

News 24 Jan, 2020

China - Coronavirus Outbreak

With the corona virus outbreak in China and other countries developing rapidly, Members are advised to be suitable prepared.

Members are advised that information on the coronavirus outbreak, principally affecting China at this time, can be found on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Coronavirus webpage, including the latest situation reports.

The WHO advise that common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, the infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and death. At the time of publication, there are over 800 cases of the virus reported globally, which has killed 26 people in China, although apparently most of these were elderly and / or with pre-existing medical conditions.

In order to contain the virus, travel restrictions in China are being expanded on a daily basis.

Recommended precautions to try and prevent the spread of the disease include:

- Regular hand washing with warm water and soap. In addition, regularly sanitize hands if possible.
 - Keep bathrooms and sinks clean, washing same at least once a day.
 - Covering the mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue / hanky or your sleeve, rather than your hand.
 - If available, wear a medical mask fitted tightly to the face in an area with a known outbreak. The mask should not be touched or handled during use, and if the mask gets wet or dirty it should be changed.
 - Thoroughly cooking meat and eggs prior to consumption.
 - Avoid animals (either alive or dead), animal markets, and animal products e.g. raw meat.
 - Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as cold or flu, who are coughing and sneezing. Anyone showing such symptoms should not be permitted to board the vessel.
 - Seek prompt medical attention if you have symptoms of fever and respiratory illness.
 - Consider restricting shore leave for crew in ports where cases have been reported.
 - Consider deferring crew changes in ports where the virus is active, to a later port / country of call.
 - Where crewmembers are to join a vessel in a Chinese port, these precautionary measures should be brought to their attention prior to travelling.
 - The Master should convene a meeting with all crew, prior to arrival at the first port of call in China, to discuss the measures necessary to mitigate the risk of contracting the virus. Copies of these recommended precautionary measures should be posted on notice boards throughout the accommodation for easy reference.
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- Members requiring further guidance or assistance should contact the Loss Prevention department.