COVID-19 PROTOCOL ON CREW CHANGE AND REPATRIATION OF SEAFARERS

SINGAPORE CREW CHANGE GUIDEBOOK

In collaboration with and supported by:

Part of:
PREFACE

The Singapore Crew Change Workgroup (SGCCWG) was initially formed on 2 April, but began formalised videoconference meeting every Tuesday from 7 April to coordinate efforts in Singapore for Crew Change. The SGCCWG is also connected to the larger global worldwide Crew Change Taskforce led by ICS, providing an exchange of updated information regarding changing developments around respective international government restrictions, on air-travel, health advisories on the pandemic, which impact crew change.

The main SGCCWG consists of the following representations, led by the SSA:

- Industry
  International Maritime Employers’ Council (IMEC), Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), World Shipping Council (WSC)
- Union
  Singapore Maritime Officers’ Union (SMOU), Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)
- Government
  Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

The SGCCWG strives to provide periodic updates on developments in Singapore to the larger community of Ship owners, Managers, Agents and Crewing/Manning companies, receiving relevant inputs that are considered and implemented in this document.

A further development team within the SGCCWG was formed pulling resources from experienced ship managers. The members in this team are:

- Singapore Shipping Association
- Synergy Marine Group
- Western Shipping and IMEC board member rep
- Wilhelmsen Ships Service
- World Shipping Council (Asia Pacific rep)

This document focuses on the various stages of crew change administration, and the recommended steps following the ICS issued Framework of Crew Change Protocol and based on the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) issued Port Marine Circular (PMC) 26 of 2020.

***Acknowledgement: This document is prepared by Wilhelmsen Ships Service AS, drawing upon feedback from the main SGCCWG***
Crew change process for sign on and sign off in Singapore

- A safe and coordinated planning process, ensuring minimal contact between crew and various staff of hotel, transportation providers and launch hire services
- All aspects of the value chain are considered including self-reporting of health status to detect early symptoms and seek prompt medical attention

(A) Process for sign on crew

**Remarks**

- COVID-19 Safety measures
  - Face mask and hand sanitizer should be readily available to crew at all times.
  - Ensure all service suppliers adhere to the MOH procedures and requirements in this process.
  - All crew should adhere to MOH safety and hygiene measurements at all times.

**Notes:**

**SHN** – denotes “Stay Home Notice”, details is as per laid out in the URL link: [https://www.gov.sp/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice](https://www.gov.sp/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice)

Figure 1.1
Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility

(O/nshore/alongside)

**Remarks**

**COVID-19 Safety measures**
- Face mask and hand sanitiser should be made available to crew at all times.
- Ensure all service suppliers adhere to the MOH procedures and requirements in this process.
- All crew should adhere to MOH safety and hygiene measurements at all times.

**Notes**
- All safety and hygiene measurements may vary based on the latest MOH guidelines.
- Should there be any delays, crew should be directed to a staging location by their Ship Manager/Director or appointed agent.

**Legend**
- Designated holding areas subject to approval from Singapore Authorities. Final options to be either O/nshore or O/alongside.


Figure 1.2


Figure 1.3
Sign on Crew in Port of Singapore – RACI Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Activity/ Task</th>
<th>MPA/MOT</th>
<th>Ship Manager</th>
<th>Ship Agent</th>
<th>Master</th>
<th>Manning Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
<td>Serving SHN COVID-19 Test report and Fit for travel documents</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Singapore Airport</td>
<td>Meet &amp; Greet and Immigration clearance</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A &amp; R</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Transit from Airport to Vessel</td>
<td>Transit from Airport to Vessel with approved suppliers</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>A &amp; R</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arrival at vessel (joining)</td>
<td>Joining vessel (Sign on)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Sign On is confirmed when the following approval is obtained:
(5) Approval from MPA for Sign On
(6) Valid visa issuance by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)
(a) Approval from National Environment Agency (NEA)

SHN – denotes “Stay Home Notice”, details is as per laid out in the URL link: https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home notice

Figure 1.4

To minimise the risk of importation and spread of COVID-19 in Singapore and to the ship, the crew must be transferred directly between the vessel and the point of arrival/departure. Company may wish to take note of the following requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Descriptor</th>
<th>Check List</th>
<th>Mitigating Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sign-On Crew A   | Crew must serve 14-days SHN*¹ at his/her home country prior to his/her departure flight to Singapore. (For the period of SHN, the crew should abide by the standards equivalent to the “Health Advisory for Persons Issued Stay-Home Notice” issued by MOH). All visa requirements for Singapore must be followed. Countries that require visa to enter Singapore must take into consideration the application period of 10 days processing time that ICA needs.  
  - Crew shall take his/her temperature twice daily and keep a record.  
  - Crew shall remain healthy throughout the 14-days SHN period.  
  - Crew shall provide a declaration that he/she has complied with the above and provide the temperature records for verification.  
  - Company shall, at the point of application, provide a declaration that | 1) Confirmation that the crew has been in quarantine for at least 14 days prior to entering Singapore and has been well throughout that period.  
2) Mandatory Temperature screening when crew disembarks from the plane  
3) If temperature is above 37.6, it will be led out to the nursing station set up in the airport for further assessment  
4) Agent must be present to meet the crew when they arrive. The crew will produce the MPA’s approval letter to ICA, the crew will be escorted |

