** +353 1 631 2002

**Email:** [infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie](mailto:infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie)

## National and EU measures for the Maritime Transport Sector

### Question

**I am arriving into Ireland from overseas – are there any restrictions I should know about?**

### Answer

Any person arriving into Ireland from overseas is required to self-isolate for 14 days. This includes Irish Citizens returning home. Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people. Essential supply chain workers (such as pilots, hauliers and maritime crew) are excluded from this requirement. Further details on this requirement are available here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e885b2-covid-19-coronavirus-travel-advice/>

You will be asked by your carrier to fill in a [Public Health Passenger Locator Form](#) before you arrive in Ireland and this form will be collected by Irish officials on arrival. Furthermore, you may be contacted during the 14 days after you arrive in Ireland to check that you are self-isolating.

Further information on these requirements and what you need to do in relation to self-isolation is available here:

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html#travel>

### Question

**I am an essential supply chain worker – do I need to complete the Public Health Passenger Locator Form?**

### Answer

**No.** As essential supply chain workers (such as pilots, hauliers and maritime crew members) are not required to self-isolate, there is no requirement to complete the Public Health Passenger Locator Form. However, you must tick the box stating you are an essential supply chain worker and give the basis for the exemption for self-isolation.

### Question

**What measures has the Department put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

### Answer

The Minister has put in place a number of temporary contingency measures to provide for flexibility which will allow the sector to continue its work as normally as possible during this extraordinary time. The measures include a general extension to seafarer documents as well as an extension to ship certificates where it is not possible for a survey to take place

before the certificate expires. Shipping services are continuing and Irish ports are open for business with robust business continuity plans in place.

The temporary contingency measures are set out in a number of marine notices available on the Government's website here [Marine Notices](#) or alternatively, all updates in relation to COVID-19 and the maritime sector are available on <https://www.seafarers.ie/Home>

Guidance on COVID-19 and the protection of supply chain workers is available on the Government's website here - [Guidance for Supply Chain Workers](#)

Any specific queries in relation to COVID-19 and measures to mitigate its impact on the maritime transport sector should be sent to [maritimeCovid@dtas.gov.ie](mailto:maritimeCovid@dtas.gov.ie)

## Question

**What measures has the EU put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

## Answer

The European Union recognises that the unprecedented situation in which Member States find themselves requires an unprecedented response. There has been intensive engagement over the last number of weeks and a series of rapid measures taken.

To cushion the blow to people's livelihoods and the economy, the Commission adopted a comprehensive economic response to the outbreak on 13 March, followed by the adoption of the Temporary Framework for State Aid Measures on 19 March and the proposal to activate the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) on 20 March.

In order to keep freight moving across the EU during the current pandemic, on 23 March, the Commission issued guidance on the implementation of the Green Lanes for freight movements. Member States are requested to, without delay, designate all the relevant internal border-crossing points on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) as 'green lane' border crossings. The green lane border crossings should be open to all freight vehicles, whatever goods they are carrying. Crossing the border, including any checks and health screening, should not take more than 15 minutes. This will ensure that freight continues to move across the European supply routes and into Ireland.

In Ireland, Dublin, Cork, and Shannon Foynes ports are 'CORE' ports and Rosslare and Waterford ports are 'Comprehensive' ports on the Ten-T Network.

### Question

**I am a seafarer/worker in the maritime transport sector, am I classified as an essential worker?**

### Answer

**Yes.** Workers in the maritime transport sector are essential workers in ensuring the supply of essential goods. A full list of essential service providers under new public health guidelines can be found at [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

### Question

**I am a seafarer in the maritime transport sector, I have no symptoms, am I required to self-quarantine when I disembark?**

### Answer

**No.** On March 19<sup>th</sup> the Department of Health and HSE issued the following guidance. People travelling into Ireland from overseas should self-quarantine for 14 days. Specific groups exempt from this request include HAULIERS and MARITIME STAFF either Irish based or foreign based.

In their guidance issued on March 23<sup>rd</sup> the EU Commission stressed the importance of EU-wide supply chains continuing to operate uninterrupted. To keep transport moving, the Commission recommends that Member States take action to ensure the free movement of all workers involved in international transport, whatever the transport mode. In particular, rules such as travel restrictions, and mandatory quarantine of transport workers not displaying symptoms, should be waived.

### Question

**I am a seafarer in the transport sector, I am experiencing symptoms, what should I do when I arrive at port?**

### Answer

If you are experiencing symptoms you must follow the HSE guidelines and should self-quarantine for 14 days and contact your GP. Guidelines can be found at

[www2.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus) or by calling 1850 24 1850

## Cruise and Foreign Fishing Fleets

### Question

### **Are cruise ships still allowed to dock at Irish ports?**

#### **Answer**

**No.** The National Public Health Emergency Team, at their meeting on March 24th, agreed that no cruise ship will be permitted to enter any Irish port or anchor in Irish waters for the period up to the 19<sup>th</sup> of April. This decision, which was taken in the current extraordinary circumstances of Covid-19 will be reviewed at the end of this period.

