REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY

Circular No. 8/2020 31 March 2020

SDM 5.13.09
SDM 12.3.01.36. 02

To all Registered Owners, Registered Bareboat Charterers,
Managers and Representatives of Ships flying the Cyprus Flag

Subject: Urgent Provisional Measures for the operation of Cyprus ships during the Covid-19 outbreak.

In an effort to support shipping companies and owners of Cyprus ships and to enable them to address the difficulties encountered due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM) has put in place special arrangements for its smooth operation and the effective provision of services to its clients and collaborators (Circular No. 6/2020).

In response to these unprecedented and continuously changing conditions, as well as the need for continuous updates and information arising from this ***force majeure*** situation, the Cyprus Maritime Administration has prepared a dedicated section in its website where all related information and circulars issued by the SDM, Cyprus, the EU and the IMO regarding Covid -19 can be found:

www.shipping.gov.cy

The Shipping Deputy Ministry remains **fully operational** and continues to provide its high-quality services without any disruption, so that all ships registered under the Cyprus flag will continue to operate as usual. Our arrangements ensure the timely completion of registry and other transactions without any interruption and encourage the continuity of trade and the maintenance of the supply chain. The Registrar of Cyprus Ships assures all those concerned that a degree of flexibility will be permitted wherever this is deemed necessary.

Furthermore, the SDM outlines below a number of urgent provisional measures adopted relating to the following matters**:**

A. Seafarers' Certification

In light of the recent developments and the difficulties encountered in crew changes worldwide, the Shipping Deputy Ministry has adopted the following measures applicable to **seafarers that joined the ship prior 1st of March 2020 and remain on board with a renewed contract:**

1. **Certificates of Competency** and **Certificates of Proficiency** issued by the Republic of Cyprus which have expired or will be expiring after 01/03/2020 will be extended until **01/09/2020**.

2. **Medical Fitness Certificates** and **Seafarer's Identification and Sea Service Record Books** issued by the Republic of Cyprus which have expired or will be expiring after 01/03/2020 will be considered valid until **01/09/2020**.

3. **Cyprus endorsements** attesting the recognition of national certificates of competency which have expired or will be expiring after 01/03/2020 will be extended for a **maximum period up to 01/09/2020**, or an earlier date as provided by a similar extension issued by the Competent Authorities of the Country which issued the certificate of competency.

B. <u>Statutory Surveys for Internationally Trading vessels</u>

We acknowledge that Cyprus flag vessels and their operators alike are encountering increasing difficulties in arranging the surveys, audits, inspections and servicing activities required under national and international regulations due to a lack of availability of surveyors and auditors, travel restrictions, limited access to port facilities and the shutdown of many airports around the globe. For this reason, the following arrangements will apply:

Surveys in areas not affected by Covid-19: Operators are urged to consider arranging surveys/ audits/ inspections of their vessels as early as possible and, if practicable, within the window provided by the relevant international maritime Conventions at locations and under conditions which will not adversely affect the health of the personnel involved.

Extension of surveys: Extension of the annual/ intermediate/ periodic or renewal surveys is possible for all ships' statutory certificates, subject to authorisation. Extension is possible for up to 3 months from the last date of the window survey, provided that this request is supported by the Classification society of the vessel.

Remote Inspection: The Administration may also accept a remote inspection in lieu of the onboard survey, whenever the Recognised Organisation (RO) proposes that any of the above-mentioned surveys may be carried out by remote inspection techniques.

Short Term Certificate: In the event that the authorised RO is unable to attend the vessel to complete a survey or inspection leading to the endorsement or renewal of a relevant certificate, then a short-term certificate may be issued with validity of not more than 3 months from the date of expiration of the current certificate or the closure of the required window for the conduct of the required activity. It remains the responsibility of the operator and the Master to ensure that the vessel is maintained and operated in accordance with the statutory requirements for the duration of the short-term certificate.

Re-alignment of Certificate dates: On expiration of the short-term certificate, or earlier if circumstances permit, a survey or inspection, must be completed and a new certificate issued, **aligned with the expiration date of the previous certificate**.

