

Coronavirus: Challenges in meeting operational and regulatory requirements

The Club understands that in view of the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, owners and managers are facing challenges in meeting various statutory requirements. The situation has been particularly impactful on the requirements stipulated by the Maritime Labour Convention (as applicable) and also in making arrangements for mandatory surveys and audits necessary for statutory certification.

With regards to the Maritime Labour Convention, these challenges are most prevalent in the crewing of vessels which have led to an inability to timely repatriate seafarers at the end of the period listed in their Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA). Such situations may also result in seafarers staying on board beyond the maximum allowed period and thereby contravening the applicable regulations of the Maritime Labour Convention. If Members are faced with such a situation, they should contact their Flag State and submit a request for extension of the sea service period of the individual seafarer and submit together with associated documents, as required by the Flag State.

If, as a result of COVID-19 situation, Members find themselves unable to arrange the mandatory surveys and audits required for statutory certification, it is imperative that they apply for an extension on the stated deadline to ensure that their statutory certificates remain valid and do not lapse as a result. In such cases, the Member should closely liaise with the applicable Recognised Organisation (RO), such as Class, that may have issued statutory certificates on behalf of the Flag State. Any application for an extension, on either the validity of statutory certificates or the timeframe for mandatory surveys and audits, should be submitted to the Flag State with suitable recommendations from the RO and any other documents as required by the Flag State. This same advice is applicable for maintaining a vessel's Class.

We note that some Flag State authorities are already taking a pragmatic approach in these uncertain times and may allow for suitable extensions and dispensations upon receipt of requests such as those highlighted above. However, it is important that any such requests are made prior to a breach of the relevant statutory regulation and before the due date of mandatory surveys and audits. Such extensions and dispensations may also assist Members in dealing with any related deficiencies or detentions issued by Port State Control inspectors.

The Club would also like to highlight to Members that, in addition to the above, the ongoing COVID-19 situation may also affect port calls. Therefore to avoid delays, Members should ensure that both they and their crews remain up to date with any additional requirements that individual ports may have in place to deal with the situation. Close contact should be maintained with the local port authorities and local agents to ensure that any additional port requirements

are clearly understood and complied with. Failure to do so may cause the vessel to be delayed, detained or even refused entry.

Members may also contact [Club Correspondents](#) for further guidance on this matter and to stay abreast with all of the local port requirements.