#### **Question**

### **Why are foreign fishing trawlers being allowed to land at Irish ports?**

#### **Answer**

Workers in the maritime sector are essential workers in ensuring the supply of essential goods. They should be able to do their work, while their health and safety and that of those they come in contact with is protected to the greatest extent possible.

Guidance has been issued to ships captains and skippers to ensure that those on fishing trawlers landing at Irish Ports know what they must do to protect themselves and others while carrying out their work – landing catch. While they have exemptions as essential workers to carry out their duties, at all other times, while in Irish Ports, fishing trawler workers are required to follow the guidance which is in place for the general Irish Population including maintaining physical distancing and self-isolating.

This means they should limit their contact with others to the greatest extent possible both during work time and when not working.

## **Maritime Passenger Rights**

#### **Question**

### **I am a passenger and my booking to travel has been cancelled by the ferry operator due to Covid-19, am I entitled to a refund and compensation?**

The Rights of Passengers traveling by sea is set out in EU regulations and the National Transport Authority (NTA) is the Competent Authority in Ireland for enforcement of these Regulations.

On March 18 the EU Commission issued guidelines as to how these regulations are to be applied in the situation of a global pandemic.

Where a carrier reasonably expects a passenger service to be cancelled or delayed in departure from a port terminal for more than 90 minutes, the carrier must offer passengers a choice between two possibilities:



- re-routing to the final destination under comparable conditions, as set out in the transport contract, at the earliest opportunity and at no additional cost;  
Or
- reimbursement of the ticket price and, where relevant, a return service free of charge to the first point of departure, as set out in the transport contract, at the earliest opportunity.

This obligation remains unchanged.

However, passengers must recognise that the situation presented by the Covid-19 pandemic has created a great deal of uncertainty for maritime carriers, and that “earliest opportunity” may, in the current circumstance, result in quite a considerable delay.

While the Regulation also makes provision for additional compensation for cancellations it does provide for certain exemptions from the right to compensation, on account of extraordinary circumstances. The Covid-19 pandemic constitutes such an extraordinary circumstance and therefore carriers will not be obliged to pay additional compensation for cancellations due to the outbreak.

**Should you have any further queries regarding your rights as a passenger, please contact the National Transport Authority**

**online at: [www.nationaltransport.ie/eu-passenger-rights](http://www.nationaltransport.ie/eu-passenger-rights) or phone: 01-8798300**

## Ports and Shipping Services

### Question

**Will Irish Ports remain open during the pandemic?**

### Answer

**Yes.** Our commercial ports have been preparing for the implications of the Covid-19 outbreak for many weeks. All our ports are in regular contact with the public health authorities regarding guidance on containment of the coronavirus and the maintenance of supply chains for the country. The work of the ports, port service operators and shipping sector are vital at this time. It is imperative that the health and safety of these workers is protected while they work to transport goods internationally. All Department of Health and HSE guidelines have been rigorously adhered to, in order to safeguard employees, customers and the public.

Our ports have developed robust business continuity plans that will ensure the uninterrupted functioning of port services during this emergency period.

### Question

## Is there guidance available specific to ports to minimise the impact of COVID-19?

### Answer

Dublin Port has developed guidance for a Port setting which sets out the risks involved and the mitigation measures put in place to minimise those risks. The guidance is available as an appendix at the end of this document.

## Question

### I have non-essential goods sitting at the Port – what should I do?

### Answer

It is essential that the work of the supply chain continues to the greatest extent possible throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Where practical, all goods should continue to be distributed (not just food and medical supplies) to warehouses, businesses and distribution centres around the country. Likewise, all activities necessary for the continued provision of an essential service in the supply chain should continue. Every link must operate if the entire system is to function.

Those working in the supply chain who cannot work remotely, including but not limited to, cargo handlers, haulage drivers and warehouse staff should continue to go about their business to keep supply chains moving. Storage of containers at ports and airports is an impediment to the free flowing of goods. All warehouses and distribution centres, including those related to retail outlets which are temporarily closed, should continue to receive and store goods ordered. Guidance for both employers of essential workers and essential workers themselves can be found at [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie). Important health guidelines on Covid-19 can also be found at [www.hse2.ie](http://www.hse2.ie)

Travel related to the operation of logistics businesses or necessary travel by logistics workers to places of work are considered 'essential travel' in the context of current restrictions.

## Question

### Where can I find advice in relation to the availability of warehousing/drivers etc.?

### Answer

The Covid-19 National Logistics Forum has been established which is chaired by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT). This Forum discusses the provision of commercial/technical solutions to issues affecting the wider logistics and transport sector in order to keep the supply chains moving. It has established a national resources database to allow for sharing of information and identification of spare capacity in the supply chain such as warehousing, transport, drivers etc. Further information on how to access or feed into the national resources database is available here <https://www.cilt.ie/lrd-page>

## Question

### Am I an essential worker?

#### Answer

The Department of an Taoiseach have published a list of essential workers which includes a transport related category as follows:

#### Transport Storage and Communication

- land transport (e.g. bus, rail and taxi services)
- road, rail, sea and air freight
- sea and air passenger services; ports and airports
- warehousing and support activities for transportation including cargo-handling; postal and courier activities; network control and critical maintenance (including roads); and safety related functions

Personnel involved in Maritime Search and Rescue are covered under the *Public Administration and Defence* category as 'Public administration activities necessary to support essential services and provision of social protection benefits (including Civil Service and Local Government)' and as 'Community/Voluntary services'.

