



Republic of Kenya

Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure Housing,  
Urban Development & Public Works

# SHIP'S CREW CHANGE PROTOCOLS AT THE PORT OF MOMBASA 2021



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CABINET SECRETARY

As the Government continues to steady the course in the fight against the pandemic, revival of the country's participation in international shipping and inland water transport is required to be a strategic one. We have an international obligation as well as an internal responsibility to all Kenyans, to keep the ships moving, Ports open and cross- border trade flowing, while ensuring that border agencies can safely undertake all necessary controls. Facilitating trade and the transport of goods has become more important than ever, to avoid logistics obstacles and avert lingering food shortage.

The procedures outlined below are intended to accord the possibility for seafarers to embark and disembark from ships while mitigating the possible spread of the COVID-19 to the seafarer or to the general public. Government of Kenya reserves the right to review the guidelines at any time, in consultations with relevant stakeholders. The local enforcement authorities will be part of the implementation of this protocol and the Government will not hesitate to take legal action on any ship agent or crew member contravening the local public health laws and the protocols laid down by these guidelines. With stakeholders cooperation will be able to effectively conduct crew changes for both local and international seafarers.

I sincerely appreciate the co-operation we have received from all stakeholders and Government Agencies under the leadership of the Principal Secretary, State Department of Shipping & Maritime.



## ACRONYM

## DEFINITION

### COVID-19

Infectious disease caused by coronavirus

### CREW

A person employed or engaged in any capacity on the business of a vessel

### HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

Has the meaning assigned to it under the Health Act, 2017

### PASSENGER

Any person on board a vessel except a person employed or engaged in any capacity on the business of a vessel

### VESSEL

Any ship, boat, ferry, sailing vessel, or other description of vessel used in navigation

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been developed following calls from the local shipping community as well as the International Maritime Organization to Governments, Maritime Administrations and other Authorities to allow for the exchange of crew in Port following the stoppage in March 2020 as part of measures to prevent the importation of COVID-19 through the seafarers calling the Port of Mombasa, or vice versa.

The Government of Kenya, in close cooperation with the International Maritime Organization, World Health Organization, Development partners and the local shipping sector has developed the following guidelines to allow for the exchange of ships' crew in the Port of Mombasa following the freeze on the same in March 2020 as part of the COVID-19 mitigation strategies developed nationwide.

These Guidelines take cognisance of the humanitarian crisis that seafarers are currently facing, particularly those who have completed their contract period while serving on board seagoing merchant ships in accordance with their employment contracts, those with other emergencies or even those who can no longer work on board.

The Guidelines focus on all stages of the crew change administration and are aligned with the IMO 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.



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of these Guidelines are:

- i. To ensure a co-ordinated embarkation and disembarkation process for seafarers
- ii. To set up measures and procedures to facilitate safe crew change during the pandemic; and
- iii. To establish the safe COVID-19 transmission prevention measures to be taken by those interacting with the seafarer during the crew change.

## 3.0 CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ALLOWING CREW CHANGE

Crew change at the Port of Mombasa will be allowed for the following categories of seafarers:

- i. Seafarers who have completed their employment contracts in accordance with the seafarer employment agreement
- ii. Seafarers who are no longer medically fit to work on board ship
- iii. Seafarers wishing to sign off on compassionate grounds; and
- iv. Seafarers whose sign off does not affect the safe manning of the ship.

## 4.0

# GENERAL PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR CREW CHANGE

In order to obtain approval for crew change at the Port of Mombasa, the following general procedures must be observed:

- i. Application for approval in the attached form is lodged at Kenya Maritime Authority with supporting documentation
- ii. Approval given for sign on/sign off
- iii. Crew can sign on/sign off
- iv. Authorities notified of successful sign on/sign off.

