



THE

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FILIPINO SEAFARERS NOW INCLUDED IN PRIORITY LIST IN THE NAT'L COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM

MANILA – Filipino seafarers get a closer shot at getting vaccines against COVID-19 as the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) approves the recommendation of the Department of Transportation (DOTr) to include them in the priority recipients listed in the government's national vaccination rollout.

"This is a very good development for our maritime industry champions— our seafarers. Now, our Filipino seafarers will be given priority to be vaccinated. Paulit-ulit ko pong inilalarawan ang ating maritime workforce bilang mga silent workers ng bayan. They work silently, yet their contribution is as crucial as keeping the economy thriving. Not only are they frontliners, but they are undoubtedly HEROES, too," DOTr Secretary Arthur P. Tugade expressed.

DOTr OIC Assistant Secretary for Maritime VADM Narciso Vingson Jr., who also chairs the Inter-Agency Working Group tasked to firm up the DOTr's proposal on the priority vaccination of Filipino seafarers in recognition of the vital role they play amid the present global crisis, presented the proposal and justification in a meeting with the IATF.

"The working group is in the unified position to push for the prioritization of Filipino seafarers in the country's COVID-19 vaccination program to secure their employment, and to ensure the safe shipping operations of essential goods amid the pandemic," Asec. Vingson said.

Aside from DOTr, the working group is composed of officials from the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA),



The prioritization of seafarers in the national vaccination program ensures that Filipino seafarers are promised continued employment on international and domestic vessels.

Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA), Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ), and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) through its Maritime and Ocean Affairs Office (MOAO). It also represents the local Licensed Manning Agencies through the membership...

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Members of the Editorial Board assume full responsibility for all articles and contributions published in this Newsletter.

SEAFARERS VACCINATION...

...of the Association of Licensed Manning Agencies (ALMA), Joint Manning Group (JMG), Filipino Association for Mariner's Employment (FAME), and the Philippine Association of Manning Agencies and Ship Managers (PAMAS).

From falling under B3 (Other essential workers) or B5 (Overseas Filipino Workers) in the Vaccination Priority Framework, the Inter-Agency Working Group has requested for the reclassification of Filipino seafarers to A4 (Frontline personnel in essential sectors, including uniformed personnel and those in working sectors identified by the IATF as essential during ECQ). This makes seafarers move at the top 4 priority groups to be vaccinated.

With the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines in the country, the IATF has adopted early this year the prioritization framework and criteria of the national immunization rollout to allocate the first tranches of vaccines given its limited global supply.

Furthermore, the prioritization of seafarers in the vaccination is based on the following grounds: Filipino seafarers are declared key workers globally and locally; Filipino seafarers are considered mobile, who, as part of their jobs, frequently enter various ports across the world; and shipping companies prefer their workforce to be vaccinated to ensure that their operations will remain smooth, unhampered, and somehow immune to the severe effects of COVID-19.

To further determine the specific population to be prioritized, the Working Group classified seafarers into two. Top priority will be given to active seafarers or those with recorded sea service within the last three (3) years, while new seafarers or those with last recorded sea service beyond 2018 shall be ranked second.

Per MARINA and POEA data, there are a total of 549,000 active seafarers registered in their system, wherein around 497,000 are those deployed overseas and 51,000 are serving locally. Meanwhile, a total of 181,000 seafarers are without updated sea service within the last three (3) years.

In summary, there are 730,651 Filipino seafarers who are for consideration in the A4 category.

DOTR MARITIME SECTOR FACILITATES ARRIVAL OF NEARLY 1,000 REPATRIATED FILIPINO CREW MEMBERS ABOARD NORWEGIAN VESSEL; ASSURES THEM ASSISTANCE FROM PH GOVERNMENT



The maritime sector of the DOTr continues to extend its assistance to Filipino seafarers as more international vessels are expected to conduct crew change in the country.

MANILA - The maritime sector of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), consisting of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), has facilitated the arrival of approximately 1000 Filipino crew members aboard MV "Norwegian Encore" at the Port of Manila last 11 April 2021.

According to the One-Stop Shop for Seafarers in the Port of Manila (OSS-POM), headed by PPA Port Manager Eligio P. Fortajada of Port Management Office (PMO) NCR-South, the repatriated Filipino seafarers, who all underwent profiling from the Department of Health (DOH), will undergo the mandatory quarantine and testing protocols set by the national government before their disembarkation. The said vessel will be used as the quarantine facility under the strict supervision of the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ).



