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IMO Secretary-General statements

The World Health Organization (WHO) determined that the outbreak of outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Read more [here](#).

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim statement (19 March 2020) [Tackling COVID-19 – a voyage together](#)

Advice for IMO Member States, seafarers and shipping

IMO has issued the following circular letters:

- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.7](#) (3 April 2020) - Coronavirus (COVID-19) – **Guidance concerning unforeseen delays in the delivery of ships**
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.6](#) (27 March 2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19) – **Preliminary list of recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on the facilitation of maritime trade during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5/Rev.1](#) (2 April 2020) Coronavirus (COVID-19) – **Guidance relating to the certification of seafarers and fishing vessel personnel**
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.4](#) (5 March 2020) contains ICS Coronavirus (COVID-19) **Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers**
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.3](#) (2 March 2020) - **Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships**
- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.2](#) (21 February 2020) contains the **Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak** and encourages Member States and international organizations to disseminate it as widely as possible. Available in the six official languages of the United Nations system.

• [Arabic](#) [Chinese](#) [English](#) [French](#) [Russian](#) [Spanish](#)

- [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1](#) (19 February 2020) provides advice on **Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments**
- [Circular Letter No.4203.Add.1](#) (12 February 2020) provides information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to delegates

- [Circular Letter No.4204](#) (31 January 2020) providing information and guidance, based on recommendations developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the **precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships** from the coronavirus.

Communications received from Member States

IMO has received, and circulated, communications from Member states.

Table overview: List of Circular Letters with COVID-19 related notifications received from Member States (updated weekly) - [Download PDF](#).

List of individual circular letters:

- Circular Letter [No.4254](#) 7 April 2020 Communication from the Republic of **India**
- Circular Letter [No.4250](#) 6 April 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i **Barbados**; and ii **Hong Kong, China**
- Circular Letter [No.4249](#) 2 April 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the Republic of **Cuba**; and ii the State of **Qatar**
- Circular Letter [No.4248](#) 2 April 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i **New Zealand**; and ii **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**
- Circular Letter [No.4247](#) 3 April 2020 Communication from the Government of the Kingdom of **Spain**
- Circular Letter [No.4246](#) 2 April 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the Republic of the Union of **Myanmar**; and ii the Socialist Republic of **Viet Nam**
- Circular Letter [No.4245](#) 1 April 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the Kingdom of **Sweden**; and ii the Republic of **Turkey**
- Circular Letter [No.4244](#) 31 March 2020 Communication from the Government of **Montenegro**
- Circular Letter [No.4243](#) 31 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Kingdom of **Saudi Arabia**
- Circular Letter [No.4242](#) 31 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the **United Arab Emirates**
- Circular Letter [No.4241/Add.1](#) 3 April 2020 Communications from the Government of the **Hellenic Republic**
- Circular Letter [No.4241/30](#) March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the Republic of **Croatia**; and ii the **Hellenic Republic**
- Circular Letter [No.4240](#) 27 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Arab Republic of **Egypt**
- Circular Letter [No.4239](#) 27 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i The People's Republic of **Bangladesh**; ii The Sultanate of **Oman**; and iii The Independent State of **Samoa**
- Circular Letter [No.4237](#) 25 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i The Republic of the **Philippines**; ii The **Russian Federation**; and iii The Democratic Socialist Republic of **Sri Lanka**
- Circular Letter [No.4236](#) 26 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the **United Kingdom** of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Circular Letter [No.4235](#) 25 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i The Federal Democratic Republic of **Ethiopia**; ii The Federal Republic of **Germany**; and iii The Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan**
- Circular Letter [No.4234](#) 26 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the **French Republic**; and ii **Romania**
- Circular Letter [No.4233](#) 25 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i **Ireland**; and ii the Republic of the **Marshall Islands**
- Circular Letter [No.4232](#) 24 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i **Georgia**; ii The Republic of **Poland**; and iii **Ukraine**
- Circular Letter [No.4231/Add.1](#) 2 April 2020 Communications from the Government of the Republic of **Italy**
- Circular Letter [No.4231](#) 24 March 2020 Communications from the Governments of: i the Republic of **Italy**; and ii the Kingdom of **Norway**
- Circular Letter [No.4230/Add.2](#) 3 April 2020 Communication from the Government of the Republic of **Panama**
- Circular Letter [No.4230/Add.1](#) 3 April 2020 Communication from the Government of the Republic of **Panama**
- Circular Letter [No.4230](#) 24 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Republic of **Panama**
- Circular Letter [No.4228](#) 23 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Kingdom of the **Netherlands**
- Circular Letter [No.4226](#) 20 March 2020 Communication from the Government of **Canada**
- Circular Letter [No.4225](#) 20 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Commonwealth of the **Bahamas**
- Circular Letter [No.4223](#) 18 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the Republic of **Azerbaijan**
- Circular Letter [No.4221/Add.1](#) 2 April 2020 Communication from the Government of the People's Republic of **China**
- Circular Letter [No.4221](#) 18 March 2020 Communication from the Government of the People's Republic of **China**
- Circular Letter [No.4216](#) 11 March 2020) Communication from the Government of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**