¹ * SHN – denotes “Stay Home Notice”, details is as per laid out in the URL link: https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Descriptor</th>
<th>Check List</th>
<th>Mitigating Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| B                | the company shall ensure the crew’s compliance, including periodical checks on the crew during the SHN period.  
• Company shall provide details of the SHN such as the location and period of SHN, and how they will ensure compliance. | and handed over to the agent. Transportation to the ship must be by private (not public) transport in compliance with the safe distancing measures.”                                                                                                                                                  |
|                  | Crew must be Covid-19 tested via PCR method with negative result at his/her country of origin not more than 48 hours prior to his/her departure flight.  
The crew must also obtain a fit-to-travel medical certificate from doctors registered with the medical authorities at his/her country of origin not more than 24 hours prior to his/her departure flight. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| C                | The vessel shall be in port before the sign on crew arrives in Singapore.  
- *Only in exceptional circumstances and approved by MPA, when the vessel is not yet in port, the crew may be transferred to an approved holding facility before joining the vessel.* | 5) Compulsory meet and greet services (Certis/SATS) from Immigration Desk to baggage collection and finally arrival hall - to ensure proper hand-over of each arriving crew to transport company driver |
| D                | Master to notify relevant Authority and agent to confirm once signing on crew is/are safely onboard.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 6) Agent to provide fresh face mask and hand sanitisation for arrival crew upon arrival.                                                                                                                                               |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 7) Transport services to standby 30mins prior flight landing time to receive arriving crew                                                                                                                                               |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 8) Transportation safety measure:                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 9) Hand sanitisation process before boarding the vehicle.                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 10) Reminder will be given that face mask must always be worn in Singapore.                                                                                                                                                            |
(B) Process for sign off crew

**Process for Sign Off Crew - Port of Singapore**

**Vessel**
- Crew to sign off
- The crew identified for crew change must have an available flight for them upon sign off so that he can go direct to airport once he disembarks from the vessel
- Master's statement that vessel shall not depart Singapore until clearance has been given by the Authorities **
- Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA) of the signing off crew
- Sea port doctor to certify crew member are fit to travel provide fit to travel medical certificate
- Crew can only alight from launch boat when board transport is ready
- Crew transferred from vessel to launch boat

**Transitting from plane to airport**
- Crew boards designated private transport and heads to the airport
- Crew meets Ship Agent after clearing immigration at arrival hall
- Immigration and customs clearance for signing off crew at both MSF/WCF when downloaded from launch boat

**Singapore Airport**
- Crew arrives at the airport and checks in to obtain boarding pass
- Crew clears immigration and customs
- Crew boards airplane and depart as per flight schedule
- Ship Agent to notify MPH, Map Manager and/or vessel master that crew has safely departed Singapore port

**Country of Destination**
- Sign off completed
- Crew arrives at destination

**Remarks**
- **COVID-19 Safety measures**
  - Face mask and hand sanitizer should be readily available to crew at all times.
  - Ensure all service suppliers adhere to the MOH procedures and requirements in this process.
  - All crew should adhere to MOH safety and hygiene measures at all times.

- **Notes**
  - **Subject to the crew member opposing the Fit to Travel certificate, Crew can only alight from the launch boat once Board Transportation is ready**
  - Master to seek further instructions by the Authorities.

- **Should there be any delays, crew should be directed to a staging location by their Ship Manager/Owner or appointed agent.**
Figure 2.2

Process for Sign Off Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility (Onshore/ alongside)

Vessel
- Start of sign off
- The crew identified for crew change must have available flight for return to sign off so that he can go directly to airport once he disembarks from the vessel
- Master’s statement that vessel shall not depart Singapore until clearance has been given by the Authorities
- Seafarer’s Employment Agreement (SEA) at the signing-off crew
- Crew arrives at destination
- Crew transfer from vessel to launch boat
- Crew can only alight from launch boat when backtransport is ready

Transferring from port to airport
- Crew to be chaperoned to designated holding area (onshore/ alongside) before heading to the airport
- Crew boards designated private transport
- Crew meets Ship Agent after clearing immigration at arrival hall
- Crew boards airplane and depart as per flight schedule
- Sign off completed