MARINA Administrator Robert A. Empedrad poses with staff who were present to assist the 1,058 crew members.

In accordance with the crew change protocol of the government, the seafarers shall undergo swab testing on the sixth day of their quarantine proper, which will be handled by the PCG and the First Aide Molecular Laboratory, the RT-PCR molecular testing laboratory authorized by the national port authority. Doctors and nurses, who are all under the supervision of BOQ, will be onsite to assist the seafarers.

Expenses for the swab tests will be subsidized through the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, also known as Republic Act No. 1149, which will be facilitated by the PPA. Under this law, the Philippine government has allotted Php 270 million for the free RT-PCR testing of returning Filipino seafarers to alleviate the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the seafaring industry.

The Philippines, having positioned itself as a crew change capital in the world through the DOTr and its maritime sector, commits to provide world-class services to international vessels needing fresh crew onboard amid the pandemic. The member agencies of the OSS also collectively assure the public that the government is ensuring that health and safety protocols are strictly observed to help prevent and manage the continued threat of the COVID-19 disease.



Seafarers in full personal protective equipment (PPE) await their clearance during the disembarkation process.

DOTR MARITIME SECTOR ASSISTS 1,078 DISEMBARKING SEAFARERS OF NORWEGIAN VESSEL



A total of 1,078 repatriated seafarers were previously on board MV "Norwegian Encore"

MANILA - The maritime sector of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), consisting of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), together with the members of the One-Stop Shop (OSS) Port of Manila has assisted the disembarkation of the 1,078 repatriated crew members of MV "Norwegian Encore". The MV "Norwegian Encore", which is owned by the Norwegian Cruise Line, arrived in the country on 11 April 2021, and ferried a total of 1,078 repatriated seafarers - composed of 1,058 Filipino and 20 foreign crew members.

Upon the arrival, all crew members aboard the vessel were profiled by the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and underwent the strict mandatory quarantine and testing protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. The said vessel was cleared to be utilized as a quarantine facility and subjected to the close supervision and monitoring of the BOQ.

The swab testing, which was subsidized through the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act, was executed

onboard by the PCG, First Aide Diagnostics Laboratory, and BOQ on 19 April 2021. Within 24 hours after swabbing, the test results and quarantine certificates of the seafarers were released.

On 21 April 2021, the disembarkation proper of the 1,078 crew at Pier 15 was conducted through the inter-agency effort of PPA, PCG, BOQ, Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), and Asian Terminals, Inc. (ATI).

In coordination with OWWA, the Filipino crew with negative test results and quarantine certificates shall proceed to their provinces of destination and fulfill the remaining quarantine requirements as mandated by their Local Government Units (LGUs). Meanwhile, the 20 foreign seafarers were brought directly to the airport to pursue flights bound to their home countries.

Other seafarers, including the 59 servicing crew who have yet to start their quarantine proper, were brought to their designated facilities identified by the BOQ in compliance with existing government protocols.

As the Philippines expects more international vessels to conduct crew changes in the country, the DOTr, under the leadership of Secretary Arthur Tugade, assures the public that it will continue to extend its assistance to Filipino and foreign crew members while implementing the necessary measures to contain the spread of the COVID-19 disease.



The maritime sector of the DOTr continues to ramp up efforts to facilitate more crew changes to further assist distressed and stranded seafarers amidst the pandemic.

MARINO MARKS 6TH YEAR WITH OPENING OF STCW SATELLITE OFFICE

The MARINO Party-list on Thursday celebrated its 6th anniversary by signing a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) which establishes MARINA's satellite office at the MARINO Action Center (MAC) in Ermita, Manila, where seafarers can submit documents needed for the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).



The ceremonial ribbon-cutting was led by MARINA Administrator Robert A Empedrad, MARINO Party-list Representative Hon. Macnell M. Lusotan, and Deputy Executive Director Capt. Jeffrey P Solon of the MARINA STCW Office.

The MOA was signed in the presence of representatives from different maritime groups and manning agencies, including officials from the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP).