### 4.1 Procedure for Sign -on

- i. The identified crew to sign-on must have been in self-quarantine in their home country at least 14 days before scheduled sign on date
- ii. Crew must submit COVID-19 negative test certificate issued at least 72 hours before the scheduled departure date
- iii. The receiving ship must be in Kenya prior to arrival of the crew
- iv. Approval must be obtained before crew commences journey to Kenya
- v. At the airport, crew temperature must be taken and confirmed at below 37.5 degrees (if above 37.5 degrees, measures must be taken in accordance with Port Health protocols)
- vi. After Immigration clearance, crew to be met by the Ships Agent and directed to the pre-arranged private transport vehicle
- vii. Crew arrives on-board ship
- viii. Agent notifies Authorities of the arrival on-board of the crew by email.



## 4.2 Procedure for Sign-off

- i. The identified crew to have a confirmed flight out of the country within 48 hours of the ships' arrival/departure
- ii. All documents required to be provided, including temperature history, seafarer employment agreement or proof of reason for sign off
- iii. Crew to be cleared by the Port Health and Immigration Authorities, and approval letter provided
- iv. Crew boards the designated transport vehicle
- v. Crew arrives at airport, clears with Immigration
- vi. Agent notifies Authorities by email of the safe boarding of the crew.

## 5.0 MITIGATION FACTORS DURING THE CREW CHANGE

The following mitigation measures have been put in place to prevent the possible spread of the virus either to the general population or to the seafarers onboard.

To minimize the risk of importation and spread COVID-19 in Kenya, it is a requirement that the Crew is transferred directly between the ship and the point of arrival/departure.

- a. Where it is not possible to effect direct transfer to the airport, the seafarer will be accommodated at an approved holding facility. However, the seafarer can stay at the designated holding facility for a maximum of 48 hours
- b. Ships Agent meeting the sign-on crew at the airport shall provide a fresh face mask and hand sanitizer;
- c. Private transport vehicle shall provide sanitizing facility to the sign on /sign off crew; and
- d. Mandatory Temperature screening will be undertaken on crew upon disembarkation from the plane.



## 6.0 DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

The following documents will be required and must be submitted to Port Health in order to obtain approval for sign on/sign off:

### 6.1 Sign-on

- i) Crew temperature record for the last 7 days
- ii) Crew declaration on self-quarantine before departure
- iii) Ships Agent declaration on crew fitness to travel; and
- iv) Application for approval of crew sign on shall be on Company letterhead
- v) COVID-19 negative test certificate must be provided.

### 6.2 Sign-off

- i) Application for crew sign off to be made on Company letterhead
- ii) Confirmed outbound air ticket to be provided
- iii) Crew temperature record for the last 7 days to be provided
- iv) Master/Agent Declaration on crew fitness to travel to be provided
- v) Evidence of reason for sign off (e.g. Seafarer Employment Agreement,) as enumerated in 3.0
- vi) Copies of crew passport
- vii) Declaration that crew did not go ashore in the last 14 days.
- viii) Ship's Declaration of Maritime Health.



### 6.3 Crew Change Transport Providers

Ships Agents are advised to use only transport providers vetted and approved by the Ministry of Health for the transfer of crew from the ship to the airport, from airport to ship, from ship to holding facility or from holding facility to the airports.

The transport providers must adhere to the guidelines provided on safe transport of crew including the number of crew to be carried, sanitization, provision of masks and other personal protective equipment.

The following measures must be taken by the transport provider:

- I. Wear a mask at all times
- ii. Observe 1.5m social distancing requirement
- iii. Sanitize and disinfect seats/interior prior to receiving the next crew onboard
- iv. Ensure all the crew sanitize their hands once in vehicle/launch; and
- v. Sanitize and disinfect seats/interior after each crew drop off.

## 7.0 HOLDING FACILITIES AWAITING DEPARTURE/TRANSFER ONBOARD

- i. Agents must only use the holding facilities (hotels) approved by the Ministry of Health in consultation with the Kenya Ships Agents Association
- ii. The facilities have been assessed and advised on protocols to be observed in mitigating the spread of COVID-19
- iii. The crew using the approved facilities must adhere to the guidelines and protocols in place during their stay at the facilities.





## Emergency Contacts:

### **THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, KENYA MARITIME AUTHORITY**


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