Singapore Airport
- Crew arrives at the airport and check in to obtain boarding pass
- Crew cleans immigration and customs
- Crew meets SIA Agent after clearing immigration at the arrival hall
- Crew board airplane and depart as per flight schedule
- Crew arrives at destination

Country of Destination
- Crew arrives at destination

Figure 2.3

Process for Sign Off Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility (Offshore)

Vessel
- Start of sign off
- The crew identified for crew change must have available flight for return to sign off so that he can go directly to airport once he disembarks from the vessel
- Master’s statement that vessel shall not depart Singapore until clearance has been given by the Authorities
- Seafarer’s Employment Agreement (SEA) at the signing-off crew
- Crew arrival at destination
- Crew transfer from vessel to launch boat
- Crew can only alight from launch boat when backtransport is ready

Transferring from port to airport
- Crew boards designated private transport
- Crew meets Ship Agent after clearing immigration at arrival hall
- Immigration and customs clearance for sign off crew at both MSP/ VQCP when disembark from launch boat
- Crew to be transferred by launch boat to designated holding area (offshore) before leaving airport

Singapore Airport
- Crew arrives at the airport and check in to obtain boarding pass
- Crew cleans immigration and customs
- Crew boards airplane and depart as per flight schedule
- Sign off completed

Country of Destination
- Crew arrives at destination
To minimise the risk of importation and spread COVID-19 in Singapore, the crew must be transferred directly between the vessel and the point of arrival/departure. Company may wish to take note of the following requirements:

- Approved medical doctor to certify crew members are fit-to-travel prior to sign-off.
- No sharing of Passenger launch boats for crew and service engineers/technicians.
- Agent will transport the crew using private transport to the airport for the crew to clear ICA. The crew will be escorted to the plane.
- Transport to standby 30 mins before picking sign off crew.
Only in exceptional circumstances and approved by MPA the crew can be transferred to an approved holding facility while waiting for his flight, the ship he/she signed off from may be permitted to depart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase Descriptor</th>
<th>Check List</th>
<th>Mitigating Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Land / Sea Transport Provider** | Wear mask at all times. | • Eliminating cross contamination:  
  o All transport vendors are to practice MTI Covid-19 guidelines and safety measures.  
  o All vendors’ segregation plans are to be submitted to the relevant authorities.  
  o Drivers and boatman are to remind crew on the Covid-19 safety measures.  
  o All vendors are to abide to the NEA cleaning guidelines |
| **A** | | |
| **B** | Sanitise and disinfect seats/interior prior receiving the next onboard crew  
Ensure all crew sanitise their hands once in vehicle/launch | |
| **C** | Sanitise and disinfect seats/interior after dropping off crew. | |

If the above requirements can be met in line with Port Marine Circular 26, kindly submit the following documents to MPA to process the request:

A. Application form as attached. (Complete one per crew)

B. Letter of undertaking by owner/agent/operator.

C. Scanned copies of crew’s passport.

D. Flight itinerary for both sign-on and sign-off crew.
E. Written confirmation that the last port of call was more than 14 days ago and that the crew remained well throughout; or, if the last port of call was less than 14 days ago, the crew has not gone ashore for the last 14 days and remains well.

F. Written health declaration by all crew members that they are asymptomatic and have not had contact with a known or suspect case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding arrival in Singapore.

G. A copy of the ship’s Maritime Declaration of Health in accordance with Port Marine Circular No. 16 of 2020.

Please note that the documents A, B, C, and D (just flight itinerary not e-ticket) shall be submitted at least fourteen (14) days prior to the scheduled signing on/off date of the crew, unless expressly stated otherwise. Documents E and F must be submitted at the earliest possible instance before the vessel’s arrival. Document G must be submitted 12 hours before the vessel arrives in Singapore. Any changes to documents or information submitted must be notified to MPA immediately. Failure to comply with the deadlines may result in the rejection of the request.

For Ship Owners and Managers;

a) Application for crew change has to be made at least 14 days in advance of the intended crew change date.

b) Strict compliance with the requirements for sign-on and sign-off crew must be adhered to.

c) All efforts must be made to time ship and flight schedule so that direct transfer between ship and flight can be carried out for the crew change. Should the above not be possible, ship owners and managers should explore options of chartered flights or place the crew temporarily onboard another ship in port while waiting for the intended ship/flight.

d) All efforts must be made to seek approval from other port authorities for crew change to be carried out.

e) If the request for crew change in Singapore is not approved, the company should plan for the crew change to be conducted at other ports which allow crew change to be done.

More importantly, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic around the world, ship owners and managers cannot expect business-as-usual. The potential strain on public health resources arising from crew change will necessarily mean that the total number of crew change will be significantly reduced globally. Ship owners and managers must play a role to manage the expectations of crew and provide incentives and a good working environment for crew to be willing to serve longer contracts onboard, subject to the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention, so as to minimise the number of instances crew change is needed during this pandemic.