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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.22/Rev.1
25 June 2020

To: All IMO Member States
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Singapore Crew Change Guidebook**

The Secretary-General circulated, on 11 June 2020, by means of Circular Letter No.4204/Add.22, the *Singapore Crew Change Guidebook*. The Guidebook has now been revised following updates to Singapore's crew change requirements and the revised version is attached (see also <https://www.ssa.org.sg/images/ssa/pdf/Ver2%20-%20SG%20Crew%20Change%20Guidebook%20-%20final.pdf>)

Arranging crew changes is one of the biggest challenges the shipping industry is currently facing. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, large numbers of seafarers had their contracts extended, unable to be relieved by a crew change after long tours of duty. This situation is unsustainable and severely affects both the safety and wellbeing of seafarers and the safe operation of ships. It is estimated that starting in mid-June 2020, 300,000 seafarers a month will require international flights to enable ships' crew changeover - about half will travel home by aircraft for repatriation while the other half will join ships. In addition, 70,000 cruise ship staff are currently waiting for their repatriation.

Recognizing the ongoing challenges that the industry is facing to effect crew change in Singapore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) initiated the formation of the Singapore Crew Change Working Group with its tripartite partners: the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) and the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), and in cooperation with the International Maritime Employers' Council Ltd (IMEC) and the World Shipping Council (WSC). The Working Group developed the attached Guidebook which provides guidance to the shipping community on how to effect crew change in Singapore during these extraordinary times.

In this connection, the Secretary-General would like to recall two previous Circular Letters addressing this subject: Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 on *Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic prepared by the maritime industry* and Circular Letter No.4204/Add.18 on *Joint statement IMO-ICAO-ILO on designation of seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel and service provider personnel at airports and ports as key workers, and on facilitation of crew changes in ports and airports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic*.

The Secretary-General supports the initiative of Singapore, and Member States and international organizations are invited to take this initiative as a model to develop similar guidance to address crew change.

ANNEX

**COVID-19 PROTOCOL ON
CREW CHANGE AND REPATRIATION
OF SEAFARERS**

**SINGAPORE CREW CHANGE GUIDEBOOK
(Dated 22 June 2020)**

In collaboration with and supported by:



Part of:



VERSION 2 COVID-19 SINGAPORE CREW CHANGE GUIDEBOOK – 22 JUNE 2020

PREFACE

This revised Guidebook 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 Circulars (PMC) 26 and 27 of 2020. **This Guidebook supersedes the version dated 1 June 2020.**

The Singapore Crew Change Workgroup (SGCCWG) coordinates efforts in Singapore for Crew Change. The SGCCWG is also connected to the larger global Crew Change Taskforce led by the International Chamber of Shipping (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 Singapore Shipping Association (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 representative
- Wilhelmsen Ships Service AS
- World Shipping Council (Asia Pacific representative)

***Acknowledgement: This document is prepared by Wilhelmsen Ships Service AS, drawing upon feedback from the main SGCCWG

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Crew change process for sign-on and sign-off in Singapore

- A safe and coordinated planning process, ensuring minimal contact between crew and staff of Designated Holding Facilities, transportation providers and launch services
- All aspects of the value chain taken into account including self-reporting of symptoms, so that any suspected infectious case is attended to early on
- All suppliers vetted and audited for proper quarantine and emergency protocols

Updated Requirements in line with PMC 27 of 2020 issued on 18th June 2020

Important reminder: Applications for crew change MUST be made at least 14 days in advance in line with the requirements of PMCs 26 and 27 of 2020.

Designated holding facilities

- Designated holding facilities for crew change are now available for crew changes under special circumstances.
- Ship Agents and Ship Managers are advised to directly contact the designated holding facilities for bookings and enquiries about any special requirements.
- The maximum time that a crew member can stay at the designated holding facility is 48 hours.