Coast Guard Volunteers, RNLI, CRBI and Coast Guard Helicopter crews are advised to carry either work identification or a letter issued by their organisations indicating that they are an essential employee/volunteer and are advised to always carry two forms of ID.

The list and accompanying guidance is published on Gov.ie at this link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dfef8f-list-of-essential-service-providers-under-new-public-health-guidelin/>

It is important to keep all elements of the supply chain moving and therefore it should be noted that staff involved in warehousing and support activities are deemed essential workers, even if they are not dealing with essential goods.

The guidance contains advice to employers and employees as follows:

#### What employers should do:

- refer to this guidance to decide whether your organisation is providing an essential service; it is not necessary to seek official authorisation
- if you are providing an essential service, you should identify those employees (including sub-contractors etc.) who are essential to the provision of that service and notify them (this can be done by category of employee or by individual; it could include all employees of the organisation)
- if you are providing an essential service, latest public health guidance should be followed at all times

#### What employees should do:

- if your employer notifies you that you are an essential employee, or that you belong to a category of essential employees, you are permitted to travel to and from work
- when travelling to and from work, you should at all times bring with you either a work identification or a letter from your employer indicating that you are an essential employee, as well as one other form of identification
- if you are self-employed, a farmer or agricultural worker, or a member of the clergy, you should carry one form of identification with you at all times

### Question

**Airlines have grounded most of their fleets due to the impact of the pandemic, is there a danger that the shipping operators will do likewise.**

### Answer

**No.** The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is in continual contact with all the shipping companies on Irish routes to ensure that there will be sufficient capacity to meet demand and continuity of these vital services. However, measures to control the coronavirus pandemic have now practically stopped passenger traffic on combined passenger/cargo ferries on the Southern (Rosslare to Great Britain) and Continental (any Irish port to the Continent) routes to and from Ireland. Because of this, it has become clear that urgent measures are necessary to assist in the continuation of these services over the next few months. Therefore, as a temporary measure, the Minister has announced the designation of five strategic maritime routes into and out of Ireland as Public Service Obligation (PSO) routes during the pandemic for a period of up to three months. These routes are:

- Dublin/Cherbourg;
- Rosslare/Fishguard;
- Rosslare/Pembroke;
- Rosslare/Cherbourg; and
- Rosslare/Bilbao.

### Question

**What is a Public Service Obligation and why do we need it?**

### Answer

A public service obligation is an arrangement between the Government and a service provider (in this case ferry companies) to operate services on specific routes in the public interest for which the companies will be financially subsidised. In this case, the Government has decided that the five routes mentioned above are of strategic importance to Ireland to ensure the continuation of Ireland's supply chain which is critically important at this time for

the movement of essential goods, including food and medical supplies, into and out of Ireland.

### Question

**How much will this financial package to support the Public Service Obligation Routes cost the Government?**

### Answer

The financial support package for these five routes will be capped at €15 million. The support package will be paid to the service providers – Irish Ferries, Stena Line and Brittany Ferries – for the continued operation of services on these specific five routes over the next three months.

### Question

**Does the financial package cover the entire cost of these five routes?**

### Answer

**No.** The support package will be targeted at compensating the gap between specified costs and revenues generated on the services on these five routes. It will not include the operators fixed costs and will exclude any other supports the three companies are receiving nationally or from other international Governments. Transport companies will continue to pay shipping companies for the services on these routes as usual.

### Question

**Why is the Government not supporting the other passenger ferry services out of Ireland?**

### Answer

The Central corridor (sailings from Dublin to Heysham, Liverpool and Holyhead) is the primary link for Ireland's maritime connections, with almost 100 weekly services and a total estimated weekly HGV capacity of 18,209.

The Central corridor is served by a greater number of sailings and vessels and the supply lines via this corridor and landbridge are reasonably robust. As such, there is greater capacity to vary service levels without materially reducing the service offering in terms of sailings to hauliers. Operators on this corridor have the flexibility to engage in cost saving measures such as reducing the number of sailings or the redeployment of vessels without significantly impacting Ireland's connectivity. This flexibility does not exist on the Southern and Continental corridors.

### Question

## How will the Government protect the taxpayer from undue financial exposure from this scheme?

### Answer

It must be stressed that this financial support package is a temporary measure, limited to a 3 month period only and covering five strategic routes. It will be governed by strict PSO contracts with each company. The State will only be compensating the gap between specified costs and revenues generated on the service, thus allowing the services to remain economically viable. The scheme is capped at a maximum contribution of €15m. Transport companies will continue to the ferry operators for the journeys abroad ships as usual.