"We in MARINO party-list are happy to mark our sixth anniversary as an organization by opening MARINA's satellite office here at MAC... Never before has MARINA, the executive agency devoted to seafarer affairs, worked as closely as now with the seafarer representative in Congress. We hope this partnership will continue, and we are confident it will deliver more benefits to seafarers if we work together," said MARINO Party-list First Representative Sandro Gonzalez.

The agreement will ensure easy access for seafarers to submit the needed documents for their STCW application, which is one of the requirements for local and overseas employment.

"We are happy for this opportunity to work with



The establishment of the MARINO Action Center (MAC) signifies more accessible services for seafarers.

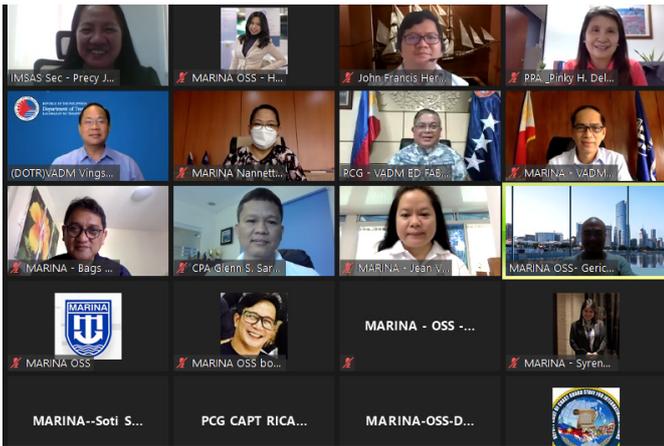
MARINO Party-list through this satellite office as we seek to bring our services closer to where our seafarers are. The MARINA administration hopes that this will be the start of more joint ventures with the MARINO Party-list for the betterment of the lives of our seafarers," said MARINA Administrator Robert Empedrad.

The MOA signing was witnessed by Senator Joel Villanueva of the Senate Committee on Labor, Employment, and Human Resources Development, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, Manila 5th District Congressman Crystal Bagatsing, Manila City Council Majority Floor Leader Joel Chua, and Manila City Council Assistant Majority Floor Leader Joey Hizon.

"MARINO alone cannot accomplish what we have done today, were it not for the support of the leadership and staff of MARINA and Dr. Oca and the membership of AMOSUP. The opening of the MARINA satellite office here is a victory of stakeholders working together for the Filipino seafarer," Gonzalez said.

MARINA OSS HOLDS 3RD INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION MEMBER STATE AUDIT SCHEME

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), through the Overseas Shipping Service (OSS), held its 3rd International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) Council Meeting on 14 April 2021 via video conference.



The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) Council Meetings are held in preparation of the upcoming mandatory audit to be held in 2022.

The Assistant Secretary for Maritime of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), VAdm Narciso A Vingson Jr, led the discussion on the revised Cross Table of Responsibilities. The Council likewise conferred the Philippine Maritime Strategy on the Implementation and Enforcement of Relevant IMO Instruments, particularly the: a.) Status of IMSAS Council Resolution No. 01; b.) Strategy Progress Report for CY 2020; c.) Strategy Targets/Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for CY 2021; and d.) Proposed Department Order on the Strategy. The Council also discussed the IMSAS Pre-Audit Questionnaire, updates on the IMSAS Mock Audit, and the schedule of activities in preparation for the incoming mandatory audit in 2022.

Further, the Council also agreed to the recommendation of having an inter-agency assessment as part of the preparatory activities.

The 3rd IMSAS Council Meeting was attended by the representatives from the DOTr, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), MARINA, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and Cebu Port Authority (CPA).

MARINA ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR THE STRICT IMPLEMENTATION OF ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM (OAS)

MANILA – The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) has published the guidelines for the implementation of the Online Appointment System (OAS) for the Seafarer’s Record Book (SRB) and Seafarer’s Identification Document (SID) System.

This initiative is in line with the Agency’s continued efforts to automate the frontline services of the Agency, for the health and safety of stakeholders and employees alike.

The SRB/SID Online Appointment System (OAS) shall be strictly implemented nationwide for all applications for the issuance of Seafarer’s Record Books (SRBs) and Seafarer’s Identification Documents (SIDs) effective Tuesday, 20 April 2021. Seafarers may submit their applications through the SRB/SID portal which was developed solely for this purpose.

Upon the activation of the OAS, the MARINA will no longer accommodate walk-in applications.

