



## COVID-19 Quarantine Requirements for Ships Departing from Russia and COVID-19 High-Risk Countries to South Korea

12 August 2020

### **Background**

On 23 June 2020, cluster infections were reported on a Russian flagged refrigerated cargo ship which sailed from Russia after some crew changes and arrived on 21 June and berthed at Gamcheon port in Busan. Nineteen crew members on board two Russian ships were tested for COVID-19 and found positive. Subsequently, COVID-19 tests were conducted on all people who came in contact with the infected crew members.

After the above incident, more new confirmed cases have been reported and according to local news, 92 seafarers on 8 ships have been tested positive for COVID-19 and more than 12 locals in Busan have been found to be infected with COVID-19 as of 1 August.

Crew members have been tested and found positive also in Incheon and Pyeongtaek Ports and in Ulsan.

### **Quarantine measures**

On 24 June, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) made the following announcement regarding plans for quarantine measures in local ports:

#### **QUOTE**

- In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 into communities through sea ports, stronger port quarantine measures will be implemented.
- Stronger screening protocols will be implemented for ships entering from a “high-risk” country. Such measures include investigation of the places where the crew members stayed within the last 14 days, crew disembarking history, type of cargo and unloading method.
- Owners will be required to report to the quarantine authorities any crew member that disembarked the ship within the last 14 days. Ships that fail to report people who have symptoms may be denied entry\* and/or a fine may be imposed against them\*\*.

*\* As for a ship which fails to report crew members who have symptoms, shall deem that special management is required for arrival at a trade port to ensure national security and etc. and denied entry (according to Article 3 (Ships Subject to Permission for Arrival and Departure) of Enforcement Decree of Act on the Arrival, Departure, Etc. of Ships).*

*\*\* As for a ship which fails to report people who have symptoms, fine, not exceeding Korean Won 5 million, shall be imposed (according to the Quarantine Act).*

- Ship crew and workers should work in non-face-to-face or contactless methods. Masks should be worn during loading or unloading of cargo. Management will be strengthened to ensure better compliance with infection prevention protocols.

#### **UNQUOTE**

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As of 01 July, the Quarantine Station announced the extended list of onboard quarantine inspection required areas for COVID-19 to include Russia, Philippines, and Indonesia in accordance with KCDC's guidelines. Therefore, onboard quarantine inspections will be carried out by quarantine officers on vessels coming from and/or via Chinese ports (including Hong Kong and Macau), Italy, Iran, Russia, Philippines, Indonesia, and etc.

Also, the Quarantine Station announced strengthening of quarantine measures at Korean ports in order to prevent importation of COVID-19 into communities through sea ports in accordance with KCDC's guidelines as follows:

- 1) As of 06 July, on board quarantine inspection is required for vessels arriving within 14 days from (including via) quarantine inspection required areas of which is determined worldwide for COVID-19 by KCDC if come under one or more of the following:
  - (a) Amongst vessels arriving from COVID-19 high risk countries (list to be periodically updated by KCDC and Quarantine Station) - if there is crew embarkation due to crew change or etc. within 14 days from the date of arrival.
  - (b) If there is a patient infected with COVID-19 (including symptomatic cases) etc. on board or if there is death on board.
  - (c) If vessel does not have the Ship Sanitation Control Inspection Certificate (including expired validity).
  - (d) Other vessels that the quarantine officer considers necessary for on board quarantine inspection.
- 2) As of 06 July, all crew members disembarking from vessels are required to undergo COVID-19 test on board and to await on board for the results of which takes about 12 hours. As for crew members showing symptoms, they should stay isolated on board until the COVID-19 test results are available.

The Results may be received by the shipowner's company or the shipping agency on behalf of the crews.

Quarantine Certificate may be issued for those crews whose test results are negative.

The COVID-19 testing on board may be skipped for those crew members who should be taken to hospital due to emergency medical attention.

- 3) As of 13 July, all crews disembarking from vessels and entering Korea after the immigration procedures are also required to stay in isolation for 14 days with installing the Self Diagnosis Mobile App – self-quarantine at home for Korean crews and quarantined at government designated facilities for foreign crews.

For foreign crews with approved landing permit and re-embarkation Korean crews, an exception for the 14 days quarantine isolation (however installing the Self Diagnosis Mobile App is required) may be reported to the Ministry of Oceans & Fisheries under the following conditions:

Prove that (1) the crew remained on board the vessel, (2) there was no embarkation/disembarkation of crews and no crew changes, and (3) there was no crew with symptoms and no crew infected with COVID-19 on board the vessel for 14 or more days prior to arrival.

Also, effective as of 13 July, KCDC announced strengthening of quarantine measures in order to prevent importation of COVID-19 into communities as follows:

All foreign arrivals from COVID-19 high-risk countries (reportedly (not formally announced) including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan (as of 13 July), Philippines and Uzbekistan (as of 20 July), and etc.) are required to submit a health certificate of 'negative' COVID-19 results on the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test issued at a testing centre designated by South Korean embassies within 48 hours prior to departure of flights.

KCDC also announced that as of 20 July, **all crews from Russian vessels that are in regular contact with the workers at port to undergo the COVID-19 test.**



As the number of confirmed cases has been increasing for seafarers arriving at airports for crew changes, the Ministry of Oceans & Fisheries announced strengthening of immigration (require Korean visa (C-3-11)) and quarantine procedures (require certificate for PCR negative test result) as of 24 July for on-signing ship crews arriving by flights in order to prevent importation of COVID-19 into communities in accordance with KCDC's guidelines, and even though submitted negative test result, to undergo 14 days of quarantine isolation at government designated facilities and to receive virus tests within 3 days of arrival and etc. in Korea.

In order to prevent importation of COVID-19 into communities from ports, KCDC announced that as of 30 July, **on board quarantine inspections on ships from Russia and high-risk countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Uzbekistan, and etc.) are being carried out.**

As of 3 August, **if ships are arriving in Korea, crews on board ships from Russia and high-risk countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Philippines, Uzbekistan, and etc.) are required to submit a certificate showing tested negative for COVID-19 taken within 48 hours prior to departure at a testing centre designated by South Korean embassies.**

If the requirement of certificate for PCR negative test result is not met (issued in excess of the 48 hours or issued at a not approved test centre or fail to submit the certificate), all ship crews on board are to undergo COVID-19 tests, all crews disembarkation is not permitted, and ship works are suspended until the 'negative' results are received.

Port operations are continuing without further restrictions up to this time.

We advise the Club's Members to contact their local agents for more updated information on the requirements (including on the Health Declaration Form, Travel Record Declaration, Self-Diagnosis Mobile App, immigration and quarantine procedures, 14-day quarantine isolation, and etc.) prior to calling at Korean ports in order to avoid possible delays.

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