### Question

## Is the financial support package anti-competitive and a breach of State aid rules?

### Answer

**No.** The model of support being implemented is currently already applied by the State on key routes in other transport sectors where the State provides support to operators on routes that are commercially unviable but strategically important. States can provide compensation to companies for services which the State believes to be key public services without this being considered State Aid. This model is currently widely applied for the provision of public transport through a range of modes including bus and coach services, train lines and key air routes through Public Service Obligation funding.

### Question

## Why were these Public Service Obligation (PSO) contracts not publicly tendered?

### Answer

In the normal course of events, there would be a public tendering competition for a PSO contract. However, the country currently finds itself in unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances where decisions are time critical. The EU Commission recognises that Covid-19 has created an environment where immediate action may be necessary.

In their guidance issued on 1 April 2020 the EU Commission noted:

*“Contracting authorities may award public contracts by a negotiated procedure without publication ‘insofar as is strictly necessary where, for reasons of extreme urgency brought about by events unforeseeable by the contracting authority, the time limits for the open or restricted procedures or competitive procedures with negotiation cannot be complied with. The circumstances invoked to justify extreme urgency shall not in any event be attributable to the contracting authority.’ (Article 32(2)(c) of the Directive).”*

The financial measures being put in place are in compliance with the European Commission’s requirements under the emergency PSO arrangements and the emergency procurement arrangements published in response to COVID-19.

## Question

### Why aren't freight only shipping companies also being supported?

#### Answer

Government support is being targeted to specific routes and services on those routes carrying passengers as well as freight. The operators of that mixed model have been most severely affected by the drop in passenger numbers, the revenue from which is necessary for the economic viability of the operations. That is not the case with the freight only operators. Due to a lower drop in freight volumes, very limited exposure to the tourism market, and a lower cost business model with more inherent flexibility, freight only operators have the capacity to reduce service offerings while maintaining more viable routes. Such options and flexibilities are not available to operators carrying passengers and freight.

In addition, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has introduced a range of supports to help businesses continue to trade during the current crisis, which will also be of relevance to those businesses in transport and logistics in maintaining the smooth running of critical supply chains. Such supports include:

- The Credit Guarantee Scheme;
- The SBCI Covid-19 Working Capital Scheme
- Microfinance Ireland Covid-19 loan finance

Further information is available here - <https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/COVID-19-supports/Government-supports-to-COVID-19-impacted-businesses.html>

## Maritime Declarations of Health

### Question

#### What are vessels arriving in Ireland from a port outside the Island of Ireland required to do?

#### Answer

The Masters of vessels arriving in Ireland from a port outside the Island of Ireland are required to complete:

- a Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) for all ships arriving in Ireland from outside the Island of Ireland, and
- an updated Crew List and Passenger List (for passenger ships).

A sample of the MDoH and Crew List/Passenger List can be accessed via [Marine Notice 06 of 2020](#).

### Question

**What is required of vessels that are on voyages between ports on the island of Ireland or departing and returning to the same Irish port and not calling at any port outside the island of Ireland?**

### Answer

The Masters of vessels on such voyages are not required to submit a Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) or crew list, at present.

### Question

**What happens when a crew member or passenger develops Covid-19 symptoms during the course of a voyage?**

### Answer

Where any crew member or passenger, during the course of a voyage (domestic or international), develops a sudden onset of at least one of the following:

- a fever
  - a cough
  - a sore throat
  - shortness of breath requiring hospitalisation
- or
- a crew member/passenger is identified as a close contact with a confirmed or probable case of Covid-19 (2019-nCoV) infection.

The Master(s) shall submit a Maritime Declaration of Health, Crew List and Passenger List in accordance with Marine Notice 06 of 2020.

### Question

**Who should the required documents be submitted to?**

### Answer

Where a MDoH and Crew List/Passenger List are required, they shall be submitted as follows:

- For Safe Seas Ireland registered users only – submission is via [www.safeseasireland.ie](https://safeseasireland.ie) <https://safeseas.ie/ssi/login.jsp>
- For non-Safe Seas Ireland users – submit to the local Environmental Health Office

### Question

**Where can the contact details for the local Environmental Health Office be accessed?**

### Answer



The contact details of the local Environmental Health Office can be requested from the Harbour Master. Where the port has no Harbour Master, the contact details can be requested from the nearest port with a Harbour Master. It is the responsibility of the master to confirm the relevant contact details for the destination port before the commencement of any voyage.

### Question

#### How soon should the Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) be submitted?

#### Answer

The MDoH must be completed and submitted **no more than 24 hours before arrival**, in the instance where there are zero cases suspected on board. Where the health status of anyone on-board changes after submission of a MDoH, an updated MDoH shall be submitted **no later than 4 hours before arrival**.