Sign-on crew

- Meet-and-greet services are compulsory for sign-on crew at Changi Airport. Please read the mitigating factors and processes for sign-on crew (pg. 3-6 of the Guidebook)

Sign-off crew

- Ships can now depart Singapore after signing off their crew and obtaining port clearance, Ships do not need to remain in port until sign-off crew have departed from Singapore.
- If the sign-off crew is not able to immediately depart Singapore after disembarking from his/her ship, he/she must stay in a holding facility until departure from Singapore.
- Tele-Medicine consultations are approved for issuance of the off-signing crews Fit-to-travel certificate. These must be completed by Singapore fully registered doctors. Details of the tele-medicine requirements are found in PMC 27 of 2020.
- Meet-and-greet services are compulsory for sign-off crew at Changi Airport. Please read the mitigating factors and processes for sign-off crew.

Foreign & Singapore flagged vessels

- For foreign flagged vessels, crew change will only be permitted for vessels meeting the requirements of PMC 26/2020 & PMC 27/2020, and that are in Singapore for cargo operations, bunkering and/or other marine services
- The Maritime Port & Authority of Singapore (MPA) will accord priority to all Singapore-flagged vessels, and will all Singapore registered ships to carry out crew change in the Port of Singapore, regardless of their purpose of call, provided they meet all prevailing requirements

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(A) Process for sign on crew



Sign on Crew in Port of Singapore – RACI Matrix

Sign On Crew in Port of Singapore - RACI Matrix

S/N	Category	Activity/ Task	MPA/MOT	Ship Manager	Ship Agent	Master	Designated Holding Facility Operator	Manning Agency	RACI Matrix
1	Country of Origin	Serving SHN COVID -19 Test report and Fit - for - travel documents	I I	A A	I I			R R	Responsible Owns the activity/task. Person working to achieve the task.
2	Singapore Airport	Meet & Greet and Immigration clearance	I	I	A & R				Accountable To whom R is accountable. Who must sign off/approve on work before it is effective. No more than one A, but can be zero. The one ultimately answerable for the completion of deliverable or task, and the one who delegates the work to those responsible. <i>NOTE: One role can be both R and A.</i>
3	Transit from Airport to Vessel and/or Designated Holding Facility	Transit from Airport to Holding Facility and Vessel with approved suppliers	I	I	A & R	I			
4	Holding Facility	Stay at Designated Holding Facility for Crew Member	I	I	I		A & R		
5	Arrival at vessel (joining)	Joining vessel (Sign on)	I	I	C	R			Consulted Has information and/or capability necessary to complete the work. Informed Must be notified of results, but need not be consulted

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

Figure 1.1

Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore
(Not using designated holding facility)

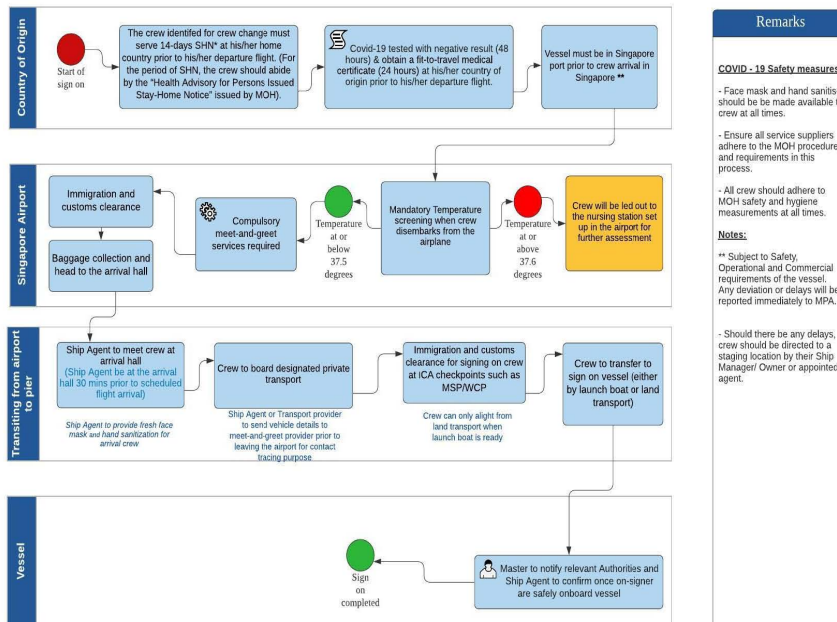


Figure 1.2

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Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility (Onshore)

