

CREW CHANGE GUIDANCE – HONG KONG (9 AUG 2021)

Crew change is possible for goods vessel with cargo operation in Hong Kong which has not called the ports of “Group A specified places” (the places are available at <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html>) during the 21 days prior to vessel’s arrival in Hong Kong.

Please find below the **Exemption Conditions Applicable to Crew Change for Goods Vessels with Cargo Operation** for your reference.

I. CREW CHANGE ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING VESSELS WHICH HAVE CALLED THE PORTS OF “GROUP A SPECIFIED PLACES” UNDER CAP. 599H

No crew change (including sign-on and sign-off crew) is permitted for goods vessels which have called the ports of high risk places specified in Group A under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-Boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) (the places are available at <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html>) during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong. These vessels will be allowed to enter Hong Kong for cargo operation without crew change. All crew members should remain on-board the vessels during the stay of the vessels in Hong Kong waters and should not get ashore.

II. CREW CHANGE ARRANGEMENT CONCERNING VESSELS WHICH HAVE CALLED THE PORTS OF PLACES OTHER THAN “GROUP A SPECIFIED PLACES” UNDER CAP. 599H

For goods vessels with cargo operation which have not called the ports of “Group A specified places” under Cap. 599H during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong and intend to conduct crew change, the following conditions will apply:

1. Shipping companies/agents shall submit the Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) and Estimated Time of Departure (ETD) of vessel together with the details of the sign-on and sign-off crew to be changed (including their names and flight schedules) **72 hours prior arrival** of the vessel for the Marine Department (MarDep)’s approval. For out-going crew members of goods vessels which have called the ports of any country outside China during the 14 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong (and have not called the ports of Group A specified places during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong), shipping companies/agents should declare in its crew change application how would the out-going crew member concerned take the SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test according to the means as mentioned in clause 8. below. In the crew change application, ship companies/agents should also indicate the out-going sea crew who is a Hong Kong resident and will stay in Hong Kong after signing off. Ship companies/agents should indicate in the crew change application whether the vessels have called the ports of any “Group A Specified Places” under Cap. 599H during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong.

2. All crew members should remain on-board the vessels during the stay of the vessels in Hong Kong waters and should not get ashore.

3. Point-to-point transfers should be arranged by the shipping companies / agents for crew members to and from the vessel. Use of public transport including MTR, airport shuttle train and taxi for crew transfer is prohibited. Crew members should wear masks during the entire journey to and from the vessel.

Sign-on Crew

4. Signing-on crew members should only arrive Hong Kong when their vessels are berthed in Hong Kong and should get onboard immediately upon arrival.

5. Signing-on crew members arriving Hong Kong at the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) to sign-on goods vessels must have a negative result of SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test at an ISO 15189-accredited laboratory or a laboratory recognised by the Government where the laboratory is located with the specimen collected within 48 hours prior to boarding the flight to Hong Kong. All signing-on crew members must take a post-arrival SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test at the Department of Health (DH)'s Temporary Specimen Collection Centre upon arrival at HKIA and wait for the results there or any other location as designated by DH ("test and hold"). The waiting time for test result may possibly need about 6-8 hours. **No report will be given for this test.** Upon arrival, they must only use the designated channel within the HKIA to arrive at the designate pick-up point. They should wear masks during the entire journey from the HKIA to the vessel.

6. Shipping companies / agents should declare on a letter of certification that the signing-on crew member concerned has been tested for SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid with the specimen collected within 48 hours prior to boarding the flight to Hong Kong (as mentioned in clause 5). The letter should also include an emergency local contact phone number for prompt contact with the concerned crew under emergency situation.

7. Signing-on crew members are required to present MarDep's approval letter (as mentioned in clause 1), the negative test report (as mentioned in clause 5) and letter of certification (as mentioned in clause 6) to staff of DH where he / she enters Hong Kong at HKIA. The shipping companies/agents should prepare at least one copy of the certification letter to be carried by each crew when arriving Hong Kong for submission to DH staff. Crew members who fail to present and submit the abovementioned documents to DH staff will be denied entry, and the shipping companies/agents concerned are required to arrange these crew members to fly back to their originating country(ies) forthwith.

Sign-off Crew

8. Signing-off crew members who have completed their service on-board will be required to stay onboard the vessel during their stay in Hong Kong and travel directly for repatriation to their home countries so as to minimise contact with the local community. For goods vessels which have called the ports of any country outside China during the 14 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong (and have not called the ports of Group A specified places during the 21 days prior to arrival in Hong Kong), ship companies/agents are required to **EITHER-**

(a) arrange a SARS-CoV-2 nucleic acid test for the signing-off sea crew at an ISO 15189-accredited laboratory or a laboratory recognised by the Government where the laboratory is located with the specimen collected within 72 hours prior to the vessel's ETA at Hong Kong and obtain a negative result; **OR**

(b) arrange the signing-off sea crew to take a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 by one of the recognised testing institutions in Hong Kong upon the vessel's arrival, and these crew members will need to stay on board his/her cargo vessel until the result

(negative) is available [i.e. test-and-hold arrangement on board the vessel in Hong Kong].

9. Signing-off crew who are Hong Kong residents and who will stay in Hong Kong after signing off are required to take a polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for COVID-19 as in clause 8(b) above. They are not exempted from compulsory quarantine, and are subject to the prevailing quarantine arrangement as with other non-exempted persons. These signing-off Hong Kong crew must use land transportation designated by the Government to the designated quarantine hotels direct from the location where they go ashore. Shipping companies / agents will be provided with a list of land transportation designated by the Government for their direct contact to make land transportation arrangement to designated quarantine hotels.

General

10. Shipping companies/agents should keep and if requested provide information on the testing, transportation and logistics arrangement of the crew members (such as details of the flights taken by the crew concerned, licence plate number and driver details of the vehicles, name of ferry and coxswain details used to transfer the crew members, exact time and location of the picking up/setting down of the transfers, laboratory reports, etc.) for ease of contact tracing.

11. Shipping companies/agents must report to the MarDep immediately upon receipt of information of any COVID-19 positive cases of their seafarers.

12. Shipping companies/agents failing to comply with the above conditions and / or provide the required information will be denied future crew change for one month.

Remarks:

-) Upon arrival at Hong Kong, crew must pay attention to their health condition, take body temperature twice daily and report to your shipping company/agent.
-) If crew feels unwell, please call 2125 1133 (have stayed in Mainland, Macao or Taiwan) or 2125 1999 (have stayed in all overseas countries/territories).
-) Crews are allowed to operate another trip and must wear a surgical mask during work.
-) If there is any enquiries, please contact duty Port Health Officer by 2543 1702.