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RECENT COVID-19 NEWS REGARDING CREW CHANGE IN TURKEY

We Vitsan AS, as a P&I Club Correspondent in Turkey, wish to inform you that due to increased Covid-19 cases in Turkey, new precautionary measurements and restrictions announced by the Government which are in force since 01 December 2020. In line with restrictions, the Ministry of Transportation of Turkey has published new circular for crew change in Turkey on 03 December 2020 and following important points were noted for the attention of Associations and Members which are planning a crew change in Turkey during this period.

General Provisions:-

1-The sign on or sign off crew documents (voyage plans, tickets, hotel reservations if any, other documents) to be submitted to the Harbor Master of the port where the crew change to be made at least 48 hours before the crew change. The confirmations for transfer is given by the local authorities of border gates. The crew working on board a vessel under coastal trading are excluded from above rule.

2-The seamen are excluded from travel restrictions during pandemic period. (which is in force from 21:00 lt to 05:00lt on weekdays and round the clock on weekends)

3-This circular is also valid for the vessels passing Turkish Straits and the crew change is carried at Istanbul and Canakkale.

4-No crew change is allowed from the vessels which have not Free Pratique and from the vessels which are not allowed for crew change.

5-The application form for crew change submitted by the agent is checked by the authorities whether it is conforming to the information given on it and then crew change is allowed.

6-The local rules applied by local authorities are commentated apart from this circular.

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7-If the crew member is from a country to which travel restriction is applied, the condition of crew change is assessed by the local authority of border gates as considering the joining date of crew member to the vessel and the ports of call of the vessel. The crew change is not allowed if considered as not convenient.

8-The crew member who are banned to enter or leave the county are excluded from this circular.

9-All the costs to be incurred are covered by the Owners, Managers and agent of the vessel.

10-During the period when restrictions are not in force, the crew change will be made based on the instruction and decisions to be made by the General Directorate of Health for Borders and Coasts.

Procedures for Crew Change:-

1-Crew change in Turkey is allowed in the cities of Antalya, Canakkale, Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Yalova, Mersin and Samsun.

2-The transfer of arrival and departure seamen to be accompanied by the local agent without any contact.

3-The sign on or sign of crew member whose residence is in Turkey to be provided by the local agent without any contact. The home quarantine implementation is controlled and conducted as per the Ministry of Health.

4-If a crew has to accommodate, it is the responsibility of local agent to ensure that the crew member not contacting with anybody during his/her transfer to the place of accommodation and then to airport or border gate and likewise during his / her transfer to the place of accommodation and then to the vessel. The check of the seafarer's stay in compliance with the quarantine measures, including the private security service, is made by the Ministry of Interior within the scope of appropriate enforcement measures.

5-If a crew member breaks the quarantine rules, the local agents has to make complain to the relevant authorities. In this respect, administrative actions to be implemented as per Public Health Law in Turkey.

6-Depending on signing on or signing off and crew member, followings are applied:-

-The sign off crew is checked during health control on arrival of the vessel to a port whether they are showing any Covid-19 symptoms. If so; the provisions for quarantine, treatment and travel are subject to the relevant authorities.

-For the sign on crew, PCR test result is requested which to be carried out 48 hours before joining date to the vessel and to be negative. The test is controlled by the General Directorate of Health for Borders and Coasts.

-A health insurance should be made of the on signer crew member and the period of insurance should cover the joining date. If the original of the policy could not be submitted, electronic copies are also considered as acceptable.

-If a quarantine of sign off crew member is in question on board, the decision for quarantine period and place of quarantine is made by the relevant authorities.

-The travel document of the on / off signer crew is checked.

The responsibilities of Owners, Managers and Agents:-

1-Crew change form to be completed by shipping company or its representative and to be informed to the Harbor Masters.

2-If Covid-19 is detected, the quarantine and treatment of the seafarers (in the hotel, hospital or residence in our country) to be commenced and followed up as per the instructions of the Ministry of Health.

3-Direct transportation of crew member to be provided without contacting anybody.

4-From the first and last point of transportation, all necessary hygiene (disinfectant, mask, face shield etc) materials to be provided during the entire transportation period.

Please contact us if you have any further queries and if you / your members need our assistance, we are always at your disposal.

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