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CLIENT ALERT - CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

On February 3, 2020, the U.S. Coast Guard issued Marine Safety Information Bulletin 02-20, Novel Coronavirus, available here: https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Portals/9/DCO%20Documents/5p/MSIB/2020/MSIB-02-20_Novel_Coronavirus_2Feb2020.pdf?ver=2020-02-02-182614-690

Bottom line:

Non-passenger commercial vessels that have been to China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) or embarked crewmembers who have been in China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) within the last 14 days, with no sick crewmembers, will be permitted to enter the U.S. and conduct normal operations, **with restrictions**. Crewmembers on these vessels will be required under Captain of the Port (COTP) authority to remain aboard the vessel except to conduct specific activities directly related to vessel cargo or provisioning operations.

Reporting requirements:

- (1) Illness of a person onboard a vessel that may adversely affect the safety of a vessel or port facility is a hazardous condition that must be immediately reported to the U.S. Coast Guard COTP.
- (2) Any crew or passengers who exhibit symptoms consistent with 2019-nCoV (which include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing) must be reported to the COTP.
- (3) Vessels destined for a U.S. port are required to report to the Centers for Disease Control any sick or deceased crew/passengers during the 15 days prior to arrival at a U.S. port. Guidance to vessels on reporting deaths and illnesses to the CDC can be found at: <https://go.usa.gov/xdjmj>.
- (4) The Coast Guard considers it a hazardous condition if a crewmember who was in China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau) within the past 14 days is brought onboard the vessel during transit. This requires immediate notification to the nearest Coast Guard Captain of the Port.
- (5) Vessel masters shall inform Coast Guard boarding teams of any ill crewmembers on their vessel prior to embarking a Coast Guard boarding team.

Recommendations:

- (1) Ensure your masters are informed of and comply with the regulations – failure to do so could lead to sanctions and control actions, including expensive delays in cargo operations.
- (2) Err on the side of caution – this is a highly public event. U.S. and other authorities are likely to be hyper-vigilant in their enforcement of the reporting requirements. You do not want to be seen as concealing possible cases of sick mariners in the current environment.
- (3) Call IMC for assistance at any time regarding regulatory requirements or to assist in the disposition of sick or injured mariners.

Did you know? **IMC has a full-service Marine Medical Management program to assist in matters involving mariner illness or injury! See the description of services at <https://www.independentmaritime.com/mariner-medical-management>.**