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To : Shipowners, Ship Managers and Masters of Hong Kong registered ships

Dear Sir/Madam,

COVID-19 Vaccination for Seafarers

Seafarers are required by the nature of their job to travel across the world to locations which have different levels of COVID-19 infections. Since 2020, it was reported that some ship operations were delayed for long period after a COVID-19 infection on board, which put seafarers' health at risk and caused huge financial losses.

2. COVID-19 vaccination offers a degree of protection to seafarers by reducing the severity of symptoms or preventing symptoms completely in a vaccinated person. As further information becomes available from studies, there is increasing evidence showing that it also reduces the likelihood of a vaccinated individual carrying the virus and passing it on to others.

3. When COVID-19 vaccines can be accessed through national, government-run vaccination programmes in the seafarers' home country, seafarers are strongly encouraged to complete COVID-19 vaccination before their travels to join ship.

4. Some countries also offer free vaccinations to foreign seafarers when they call at those countries. The International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA) has compiled a list of available vaccination sites for seafarers around the world which can be found here: <https://icma.as/vaccines>. Please also refer to IMO [Circular Letter No.4204/Add.43](#) - "Coronavirus (COVID-19) – List of global ports

offering vaccinations for seafarers” and other COVID-19 related circular letters.

5. To mitigate the risk of infection and interrupt to ship operation due to infection incident, seafarers and the ship company including manning agency are strongly encouraged to well arrange COVID-19 vaccinations before any seafarers joining ship. For onboard crew without vaccination, the company and her agency shall take utmost endeavour to arrange COVID-19 vaccination for them at any calling port if such services are available.

6. Given that seafarers will be required to show evidence of vaccinations, it is advised that seafarers utilise WHO listed vaccines to achieve wider acceptance by various port authorities around the world. It is recommended that information about the vaccine is obtained and paper or electronic copies to certify proof of vaccination and place of vaccination are kept safely together with the seafarers’ travel documents.

7. Should you have any question or require further information, please feel free to contact this office at telephone number (852) 2852 3056, 2852 4383, fax number (852) 2545 4669, or email: mmo_mdd@mardep.gov.hk.

Yours faithfully,

(No signature on website copy)

(Z.J. Kuang)

Hong Kong Marine Department
for Director of Marine

c.c.: Hong Kong Shipowners Association
Hong Kong Seamen’s Union
Merchant Navy Officers’ Guild
Amalgamated Union of Seafarers, HK