### Question

#### What documents are to be completed?

#### Answer

The following documents are required to be completed:

1. The Maritime Declaration of Health (as per International Health Regulations 2005, Annex 8 model) which should include:
  - a) last 30 days Port of call, and
  - b) list of all crew and passengers having joined since commencement of international voyage. If none joined state "Not applicable".
2. Crew list and Passenger List.

### Question

#### What happens if the documents are not completed in full?

#### Answer

Ship entry may be refused in case of incomplete reporting.

### Question

#### What happens if there is a problem accessing Safe Seas Ireland?

#### Answer

In the event of a loss of service to Safe Seas Ireland all MDoH to be submitted, via email, to [ehnationaloffice@hse.ie](mailto:ehnationaloffice@hse.ie) and the local Harbour Master.

### Question

**What is the appropriate action to take if there is a suspected case of Covid-19 on-board?**

#### Answer

In the case of a passenger/crew member presenting with acute respiratory infection with sudden onset of at least one of the symptoms lists above, the assistance of a medical professional should be sought immediately.

### Question

**What is the best means of seeking medical advice?**

#### Answer

*For events at sea in Irish waters: -*

Liaise with the National Maritime Telemedical Assistance Service (Medico Cork). Contact via the Irish Coast Guard on telephone 112 or VHF Radio.

[http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork\\_about.php](http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork_about.php)

*For events in port: -*

Call HSE National Ambulance Control on 021-4640038 for case management and Public Health assessment. Notify the Port Authority of the suspected case as soon as possible and preferably not less than 24 hours before arrival.

To make contact outside of business hours (i.e. Monday-Friday from 17h00-09h00, and on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays), please telephone the Public Health out-of-hours service and ask for the on-call Public Health Specialist. If you do not have the number for the local out-of-hours Public Health Service, please contact your Harbour Master for these details.

## Certification of Seafarers

### Question

**Is the Mercantile Marine Office open?**

#### Answer

The Marine Mercantile Office is currently closed to the public. Staff are available to answer queries which should be sent to [admin@seafarers.ie](mailto:admin@seafarers.ie) All queries in relation to revalidation of Certificates of Competency should be sent to [seafarersTEC@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:seafarersTEC@dttas.gov.ie)

### Question

**What if a Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency is due to expire?**

#### Answer

Any Irish Certificate of Competency, or Certificate of Proficiency for service on tankers, issued to a seafarer by the IMA, in line with the International Convention on Standards, Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and/or national regulations, which expires or is due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020 are given an extension of 6 months from the date of expiry.

### Question

**Will a temporary extension Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency, be issued to affected seafarers?**

#### Answer

The IMA is in the process of issuing temporary extensions to all affected seafarers, details of which can be found on [www.seafarers.ie](http://www.seafarers.ie) or by emailing your COC number and Date of Birth to [SeafarersTEC@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:SeafarersTEC@dttas.gov.ie)

### Question

**Should an expired Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency be retained?**

#### Answer

Seafarers are required to retain their expired certificate along with a copy of Marine Notice 14 of 2020 for inspection and presented when requested to do so.

### Question

**What provisions are in place for Irish Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CeC) which are due to expire?**

#### Answer

Any Irish Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CeC) issued to a seafarer by the IMA, in line with the International Convention on Standards, Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and/or national regulations, will be linked to the validity of the seafarer's national Certificate of Competency.

### Question

**What happens if a seafarer's Certificate of Equivalent Competency (CeC) is due to be renewed?**

### Answer

Should the seafarer's national Certificate of Competency be due for renewal an application for an Irish Certificate of Equivalent Competency can be made through email. In these instances, the seafarer will automatically be granted with a Certificate of Receipt of Application (CRA), this will allow the seafarer to sail on Irish registered vessels for an extended period of 6 months.

### Question

**What if a seafarer is unable to apply for a Certificate of Competency within their home country?**

### Answer

In those instances in which a seafarer is unable to apply for Certificate of Competency within their home country, they must request a written declaration from the relevant administration in their home country stating that their Certificate of Competency has been extended for a period of months which should then be submitted to the IMA for review.

The IMA will then be in a position to issue a Certificate of Receipt of Application (CRA) to allow the seafarer to continue to work on board. There is no requirement for a seafarer to make an application for such an extension, however, their expired Certificate of Equivalent Competency must be retained along with a copy of Marine Notice 14 of 2020 for inspection and presented when requested to do so.

### Question

**What action should a seafarer take when they are unable to renew a completed discharge book?**

### Answer

Seafarers that are unable to renew a completed (full) discharge book should request that all seafarer discharges or engagements are recorded on paper (paper discharge).

### Question

**My Seafarers' Medical Certificate has expired or is due to expire and I am unable to secure a medical examination – what should I do?**

### Answer

A medical Certificate issued to a seafarer under the seafarers' medical examination scheme, which expires or is due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August examination scheme, may be extended by up to 3 months from the date of expiry, where the seafarer is unable to present to an Approved Doctor for a medical examination in order to renew their certificate.

### Question

**Is a seafarer required to apply for an extension of their medical certificate?**

### Answer

There is no requirement for a seafarer to make an application for such an extension, however, their expired certificate must be retained along with a copy of Marine Notice 14 of 2020 for inspection and presented when requested to do so.