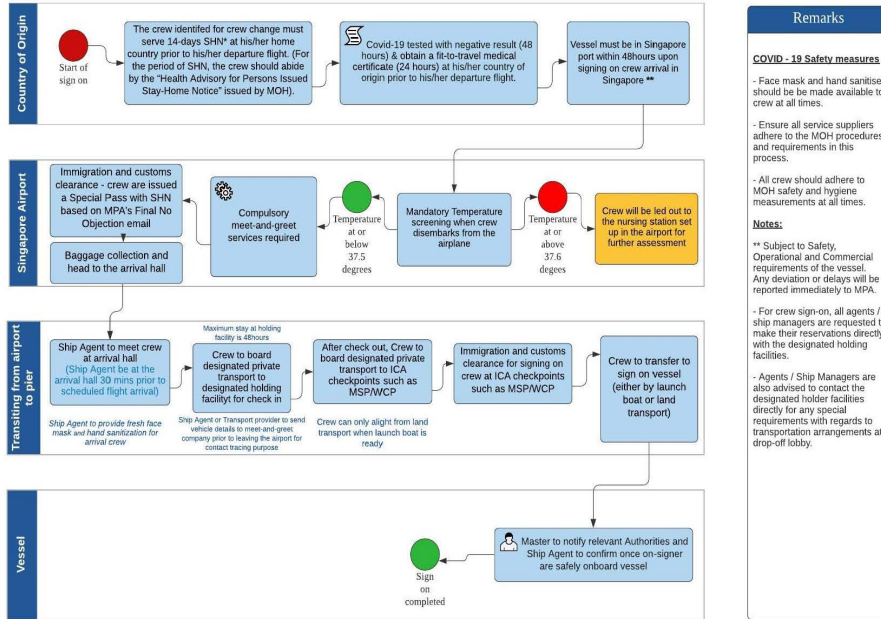


Figure 1.3

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

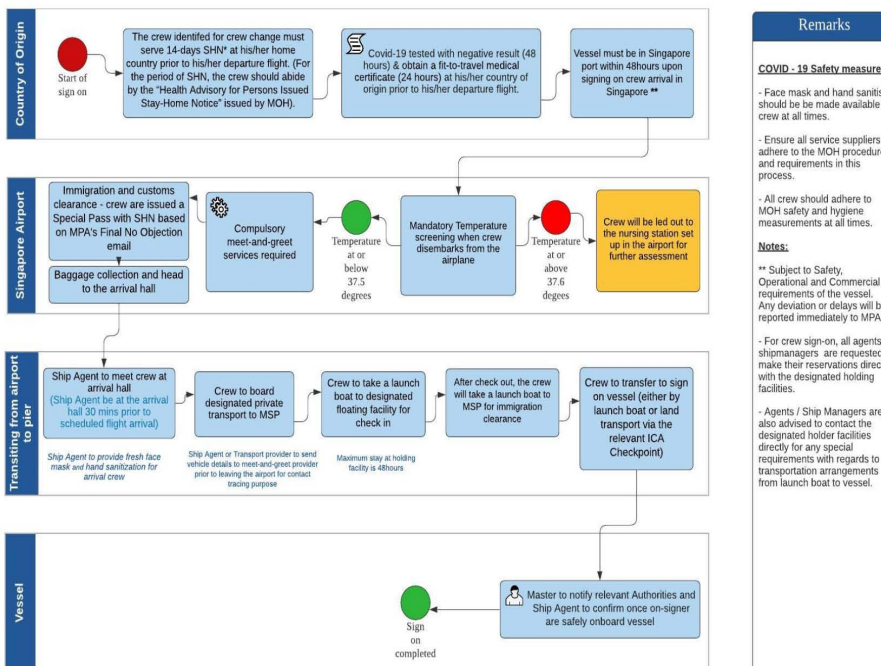


Figure 1.4

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

Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
<p>Sign-On Crew</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Crew must serve 14-days Stay-Home Notice (SHN)* at his/her home country prior to his/her departure flight to Singapore.</p> <p>*</p> <p>(For the period of SHN, the crew should abide by the "Health Advisory for Persons Issued Stay-Home Notice" issued by MOH).</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 degree celsius, he/she will be led out to the nursing station set up in the airport for further assessment 4) Agent must be there in advance to meet the crew and transport direct to airport. The crew will produce the MPA approval letter to ICA and the crew will be escorted and be handed over to the agent. The agent will transport the crew to the ship in a private transport." 5) Compulsory meet-and-greet services - to ensure proper hand-over of each arriving crew to transport company driver
	<p>B</p> <p>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.</p>	

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Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
C	<p>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.</p> <p>The vessel shall be in port prior the crew arrival Singapore.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>If vessel is not in port, then crew must temporarily transfer to a designated holding facility while waiting for the arrival of the ship that the crew is joining. Stay at holding facility should not exceed 48 hours. Sign on crew must comply with SHN requirements and house rules of the holding facility during his/her stay there.</i> 	<p>6) Meet-and-greet services to provide fresh face mask and hand sanitization for arrival crew upon arrival.</p> <p>7) Transport services to standby 30mins prior flight landing time to receive arriving crew</p> <p>8) Transportation safety measure:</p> <p>9) Hand sanitization process before boarding the vehicle.</p>
