

Covid-19 brings operational and regulatory challenges



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In view of the ongoing Covid-19 situation, owners and managers were likely to face challenges in meeting various operational and regulatory requirements, says Shipowners' Club in a new article on the current situation.

The Club said that the situation had been particularly impactful on the requirements stipulated by the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and also in making arrangements for mandatory surveys and audits.



The Club said that it had issued advice which provided information on the necessary actions Members should take to avoid any breach or lapse of regulatory and operational requirements.

With regards to the MLC, the Club said that these challenges were most prevalent in the crewing of vessels. Covid-19 has led to an inability to repatriate seafarers at the end of the period listed in their Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA). Such situations might also result in seafarers staying on board beyond the maximum allowed period.

The Club said that if Members are faced with such a situation they should contact their Flag State and submit a request for extension of the sea service period of the individual seafarer, together with the required associated documents.

If, as a result of the Covid-19 situation, Members found themselves unable to arrange the mandatory surveys and audits required for statutory certification, the Club said that it was imperative that they apply for an extension on the stated deadline to ensure that their statutory certificates remained valid.

In such cases, the Member should liaise with the applicable Recognised Organisation (RO), such as Class, that may have issued statutory certificates on behalf of the Flag State. Any application for an extension, on either the validity of statutory certificates or the timeframe for mandatory surveys and audits, should be submitted to the Flag State with suitable recommendations from the RO and any other documents as required by the Flag State. This same advice is applicable for maintaining a vessel's Class.

Shipowners' Club said that some Flag State authorities were already taking a pragmatic approach and might allow for suitable extensions and dispensations upon receipt of requests such as those

highlighted above. However, the club emphasized how important it was that any such requests be made prior to a breach of the relevant statutory regulation and before the due date of mandatory surveys and audits.

The Club also highlighted to Members that the ongoing Covid-19 situation might also affect port calls. It said that Members should ensure that both they and their crews remained up-to-date with any additional requirements that individual ports might have in place to deal with the situation. "Close contact should be maintained with the local port authorities and local agents to ensure that any additional port requirements are clearly understood and complied with. Failure to do so may cause the vessel to be delayed, detained or even refused entry", the Club warned.

www.shipownersclub.com/coronavirus-challenges-in-meeting-operational-and-regulatory-requirements/

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