Furthermore, expedite applications will now be done online and may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. The expedite application must be applied and handled by the Licensed Manning Agency/Shipping company through the designated online portal at: srbsidexpedite.marina.gov.ph and it must be supported by a letter drafted by the authorized company representative, together with the company logo and official company email address. Additionally, an Affidavit of Undertaking, confirmed e-ticket, and the approved POEA contract must also be enclosed. A request for the transfer of venue and date of appointment may be allowed for expedite applications if it is supported by the necessary documents outlined in MARINA Advisory No. 2021-22.

The MARINA assures its stakeholders that the Agency shall strive to open more slots for SRB/SID applications for all its processing Offices nationwide until 31 August 2021. Additional SRB/SID slots will be added in the ensuing months.

REGIONAL NEWS

MRO XI CONVENES INTER-AGENCY BRIEFING WITH CONCERNED MARITIME AGENCIES



The Inter-Agency Briefing was led by MRO XI Regional Director Mary Ann Armi Z. Arcilla.

The MARINA Regional Office XI (MRO 11) in Davao City, headed by Regional Director Mary Ann Armi Z. Arcilla, conducted a virtual Inter-Agency Meeting/Briefing together with the Philippine Coast Guard District - Southeastern Mindanao (led by Commo Allan O Corpuz) and the PNP Regional Maritime Unit 11 (led by PCol Simeon L Gane Jr) yesterday, 28 April 2021. The meeting was held to discuss the uniform implementation of maritime rules and regulations.

It also served as an opportunity to brief enforcement agencies on the various documents issued by the MARINA.

MRO 9 DISCUSSES INITIATIVES FOR TRANSITION TO BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM MINDANAO (BARMM)

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) Regional Office IX (MRO 9) Director Rizal Victoria met with Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) MARINA Regional Head Alonto Sahiron at

the MRO 9 - Zamboanga office to discuss the transition initiatives of the Agency to the BARMM.

Assisted by the MARINA Central Office, through MRO 9, the MARINA BARMM employees will undergo proposed training, such as workshops on frontline services, records management, and maintenance and troubleshooting of computer system and networks; The employees will also be briefed regarding maritime



MRO 9 Regional Director Rizal Victoria together with MARINA-BARMM Regional Director Alonto Sahiron.

law enforcement matters, maritime route plans, and maritime accident/incident investigation.

Furthermore, the MARINA BARMM employees will also be tasked to handle the Modified Basic Safety Training (MBST) for the crew members of the vessels under its area of responsibility (AOR).



The meeting was an opportunity for the two Regional Directors to discuss relevant matters for the transition of the MARINA to the BARMM.

MRO 7 INITIATES CAPACITY-BUILDING EFFORTS FOR THE MARINA TAGBILARAN EXTENSION OFFICE

To strengthen the capacity development of the Agency, the MARINA Regional Office VII (MRO 7), led by Regional Director Marc Anthony P. Pascua, visited the MARINA Tagbilaran Extension Office (TEO) to monitor the operations of the office.



The establishment of the MARINO Action Center (MAC) signifies more accessible services for seafarers.

Regional Director Pascua also visited LTJG Tolentino of Philippine Coast Guard Station (PCG) and Port Manager James Gantalao of Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), in Tagbilaran City last 15 April 2021 to discuss the cargo and passenger vessel traffic and maritime situational reports in the area.

On 16 April 2021, Regional Director Pascua also visited Provincial Governor of Bohol Arthur Yap to discuss the request of assistance for the MARINA Tagbilaran Extension Office in conducting the mobile registrations for the renewal and issuance of boats registration and licenses and the Seafarer Identification Book (SIB) for boat captains and motormen.

It is the MRO 7's objective to extend assistance and convenience to all clients and to strengthen the coordination with the inter-agency maritime sector inside the jurisdiction.

MRO 5 PERSONNEL TAKE DOTR PLEDGE OF COOPERATION AND OATH OF HONESTY AND REAFFIRMATION OF INTEGRITY

The MARINA Regional Office V (MRO 5) personnel participated in the DOTr Pledge of Cooperation and Oath of Honesty and Reaffirmation of Integrity on 28 April 2020 at the MARINA V Function Hall in Legazpi City.

The activity aimed to ensure that the mandates and best practices in the industry are governed by ethical standards, according to each employee's duty to society.

MARINA ROV



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