D	<p>Master to notify relevant Authority and agent to confirm once on-signer are safely onboard.</p>	<p>10) Reminder will be given that face mask should always worn in Singapore.</p>

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(B) Process for sign off crew



Sign Off Crew in Port of Singapore – RACI Matrix

Sign Off Crew in Port of Singapore - RACI Matrix

S/N	Category	Activity/ Task	MPA/MOT	Ship Manager	Ship Agent	Master	Designated Holding Facility	Manning Agency	RACI Matrix
1	Vessel Arrival in Singapore	Flight booking	I	A & R	I	I		I	Responsible Owns the activity/task. Person working to achieve the task.
		Master statement and SEA Singapore doctors issuance of Fit - for- travel	I	A	I	R		C	Accountable To whom R is accountable. Who must sign off/approve on work before it is effective. No more than one A, but can be zero. The one ultimately answerable for the completion of deliverable or task, and the one who delegates the work to those responsible. <i>NOTE: One role can be both R and A.</i>
2	Transit from Vessel to Airport and/or Designated Holding Facility	Transit from Vessel to Airport with approved suppliers	I	I	A & R	I			
3	Holding Facility	Stay at Designated Holding Facility for Crew Member	I	I	I		A & R		
4	Singapore Airport	Crew check- in and immigration clearance – with Chaperon	I	I	A & R	I		C	Consulted Has information and/or capability necessary to complete the work
5	Country of Destination	Crew arrives at destination		A				R	Informed Must be notified of results, but need not be consulted

Note: Sign Off is confirmed when the following approval is obtained:
(i) Approval from MPA for crew Sign Off
(ii) Valid visa issuance by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)
(iii) Approval from National Environment Agency (NEA)

Figure 2.1

Process for Sign Off Crew - Port of Singapore
(Not using designated holding facility)

