



# NIUE SHIP REGISTRY

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## NOVEL CORONAVIRUS DISEASE OUTBREAK (COVID-19) (Circular NMC2.2020 (rev1))

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this circular is to disseminate useful information originating from IMO and other organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) relating to the COVID-19 outbreak which has been declared by WHO as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30 January 2020.

These include health measures relating to the virus SARS-CoV-2 which has emerged from Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China somewhere around the end of 2019. These health measures should be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

### REFERENCES:

1. IMO Circular Letter No.4204, dated 31 January 2020 – appended
2. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1, dated 19 February 2020 – appended
3. IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.2, dated 21 February 2020 – appended
4. International Maritime Health Association – Reducing the Risk of Infection from 2019-nCoV Information to shipping companies, dated 26 January 2020 – appended

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Circular Letter No.4204  
31 January 2020

To: All IMO Member States  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)**

### **Introduction**

1 The purpose of this circular is to provide information and guidance, based on recommendations developed by the World Health Organization (WHO), on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).\*

### **Background**

2 On 31 December 2019, WHO was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. Subsequently, on 7 January 2020, Chinese authorities confirmed that they had identified a new virus in the coronavirus family of viruses, which includes the common cold and viruses such as SARS and MERS. This new virus was temporarily named "2019-nCoV".

3 WHO has been working with the Chinese authorities, governments and global experts to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on the new virus, track its spread and virulence, and provide advice on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak.

4 As of 29 January 2020, a total of 130 tests have been concluded in the United Kingdom, all of which were confirmed negative. The latest information regarding the situation in the United Kingdom can be obtained at the following address:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

5 On 30 January 2020, WHO declared that the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC).

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\* For information and guidance on precautions for delegates attending IMO meetings, please refer to Circular Letter No.4203.

## Symptoms

6 Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death. Infection from humans to humans may occur during the incubation period (before persons show signs of sickness). Coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

## Risks

7 The current outbreak originated in Wuhan City, which is a major domestic and international transport hub. Given the large population movements and the observed human-to-human transmission, it is not unexpected that new confirmed cases will continue to appear in other areas and countries.

## WHO advice

8 It is prudent to remind populations and health workers of the basic principles to reduce the general risk of transmission of acute respiratory infections by following the below-mentioned key preventative measures:

- .1 avoiding close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections;
- .2 frequent handwashing, especially after direct contact with ill people or their environment;
- .3 avoiding unprotected contact with farm or wild animals;
- .4 people with symptoms of acute respiratory infection should practise cough etiquette (maintain distance, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and wash hands); and
- .5 within healthcare facilities, enhance standard infection prevention and control practices in hospitals, especially in emergency departments.

9 WHO does not recommend any specific health measures for travellers. In case of symptoms suggestive of acute respiratory illness either during or after travel, travellers are encouraged to seek medical attention and share their travel history with their healthcare provider. Health authorities should work with travel, transport and tourism sectors to provide travellers with information to reduce the general risk of acute respiratory infections via travel health clinics, travel agencies, conveyance operators and at points of entry.

10 Travellers who had contact with confirmed cases or direct exposure to a potential source of infection should be placed under medical observation. High-risk contacts should avoid travel for the duration of the incubation period (up to 14 days).

11 Novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) advice for the public published on the WHO website contains WHO standard recommendations for the general public to reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, to protect yourself and others from getting sick, and to stay healthy while travelling. WHO provides novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) travel advice here:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/travel-advice>

12 With the information currently available for the novel coronavirus, WHO advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation or importation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions on international traffic.

13 Member States are advised to urge all stakeholders (companies, managers, crewing agents, etc.) to promulgate information to ensure that seafarers, passengers and others on board ships are provided with accurate and relevant information on the coronavirus outbreak and on the measures to reduce the risk of exposure if they are likely to be engaged on ships trading to and from ports in coronavirus-affected States.

#### **Guidance available**

14 The following links provide advice and guidance to seafarers and shipping (non-exhaustive list):

[International Maritime Health Association](#) (IMHA) advice for shipping companies on the new type of coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

[USCG Novel Coronavirus Precautions](#)

15 WHO issues advice on international travel and health. This information is regularly reviewed and updated by WHO and can be found at the following address:

[www.who.int/ith/updates](http://www.who.int/ith/updates)

Additional information can also be found at:

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/01/1056031>  
[https://www.who.int/ith/other\\_health\\_risks/en/](https://www.who.int/ith/other_health_risks/en/)

16 The publications listed below may also be helpful:

WHO International Health Regulations  
WHO Guide to ship sanitation  
International Medical Guide for Ships

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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.1  
19 February 2020

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

Subject: **COVID-19 – Implementation and enforcement of relevant IMO instruments**

The Secretary-General informs that he has received reports regarding the impacts on the shipping industry resulting from the sudden and rapid outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus. In response to this situation, the Secretary-General has issued guidance through Circular Letter No.4204.