### Question

**If there are restrictions associated with a seafarers' medical certificate, will these remain in place?**

### Answer

Any restrictions associated with a seafarers' medical certificate remain in place during the extension period.

### Question

**What happens in those instances where the seafarer's employment agreement is due to expire?**

### Answer

Where a seafarer's employment agreement (SEA) expires or is due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, and a seafarer has reached the maximum period of service and/or repatriation of the seafarer is difficult due to current travel restrictions, the SEA may be extended by up to 6 months from the date of expiry with the agreement of the seafarer.

#### **Question**

**Will the same terms and conditions apply to seafarer's employment agreements that have been extended?**

#### **Answer**

In this situation, the same terms and conditions as originally agreed will continue to apply. Any Agreement to such an extension must be signed by the seafarer and witnessed by a person not party to the Agreement.

#### **Question**

**Who is liable for the costs pending repatriation?**

#### **Answer**

Shipping companies remain liable for costs pending repatriation. These include but are not limited to medical care, crew transfer, isolation etc.

If a shipping company is in doubt, they should contact the financial security provider to confirm that the insurance or other financial security is in place for additional costs.

#### **Question**

**What will be accepted as valid seagoing service for the revalidation or issue of a Certificate of Competency (CoC)?**

#### **Answer**

All days spent on the ship when it is fully crewed and operational or if placed in warm lay-up, will be accepted as valid seagoing service for the revalidation or issue of a CoC.

Sea service for cadets currently completing a sea phase will be subject to review.

#### **Question**

**Who should be contacted in the event of changes to the Minimum Safe Manning Document (MSMD) due to Covid-19 travel restrictions?**

#### **Answer**

If a crew member needs to leave the ship due to urgent circumstances and cannot be replaced immediately due to COVID-19 travel restrictions the shipowner/Company manager should contact the Marine Survey Office for a dispensation or revised MSMD as may be applicable.

### Question

**What happens when training course providers have ceased training and refresher training is required?**

#### Answer

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport is aware that a significant number of ancillary training course providers have ceased training for the immediate future and that seafarers who require refresher training may not be able to find an available course<sup>1</sup>.

For the holder of an Irish Certificate of Proficiency, the Department considers that, for those seafarers who are on board a vessel or about to return and their safety training which expires or is due to expire between 1 March 2020 and 31 August 2020, a self-declaration may be completed to allow the seafarer to comply with STCW updating/refresher training. This self-declaration shall be acceptable for no more than 6 months following the fifth anniversary of the issue date of the certificate concerned.

The appropriate self-declaration the seafarer is required to complete is appended to [Marine Notice 14 of 2020](#).

### Question

**How soon after they become available must the required training course be completed?**

#### Answer

An approved updating/refresher training course must be completed as soon as possible when courses become available.

### Question

**Is it the IMA's intention to accept expired seafarer certificates of competency/proficiency and medical certificates, when conducting Port State Control inspections?**

#### Answer

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of required training courses include: Proficiency in Personal Survival Techniques (PST) STCW A-VI/1-1 and Proficiency in Advanced Fire Fighting (AFF) STCW A-VI/3

The IMA will accept expired seafarer certificates of competency/proficiency and medical certificates where the flag administration has granted an extension due to the current circumstances. In these circumstances, the shipowner may be asked to produce any letter of dispensation issued by the flag State and details of any measures put in place in order to comply with any conditions imposed by the flag State, including where appropriate, amendments to relevant parts of the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance – Part 1 & II. Shipowners may also be required to provide details of how crew entitlements under Maritime Labour Convention are to be protected in light of an extended stay on board and what plans, if necessary, the shipowner has to repatriate them.

### **Question**

**From what date will the temporary measures outlined in [Marine Notice 14 of 2020](#) expire?**

### **Answer**

As soon as new Certificates of Competency and Certificates of proficiency can be issued their period of validity of five years will start from the expiry date of the previous certificates. [Marine Notice 14 of 2020](#) shall expire on 31 August 2020 and the provisions outlined therein will no longer be applicable.

A further Marine Notice will issue before end of August to clarify the situation on this matter.

## **Surveying and Certification of Irish Registered Ships**

### **Question**

**What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in international trade?**

### **Answer**

Companies should endeavour to arrange surveys within the applicable time window as normal. Where this is not possible, due to personnel and travel restrictions that are currently in place around the world, the DTTAS has decided that all ships' certificates which expire from 23 March 2020 (the issue date of [Marine Notice 15 of 2020](#)) will remain valid for 3 months from the date of expiry without approval from the DTTAS or the Recognised Organisation (RO). This extension applies to certificates issued by service providers, recognised organisations and recognised security organisations (RSO's) carrying out surveys, verifications and inspections on behalf of the IMA.

The extension also applies to certificates issued by service providers conducting services on behalf of the Administration or RO, including, but not limited to service providers re-certifying life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment or radio equipment.