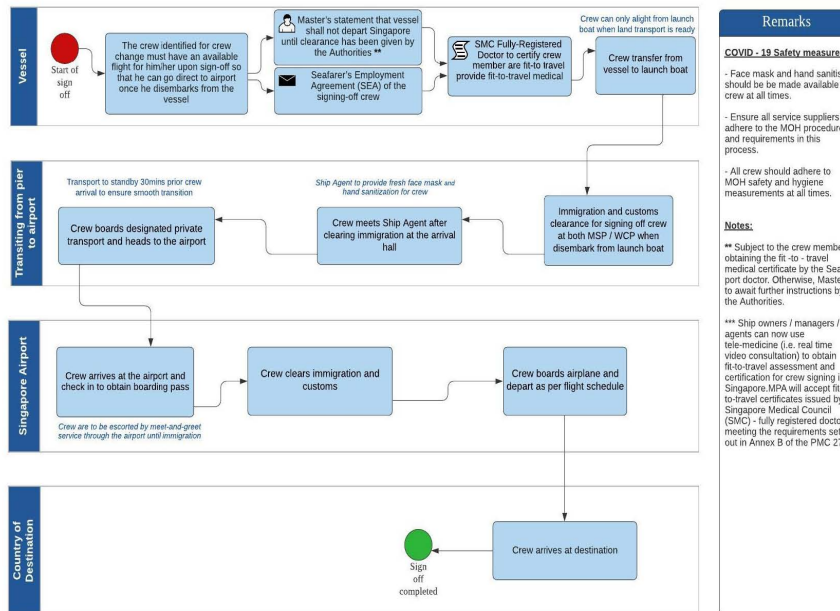
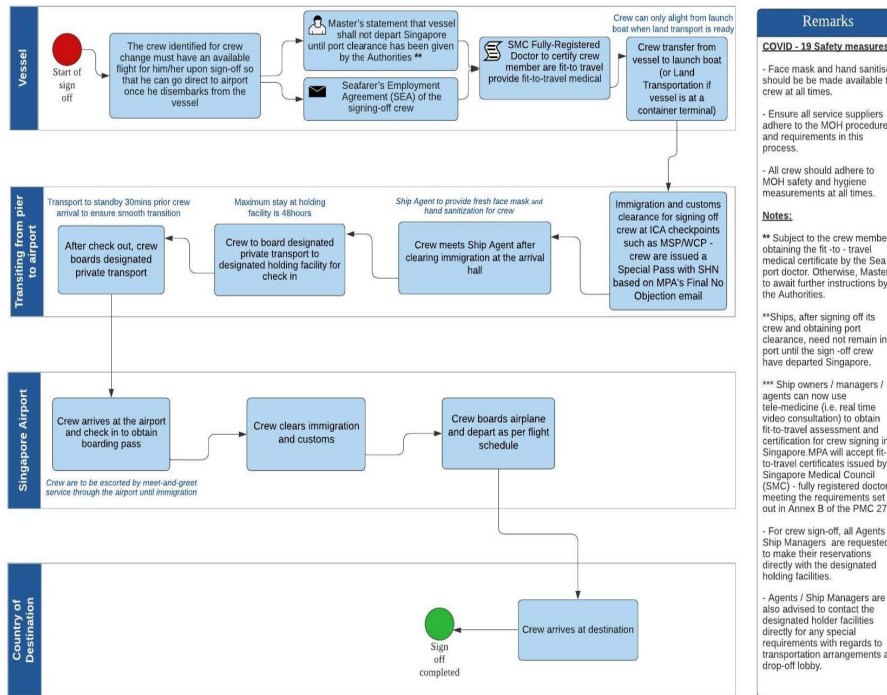