C. International Safety Management (ISM) Code & International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code Verifications

If, due to restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, an auditor or inspector cannot attend ISM/ISPS upcoming inspections, audits, or verifications due **before 01 July 2020**, a Recognised Organisation (RO) or Recognised Security Organisation (RSO) must notify the Administration and obtain relevant authorisation, unless specified otherwise, as follows:

1. ISM Code

Internal Annual ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for a 3-month extension to the 12-month interval for shore-side and shipboard internal audits. The audit may be postponed for a further 3 months without further authorisation from the Administrator. For audits to be carried out during the 3-month extension period, the Administrator will accept a remote audit in lieu of a physical audit. No further authorisation to carry out a remote internal audit is required from the Administrator. This may also be applied to internal audits which are required to be completed prior to the external verification.

Initial ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the Interim Safety Management Certificate (SMC) with validity for a minimum period required to complete the initial verification and for a period no longer than 3 months.

Intermediate ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term SMC that is valid for a period of no longer than 3 months.

Renewal ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the SMC for no longer than 3 months.

Document of Compliance Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term DOC, valid for a period of no longer than 3 months, in the event that a company is unable to complete the necessary verifications due to the current Covid-19 circumstances.

2. ISPS Code

Internal Annual ISPS Verification: Internal Audits ISPS Verification may be postponed for up to 3 months without further authorisation from the Administration. For audits to be carried out during the 3-month extension period, the Administrator will accept a remote audit in lieu of a physical audit. No further authorisation to carry out a remote internal audit is required from the Administrator. This may also be applied to internal audits which are required to be completed prior to the external verification.

Initial ISPS Verification: The Administration will authorise a consecutive Interim International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC) with validity for the minimum period required to complete the initial verification and for a period no longer than 3 months.

Intermediate ISPS Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term ISSC with validity of no longer than 3 months.

Renewal ISPS Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the ISSC for no longer than 3 months.

3. Remote Audits

The Administration may also accept a remote audit in lieu of the onboard audit, whenever the RO/RSO confirms that such audits may be carried out by remote auditing techniques.

D. Guidance for Recognised Organisations

Where an RO is able to conduct a survey on board a vessel in compliance with the normal course of survey and certification, no notification to the SDM is required and the relevant certificate may be issued or endorsed as necessary. In the case of ISM and ISPS related audits, the associated RO is obliged to inform the SDM as per Circular No. 03/2019 at **ism@dms.gov.cy** and as per Circular No. 24/2015 at maritime.security@dms.gov.cy

For statutory certificates issued by an RO, and the issuance of a short-term certificate or extension as provided on the basis of this Circular, the SDM should be notified electronically as soon as practicable at **shipsafety@dms.gov.cy**

E. Compulsory Insurance

Owners and Managers of Cyprus flagged ships remain liable to maintain at all times compulsory insurance in force and, if applicable, carry on board relevant Certificate(s) in hard copy or electronic format under the 2006 MLC Convention, the 2001 Bunkers Convention, the 1992 CLC Convention, the 2007 Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention, Directive 2009/20/EC and the Athens PLR Regulation (EC) No.392/2009, to the extent that these instruments apply.

The Shipping Deputy Ministry is at the disposal of Owners, Managers and anyone concerned to provide any information or clarifications they may require.

This Circular must be placed on board vessels flying the Cyprus flag.



Stavros Michael
Acting Permanent Secretary
Shipping Deputy Ministry

CC:

- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Maritime Offices of the Shipping Deputy Ministry abroad
- Inspectors of Cyprus Ships
- Diplomatic Missions and Honorary Consular Offices of the Republic
- Recognised Organisations (Ros)
- Cyprus Shipping Chamber
- Cyprus Union of Ship-owners
- Cyprus Master Mariners Association
- Association of Merchant Marine Officers
- Recognised maritime training schools
- Trade Union SEK
- Trade Union PEO
- Trade Union DEOK
- Cyprus Bar Association