The subject ship certificates are not required to be replaced by new certificates on which the extended date of expiry is stated.



The above also applies in relation to expiration of the validity of certificates due to the fact that required annual/periodical/intermediate/renewal/bottom surveys cannot be held within the expiry of the window.

In such cases where surveys are to be held/completed outside the time window, DTTAS will agree that a note should be made on the certificate explaining the circumstances. The scope of survey that is to be used may be the same as if subject survey was held within the original window.

Annual ISM internal audits may be postponed for 3 months, as described in paragraph 12.1 of the ISM Code in cases where audits cannot be carried out due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The ship owner shall notify the ROs in cases where they make use of the above-mentioned provision. Similarly annual internal audits under the ISPS Code may also be postponed for 3 months with notification to the RSO as above.

### **Question**

**What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in Domestic Voyages including fishing vessels?**

#### **Answer**

The survey of ships and passenger boats engaged in domestic voyages and fishing vessels will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Owners should apply for survey in the usual manner and they will be contacted by the Marine Survey Office (MSO) to discuss arrangements.

### **Question**

**What advice is available in relation to survey and Certification of New-Building ships of all types for the Irish Flag?**

#### **Answer**

Due to increased travel restrictions it is not possible for MSO Surveyors to travel to shipyards overseas. Therefore, the survey of new-building ships for the Irish flag of all types will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the shipyard and shipowner. In such cases the shipyard and shipowner should make direct contact with the MSO who will discuss arrangements.

### **Question**

**Where can queries in relation to Ships Radio Licences and Registration of EPIRBs be directed to?**

#### **Answer**

Ship Radio Licence/Transfer Applications, EPIRB Registrations and general maritime radiocommunications related queries should be e-mailed directly to [RadioSurveyors@dtas.gov.ie](mailto:RadioSurveyors@dtas.gov.ie)

Relevant forms are available in an editable format at the following link, <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1d6ea4-maritime-radio/>

### Question

**What if there is a delay in issuing a hard copy of the Ships Radio Licence?**

#### Answer

As there may be delays in issuing hard copies of licences, a PDF version of the Ships Radio Licence and associated documentation may be emailed to applicants during this period. This PDF should be printed and retained onboard the vessel and be available for inspection purposes.

### Question

**What are the MSO's plans in with regard to the servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and Marine Evacuation Systems (MES)?**

#### Answer

The MSO recognises that servicing facilities may not be available due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and therefore, subject to an onboard inspection by the Master, the MSO hereby extends the servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and MES to 17 months but not later than six months from the date of issue of Marine Notice 15 of 2020 (23 March 2020).

Operators are not required to approach the MSO to use this extension to service periods but should retain a copy of Marine Notice 15 of 2020 on board for the guidance of officials should it be required. Routine on-board inspections of Life Saving Apparatus should continue as normal on equipment subject to the above extensions.

### Question

**Is it the MSO's intention to accept expired surveys, when conducting Port State Control inspections?**

#### Answer

The Paris MoU on Port State Control issued Temporary Guidance related to COVID-19 for Port State Control Authorities on 18 March 2020 in which they require that when a ship does not comply with the requirements of the surveys, inspections and audits contained in the relevant conventions, the ship must provide evidence to the port State that the flag State has agreed to an exceptional delay specific to COVID-19. There should also be evidence that the ship has a plan that covers how the ship will be brought back into the regular survey or audit cycle.

### Question

**When do the temporary measures outlined in [Marine Notice 15 of 2020](#) expire?**

### Answer

[Marine Notice 15 of 2020](#) will expire on 31 August 2020 and thereafter the provisions contained within will no longer be applicable. A further Marine Notice will issue before end of August to clarify the situation on this matter.

## Maritime Search and Rescue Services (SAR)

### Question

**Is there any change to National SAR arrangements?**

### Answer

**No change.**

- a. The Coast Guard will continue to coordinate Maritime SAR services through its three Rescue Coordination Centres at Dublin, Malin and Valentia operating on a 24/7 basis.
- b. These centres keep a constant watch on Ch16 VHF, 2182 Mhz, maritime frequencies and coordinate the national response to any EPIRB, PLB or ELT alerts.
- c. Coast Guard Rescue Coordination centres can also be contacted via ECAS by dialling 112 or 999 and ask for *Coast Guard*.

### SAR Resources

- a. The Coast Guard SAR helicopter contract, with day and night services operates out of Dublin, Sligo, Shannon and Waterford.
- b. Volunteer Coast Guard Units provide Rescue Boats, Cliff Rescue and Shoreline search capabilities and act as the eyes and ears of the RCCs. They are also available to assist the Principal Response Agencies with other emergency service as may be requested.
- c. RNLI services are unchanged and Coast Guard and RNLI remain in constant contact to address any issues arising.
- d. Locally based Community Rescue Boats, as coordinated by the Coast Guard, are also available to assist with local SAR requirements

## Maritime Pollution

### Question

**What do I do if I see a pollution incident at sea or along the coast?**

### Answer

Contact the Coast Guard via CH 16 VHF or ECAS 112/999 and provide a description of the sighting.