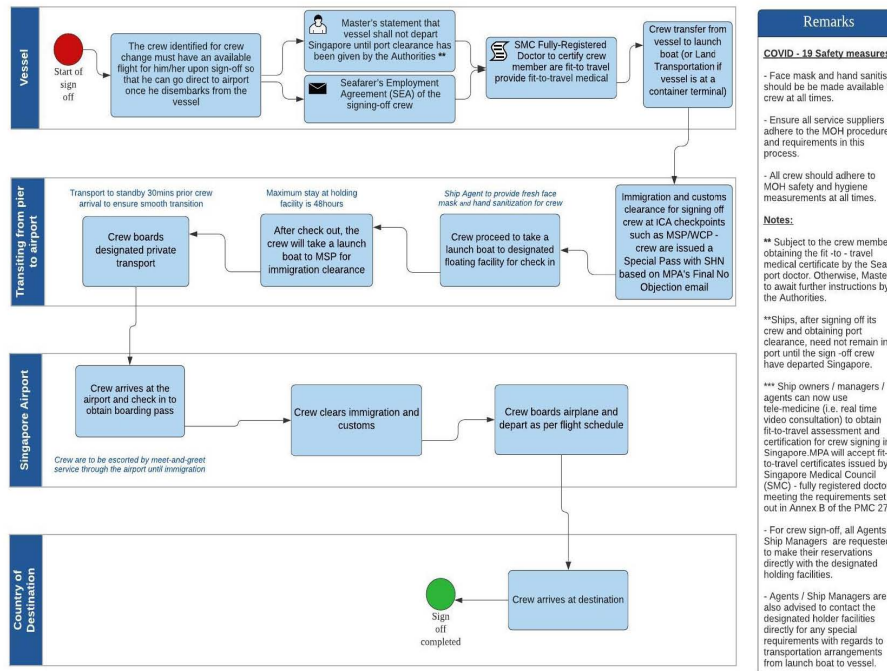
Figure 2.2

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



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



Remarks

COVID - 19 Safety measures

- Face mask and hand sanitizer 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:

- ** Subject to the crew member obtaining the fit-to-travel medical certificate by the Sea port doctor. Otherwise, Master to await further instructions by the Authorities.
- **Ships, after signing off its crew and obtaining port clearance, need not remain in port until the sign-off crew have departed Singapore.
- *** Ship owners / managers / agents can now use tele-medicine (i.e. real time video consultation) to obtain fit-to-travel assessment and certification for crew signing in Singapore. MPA will accept fit-to-travel certificates issued by Singapore Medical Council (SMC) - fully registered doctors meeting the requirements set out in Annex B of the PMC 27.
- For crew sign-off, all Agents / Ship Managers are requested to make their reservations directly with the designated holding facilities.
- Agents / Ship Managers are also advised to contact the designated holder facilities directly for any special requirements with regards to transportation arrangements at drop-off lobby.

Remarks

COVID - 19 Safety measures

- Face mask and hand sanitizer 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:

- ** Subject to the crew member obtaining the fit-to-travel medical certificate by the Sea port doctor. Otherwise, Master to await further instructions by the Authorities.
- **Ships, after signing off its crew and obtaining port clearance, need not remain in port until the sign-off crew have departed Singapore.
- *** Ship owners / managers / agents can now use tele-medicine (i.e. real time video consultation) to obtain fit-to-travel assessment and certification for crew signing in Singapore. MPA will accept fit-to-travel certificates issued by Singapore Medical Council (SMC) - fully registered doctors meeting the requirements set out in Annex B of the PMC 27.
- For crew sign-off, all Agents / Ship Managers are requested to make their reservations directly with the designated holding facilities.
- Agents / Ship Managers are also advised to contact the designated holder facilities directly for any special requirements with regards to transportation arrangements from launch boat to vessel.