Flag State authorities, port State authorities and control regimes, companies and shipmasters should cooperate, in the current context of the outbreak, to ensure that, where appropriate, passengers can be embarked and disembarked, cargo operations can occur, ships can enter and depart shipyards for repair and survey, stores and supplies can be loaded, certificates can be issued and crews can be exchanged.

The principles of avoiding unnecessary restrictions or delay on port entry to ships, persons and property on board are also embodied in articles I and V and section 6 of the annex of the FAL Convention.

Several IMO instruments contain provisions that may be relevant to the impact on shipping caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. These include, but are not limited to:

- the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974;
- the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973;
- the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004;
- the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978; and
- resolution A.1119(30), *Procedures for port State control*, 2017.

In addition, the Secretariat has received the following communication from the International Labour Organization (ILO):

"In the context of the evolving coronavirus outbreak, the effective protection of the health and safety of seafarers should be a priority. Under the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, flag States must ensure that all seafarers on ships flying their flag are covered by adequate measures for the protection of their health and that they have access to prompt and adequate medical care whilst working on board. The Convention also requires port States to ensure that seafarers on board ships in their territory who are in need of immediate medical care are given access to medical facilities on shore."

COVID-19 is a severe public health challenge that requires understanding and close cooperation among all Member States to overcome challenges related to the implementation and enforcement of the relevant IMO instruments.

The Organization will continue to closely monitor the situation and the Secretary-General will provide additional information as appropriate and will bring these matters to the attention of the relevant organs of the Organization, in particular the Maritime Safety Committee, the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the Facilitation Committee and the Legal Committee.

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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.2  
21 February 2020

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

Subject: **Joint Statement IMO-WHO on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak**

The Director-General of WHO and the Secretary-General of IMO have jointly issued the attached statement to assist States in ensuring that health measures are implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

Member States and international organizations are encouraged to disseminate this joint statement as widely as possible.

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## ANNEX



### **A Joint Statement on the Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak - 13 February 2020 -**

On 31 December 2019, the first outbreak of what has now become known globally as the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People's Republic of China. On 9 January 2020, Chinese authorities reported in the media that the cause of this viral pneumonia was initially identified as a new type of coronavirus, which is different from any other human coronaviruses discovered so far.

Following the advice provided by the Emergency Committee convened under the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005) on 30 January 2020, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and issued a set of Temporary Recommendations.

WHO is working closely with global experts, governments and partners to rapidly expand scientific knowledge on this new virus, to track the spread and virulence of the virus, and to provide advice to countries and the global community on measures to protect health and prevent the spread of this outbreak. Based on recommendations developed by the WHO, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued Circular Letter No.4204 of 31 January 2020 to provide information and guidance on the precautions to be taken to minimize risks to seafarers, passengers and others on board ships from the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

Following the advice of the Emergency Committee, the WHO Director General did not recommend any travel or trade restriction. Countries are stepping up their efforts in line with WHO's recommendations for preparedness and response to this public health risk. At the same time, additional measures are being adopted by countries, ranging from delayed port clearance or refusal of entry, which may cause severe disruption of international maritime traffic, in particular affecting ships, their crews, passengers and cargo.

WHO is working in close consultation with IMO and other partners to assist States in ensuring that health measures be implemented in ways that minimize unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

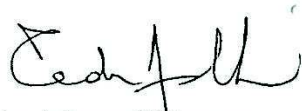
In this connection, WHO and IMO call upon all States to respect the requirements of "free pratique" for ships (IHR (2005) article 28) and the principles of proper care for all travelers and the prevention of unnecessary delays to ships and to persons and property on board, while recognizing the need to prevent the introduction or spread of disease.

IHR States Parties have committed to providing a public health response to the international spread of disease "in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade". Further, IMO's Convention on the Facilitation of Maritime Traffic (commonly known as the "FAL Convention") states that non-Parties to the IHR shall endeavor to apply the IHR to international shipping.

Accordingly, measures interfering with international maritime traffic are subject to provisions of the IHR (2005), including the specific requirements set out in Article 43. Further, it is essential that States Parties implement the IHR with full respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of everyone, as stated in Article 3(1). The principles of avoiding unnecessary restrictions or delay on port entry to ships, persons and property on board are also embodied in Articles I and V and section 6 of the annex of the FAL Convention. IHR and IMO regulations must be applied in a consistent manner to secure their common objectives.

In particular, flag State Authorities, port State authorities and control regimes, companies and ship masters should cooperate, in the current context of the outbreak, to ensure that where appropriate, passengers can be embarked and disembarked, cargo operations can occur, ships can enter and depart shipyards for repair and survey, stores and supplies can be loaded, and crews can be exchanged.

