

May 1st 2020

Novel Coronavirus – Mexican Jurisdiction Update

GUIDELINES by May 1st 2020

The Mexican Navy Secretariat (the maritime authority involved in port safety & security) has issued guidelines for a vessel arriving with a report of infectious diseases, including Coronavirus, or suspicions thereof.

Should a vessel have a suspicious case of Novel Corona virus, the guidelines from the Mexican Navy are as follows:

1. The Master of the vessel shall inform Port Agents of a sick person(s) who presents symptoms similar or compatible with those of the Covid-19 (or as per applicable medical guidelines issued by national and/ or international authorities, such as WHO or IMHA, for instance).
2. Port Agents shall proceed to give immediate notice to the International Health Service (*Sanidad Internacional / S.I.*).
3. S.I. will coordinate with the Harbour Master (headed by the Mexican Navy) the applicable safety and sanitary protocols to be imposed on the vessel.
4. The Harbour Master will coordinate with port's traffic control, and likely order any suspect vessel to remain at anchorage until further notice.
5. While at anchorage, S.I. will board the vessel to make necessary investigation and either confirm as negative or positive the symptoms of the crewmember in relation to the Coronavirus.
6. If positive, the vessel shall be placed in quarantine until the virus is eradicated (or rejected free pratique)

Our other Maritime authority, the Mexican Merchant Marine, involved in navigational and port operations, has issued recommendations based on the WHO's Circular No. 4202 from the 31st of January 2020, mainly aimed at preventing the spread of the virus in the maritime community.

IN PRACTICE AND RECENT EXPERIENCES

Based on multiple experiences this office has faced in disembarking crew under distress or signing-off, the following trends have appeared:

1. Initial hesitation from local and superior authorities when requesting to disembark crew on medical emergencies, and especially when signing-off, even when they are clearly non Covid-19 related.
 - a. Nationals and foreigners have largely been accepted to disembark if urgent.
2. Port Agents active role has become increasingly more important in assisting our office to make prevail human rights and IMO recommendations, as in Ports have at times denied disembarkation in the first instances.
3. Humanitarian approaches/argumentation in tandem with local Embassies have proved most effective.
4. Immediate involvement of Embassies is recommended. Invoke human rights and IMO recommendations is also advisable.

PORTS THAT HAVE RECENTLY DISEMBARKED CREWMEMBERS/PASSENGERS IN MEXICO

1. Lazaro Cardenas
2. Progreso
3. Cozumel
4. Veracruz
5. La Paz
6. Cabo San Lucas

SURVEYS & SURVEYORS

This office continues to have access to ports and vessels for surveys. Our surveyors (in-house or another) are taking additional precautions through the use of PPE, and following local protocols and guidelines.