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To minimise the risk of importation and spread COVID-19 in Singapore, it is preferred that the crew is transferred directly between the vessel and the point of arrival/departure. Companies shall take note of the following requirements:

Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
Sign-Off Crew	A The crew must have an available flight for him/her upon sign-off.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea port doctor to certify crew member are fit-to travel prior sign-off. This can be performed via Tele-medicine in line with the requirements of PMC 27 of 2020 • No sharing of Passenger launch boats for crew and service engineers/technicians • Agent will arrange for crew for using private transport and Meet-and-greet Services, at the airport, escorting the crew to clear ICA through to boarding the plane. Or to handover to holding facility . • Transport to standby 30 mins prior crew arrival
	B Crew is not allowed to remain ashore in Singapore while waiting for his flight. <i>- If the crew has a confirmed booking at a designated holding facility, the ship he/she signed off from can depart Singapore. Stay at holding facility should not exceed 48 hours.</i>	
	C Seafarer’s Employment Agreement (SEA) of the signing-off crew.	
	D Sign-off crew must have a fit-to-travel medical certificate issued by a doctor in Singapore not more than 24 hours prior disembarking the ship. <i>- For sign-off crew who are not able to transfer directly from ship to airport and are staying in the designated holding facility, fit-to-travel medical certificate should also be issued not more than 24 hours prior disembarking the ship that the crew is signing off from. During the stay, the sign-off crew will have to follow the SHN requirements in the holding facility and to monitor their temperature daily.</i> <i>- Sign-off crew who exceeds the maximum 48 hours stay in the designated holding facility will have to be assessed and certified with a new fit-to-travel medical certificate.</i>	

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	<p>E Master's statement that vessel shall not depart Singapore until Port Clearance is issued from the MPA.</p> <p>- <i>If the crew has a confirmed booking at a designated holding facility, the ship he/she signed off from can depart. Stay at holding facility must not exceed 48 hours.</i></p>	
<p>Land / Sea Transport Provider</p>	<p>Wear a mask at all times.</p> <p>Sanitize and disinfect seats/interior prior receiving the next onboard crew</p> <p>Ensure all crew sanitize their hands once in vehicle/launch</p> <p>Sanitize and disinfect seats/interior after dropping off crew.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating cross contamination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All transport vendors are to practice MTI COVID-19 guidelines and safety measures. ○ All vendors' segregation plans are to be submitted to the relevant authorities. ○ Drivers and boatman are to remind crew on the COVID-19 safety measures. ○ All vendors are to abide to the NEA cleaning guidelines.

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If the above requirements can be met in line with Port Marine Circular 26 and Port Marine Circular 27 of 2020, kindly submit the following documents to MPA to process the request:

- A. Application form as per <https://www.mpa.gov.sg/web/portal/home/port-of-singapore/operations/crew-change> (You will have to make multiple submissions if you have more than 20 off-signers and/or on-signers)
- B. Online declaration, undertaking and consent by owner/agent/operator.
- C. Intended flight itinerary from the airline for both sign-on and sign-off crew.
- D. Online declaration that the last port of call was more than 14 days ago and the crew remains well; 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.
- E. Online 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.
- F. A copy of the ship's Maritime Declaration of Health in accordance with Port Marine Circular No. 16 of 2020. (To be submitted 12 hours before the vessel arrives Singapore)
- G. If using a Designated Holding Facility, a confirmed booking not exceeding 48 hours to be provided in line with PMC 27.
- H. Confirmed flight tickets must be submitted as early as possible.
- I. For sign-off crew, fit-to-travel medical certificate issued by a doctor in Singapore not more than 24hrs prior to disembarking the vessel.
- J. For sign-on crew, crew's declaration that he/she has served 14-days SHN in accordance with MOH's Guidelines, as well as provide his/her temperature record.
- K. For sign-on crew, the COVID-19 PCR test result not more than 48hrs before departing his/her home country.
- L. For sign-on crew, the fit-to-travel medical certificate not more than 24hrs before departing his/her home country

Please note that A, B, C, D & E as requested above, shall be submitted at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the scheduled signing on/off date of the crew, unless expressly stated otherwise. Documents F, G, H, I, J, K & L must be submitted at the earliest possible instance before the vessel's arrival. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the application.

Should there be any changes to the information provided, company is to update MPA immediately.

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In the event that the application for crew change in Singapore is not approved, the company should plan for the crew change to be conducted at other ports that allow crew change.