

CIRCULAR ROU/02/20

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REINFORCEMENT OF THE MEASURES FOR THE CONTROL OF RESPIRATORY DISEASES IN THE FACE OF THE EPIDEMIC OUTBREAK OF THE NEW CORONAVIRUS

In the wake of the discovery of a novel virus that has emerged in some provinces of the People's Republic of China, which is similar to the one that caused acute respiratory infections in 2003, the Ministry of Health of Uruguay has reminded the general public of some hygiene and health protection measures to be taken.

In order to minimize the spreading of this virus to the rest of the world's population a strategy has been implemented following the guidelines of the Pan American and the World Health Organizations.

The most important aspects of this strategy pertaining to the maritime industry are:

- ✓ Measures to limit the risk of human-to-human transmission of the disease will be implemented without imposing unnecessary restrictions of international traffic.
- ✓ Vessels should report if they have on board crewmembers or passengers who are Chinese nationals or that have embarked in China, clearly specifying the date of embarkation.

It is reminded that the Health Declaration is an affidavit for which the Master of the ship is responsible. In case of misdeclaration, even if unintentional, the Master could face criminal charges for endangering the public health.

- ✓ When the vessel has on board crewmembers or passengers who are Chinese nationals or that have embarked in China, then:
 - a) Before berthing, the Master will be requested to report whether there have been any crewmembers or passengers with fever during the last 48 hours. If affirmative, he will also be required to mention any other additional symptoms that may be present.
 - b) If the Surveillance Service concludes that there may be an infectious transmissible disease, the steps to be taken will be informed, and no access to the vessel will be granted until all requirements have been met.

Finally, local Health Authorities assure that this disease is treatable in Uruguay, and these measures are only intended to prevent those who board the vessel for working purposes, to be infected.

We will continue monitoring the local situation and keeping the Association duly updated.

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