The World Health Organization and the International Maritime Organization stand ready to assist and support countries and the maritime industry in responding to the challenges to shipping posed by the current outbreak of novel coronavirus.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
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World Health Organization



Kitack Lim  
Secretary-General  
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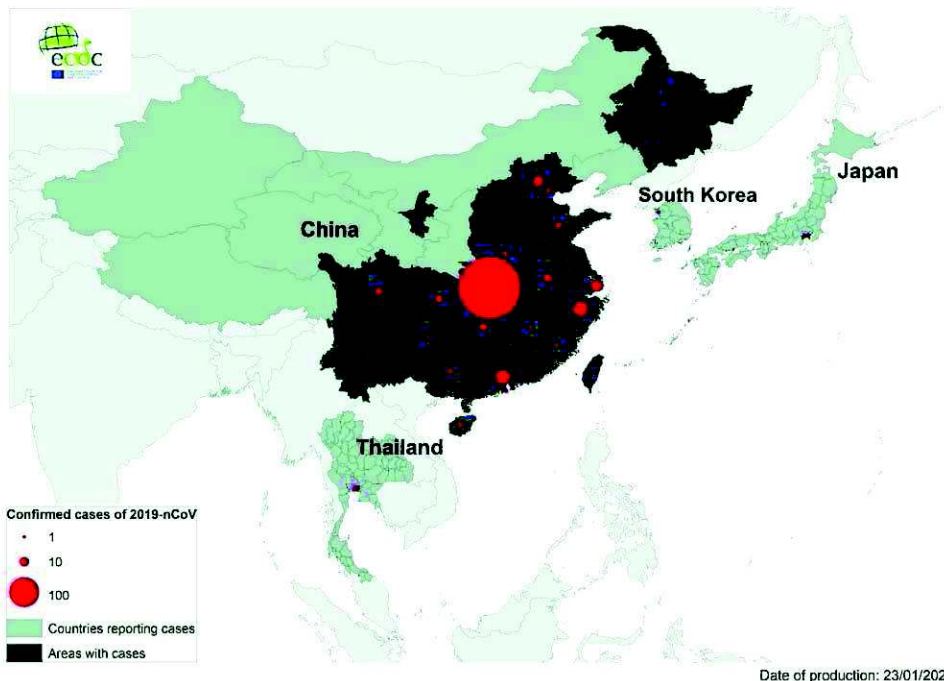


## Reducing the Risk of Infection from 2019 new Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Information to shipping companies (26.1.2020)

A new type of Coronavirus was detected since December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. All cases in Wuhan were connected to the "Huanan Seafood Market". The source of infection is unclear. Human-to-human transmission is possible.

### Signs and symptoms of 2019- nCoV sickness

- **Fever**
- **Acute respiratory symptoms (cough, breathing problems, pneumonia)**
- **Average time from infection to disease: 7 days**
- **Infection from humans- to-humans may occur during incubation period (before persons shows signs of sickness)**



Cases have been exported from Wuhan to other Chinese provinces and to Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Macau, Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Vietnam, USA, France and Australia. Further global spread to other countries is possible.

The Chinese authorities have installed TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS in the affected areas in China. Health measures, such as fever measurements are installed at Chinese airports, bus and train stations and at ports.

Currently WHO does not recommend travel restrictions. Follow up what local authorities recommend and stay up to date on the latest advice from WHO.

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## How to protect yourself from getting infected with 2019-nCoV



- Frequently clean hands by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water;
- When coughing and sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue – throw tissue away immediately and wash hands;
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough;
- If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider;
- When visiting live markets in areas currently experiencing cases of novel coronavirus, avoid direct unprotected contact with live animals and surfaces in contact with animals;
- The consumption of raw or undercooked animal products should be avoided. Raw meat, milk or animal organs should be handled with care, to avoid cross-contamination with uncooked foods, as per good food safety practices.

## Specific advice to shipping crew and companies (as of January 26, 2020)

- Do not restrict embarkation /disembarkation of seafarers in non-affected ports
- Do not restrict necessary ship visits by port agents, chaplains, service personnel and others.
- Do not visit Food Markets in China. Avoid provision of fish and poultry in China.
- Do not consume raw eggs, milk, meat.
- For galley: Observe strict food hygiene to avoid cross contamination
- Store facial protection for all crew (5 pieces /per person)
- Provide influenza vaccination, alcohol based hand rub and facial protection to ship inspector and other company employees who travel to China.
- If a person on board falls sick AND has been travelling to affected areas 2-12 days before embarkation, the person must stay in his cabin. Consult a Medical Doctor in the next port.
- If a sick person is on board of the ship, fill the Maritime declaration of health and notify port authority
- Further information: [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

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