[Read more - further links](#)

The following links also provide advice and information to seafarers and shipping (this list is not intended to be a complete reflection of all available information) - IMO is not responsible for the information in these websites:

- BIMCO - <https://www.bimco.org/covid19>
- BIMCO - crew challenges - <https://www.bimco.org/ships-ports-and-voyage-planning/crew-support/health-and-medical-support/novel-coronavirus---crew-challenges>
- EMSA - <http://emsa.europa.eu/news-a-press-centre/covid19.html>
- European Commission - Guidelines on protection of health, repatriation and travel arrangements for seafarers, passengers and other persons on board
https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/news/2020-04-08-coronavirus-cruise-ships_en
- European Commission - Guidelines concerning the exercise of the free movement of workers during COVID-19 outbreak ([PDF download](#))
- Helse Bergen Haukeland University Hospital [COVID-19 assessment tool](http://www.covid19atsea.no) - www.covid19atsea.no
- International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers](#)
- International Labour Organization (ILO) [Information note on maritime labour issues and coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) ([PDF](#))
- International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) - [advice for shipping companies](#) on the new type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV)
- INTERTANKO - [Outbreak Management Plan: Covid-19](#) ([Download PDF](#))
- ISWAN - "Managing Your Mental Health During the Covid 19 Pandemic - A [guide for seafarers](#)" on YouTube. Mental health tools are also available to download free of charge from the ISWAN website at <https://www.seafarerswelfare.org/seafarer-health-information-programme/good-mental-health>
- International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) - COVID-19 update for transport workers: <https://www.itfglobal.org/en/focus/covid-19>
- International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) - COVID-19 country information for seafarers: <https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/embed/covid-19-country-information-seafarers>
- USCG - <https://www.uscg.mil/coronavirus/>
- S5 - port restrictions map - <http://tiny.cc/zz07lz>
- Singapore - <https://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/port-of-singapore/circulars-and-notice/port-marine-circulars>
- Safety4Sea - <https://safety4sea.com/cm-how-coronavirus-affects-shipping-everything-you-need-to-know/>
- UNCTAD - Port Responsiveness in the fight against COVID-19 - Technical note - <https://tft.unctad.org/ports-covid-19/>
- UN World Food Programme - World travel restrictions
- <http://unwfp.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/db5b5df309ac4f10bfd36145a6f8880e>
- Wilhelmsen COVID-19 Global Port Restrictions Map - <https://www.wilhelmsen.com/ships-agency/campaigns/coronavirus/coronavirus-map/>
- World Ports COVID-19 Information Portal - <https://sustainableworldports.org/world-ports-covid19-information-portal/>

IMO meetings postponed

IMO has decided to postpone a number of meetings in the light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Updates on meetings

- **Circular Letter No.4213/Add.3** (1 April 2020) Postponement of the Sub-Committee on Human Element Training and Watchkeeping and the Technical Cooperation Committee owing to the COVID-19 outbreak
- **Circular Letter No.4213/Add.2** (17 March 2020) Postponement of the forty-fourth session of the Facilitation Committee, the second meeting of the IMO Expert Group on Data Harmonization, the Port symposium "A Holistic approach to standards for port operational data in maritime supply chains" and the 102nd session of the Maritime Safety Committee due to the COVID-19 outbreak

- **Circular Letter No.4213/Add.1** (12 March 2020) Postponement of the thirty-third meeting of the Editorial & Technical Group (IMSBC), the seventh meeting of the Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships and the seventy-fifth session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee due to the COVID-19 outbreak
- **Circular Letter No.4213** (6 March 2020) Postponement of the joint session of the LC/LP Scientific Groups and the 107th session of the Legal Committee due to the COVID-19 outbreak

Updates on the IMO Headquarters

- **Circular Letter No.4220/Add.1** (18 March 2020) Update on the status of the International Maritime Organization Headquarters building and telecommuting arrangements due to the COVID-19 outbreak
- **Circular Letter No.4220** (12 March 2020) Update on the status of the International Maritime Organization Headquarters building and its closure due to the COVID-19 outbreak

World Health Organization advice

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. The virus did not match any other known virus. This raised concern because when a virus is new, we do not know how it affects people. One week later, on 7 January, Chinese authorities confirmed that they had identified a new virus. The new virus is a **coronavirus**, which is a family of viruses that include the common cold, and viruses such as **SARS** and **MERS**. This new virus has been named COVID-19.

With the information currently available on novel coronavirus, WHO advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation or importation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions on international traffic.

WHO technical guidance on **detection and management of ill travellers suspected of COVID-19 infection**, including at ports, can be downloaded [here](#).

WHO **Operational considerations for managing COVID-19 cases/outbreak on board ships** can be downloaded [here](#).

Because this is a coronavirus, which usually causes respiratory illness, WHO has advice to people on [how to protect themselves and those around them](#) from getting the disease. WHO provides Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) travel advice here: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>

Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and running water when **hands are visibly dirty**

If your **hands are not visibly dirty**, frequently clean them by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water





If your **hands are not visibly dirty**, frequently clean them by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands



- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