### Contact details:

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport – [info@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:info@dttas.gov.ie)

COVID-19 related maritime issues – [maritimeCovid@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:maritimeCovid@dttas.gov.ie)

Marine Notices – [marinenotices@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:marinenotices@dttas.gov.ie)

Mercantile Marine Office – [admin@seafarers.ie](mailto:admin@seafarers.ie)

Marine Survey Office – [mso@dttas.gov.ie](mailto:mso@dttas.gov.ie)

HSE – [www2.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus) or by calling 1850 24 1850

### GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RISK MITIGATION MEASURES - COVID-19 & PORT OPERATIONS:

This document proposal applies to Essential Workers who must attend their workplace within the Port in order to maintain Essential Services.

COVID-19 represents a medical threat to individuals and as a result specific risk evaluations should be carried out for each worker.

Risk is increased due to the Vulnerability of a person, the Probability of exposure and the Impact of contracting COVID-19 (the consequences, personal and economic). Risk is reduced by control measures.

The HSE, Port Health Authority and Occupational Health Staff should be engaged when developing specific worker risk assessments to minimise worker's risk of exposure to the virus.

A clinical approach to risk assessment should be utilised; identifying the actual medical risk for each individual in a common work-place. Mitigation or control measures may then be applied to lower or remove that risk. Standardised control measures may apply to all, or some workers, dependent on their physical and personal circumstances.

- A clinical risk assessment (RA) does not necessarily involve a test for COVID-19 unless the relevant symptoms are displayed.
- The clinical RA should be conducted in conjunction with a trained medical person. (The Company may have access to an occupational health nurse or doctor)
- The clinical RA should include medical risk profiling of each individual. Information may be gathered in confidence by the medical clinician and their evaluation of the risk to that person is inserted into the risk assessment as a particular risk level (vulnerability). The procedural control measures can then be applied to determine if that person can continue in their assigned role with an acceptable level of risk. If a clinician is unavailable to assess the Essential Worker's vulnerability, a high risk level must be inserted into the risk assessment for the individual and increased control measures must be applied

A clinical RA must be applied for vulnerable persons identified as persons of 60 years of age and over and those with a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or cancer and pregnant women.

Business contingency measures should be put in place to consider the absence of Essential Workers and the departure of workers from the workplace due to contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19. If a worker calls in sick or with symptoms the HSE should be informed.

- If a worker has a confirmed case of COVID-19, contact your Company Management and Human Resources. They should immediately inform the HSE and follow the HSE advice. A complete list of Port locations visited by the person and any person to person contact situations should be developed, if possible.

- If a worker reports symptoms whilst on duty they should be provided with a face mask and gloves and taken to a prepared isolation room. As is practical, an isolation room should be designated in each port facility / terminal.

Isolation rooms should be provided with seating, water, tissues, close top bin, hand sanitizer & wipes, first aid box, surgical face mask, face shield or goggles, clean, non-sterile, disposable long-sleeved gown - if this is not available wear a plastic apron and roll down your sleeves and pairs of gloves. Contact with cleaning contractor may be made for cleaning of the person's work station and visited locations if required. Emergency Numbers: HSE No. 1850 24 1850

All individuals who have been in close contact with a person with confirmed case of COVID-19 should self-isolate and contact their Doctor, the HSE and work-place management. Close contact is remaining / working within 1 to 2m of that person with no PPE for 15 minutes or more, physical contact or working at the same work / control station within 24 hours of previous use by that person, if it has not been sterilised after their use.

It should be noted that ships entering Ireland from a Port not on the island of Ireland shall submit a Maritime Declaration of Health in accordance with Marine Notice 06 of 2020 no later than 4 hours prior to entering port (Regular Ferries are exempt by the HSE). The Harbour Masters shall ensure that requirement is followed.

#### Examples of Risk Control / Mitigation Measures:

- Companies should enable remote working if and where possible for workers.
- If possible traveling to & from work via private car.
- Where possible, maintain personal space (2.0m), where this is not possible reduce duration.
- Avoid personal gestures such as handshakes, hand to hand contact etc.
- Wash/clean hands regularly with soap/water or hand sanitiser.
- Where neither option is available, gloves may be used and MUST be disposed of after use.
- Common workstations to be sanitised regularly.
- Maximum two person occupancy in company cars at any given time. One front, one back, on opposite sides. If using busses for personnel transports provide one empty seat gaps to front and rear.
- Have equipped isolation rooms in place for protection of workers.
- Persons returning from Overseas are to contact their function manager first before returning to work and may be required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days.
- Only essential visitors permitted to Port facilities and buildings.
- All deliveries to be left at building receptions for collection. Use of contactless payment.
- HSE Information posters to be erected in the Port Operations Building and terminals.
- Provide regular updates from port management to workers on COVID-19 Planning & Preparedness.
- Information and training given to all employees via e-mail, posters and verbal briefings as required.

Captain Michael McKenna  
Harbour Master