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Guidance around Covid-19 issued by several U.S. bodies

In light of the Coronavirus pandemic, guidance has issued by several US bodies which potentially impact both our US-based Members and those trading there.

The US Coast Guard (USCG) has issued its latest Marine Safety Bulletin, (MSIB 09-20), entitled *Vessel Inspection, Exams and Documentation*.

The bulletin outlines the remote inspection techniques employed to verify compliance and if needed, to defer the physical inspection of vessels calling at US ports.

Prior to boarding a vessel or immediately prior to conducting a pre-exam/inspection meeting, Marine Inspectors, Port State Control Officers (PSCOs), and Commercial Fishing Vessel Examiners (CFVEs) will first verify with the vessel that there are no ill persons onboard.

A copy of the US Department of Homeland Security *Attestation of Hazardous Condition Letter* and (MSIB 06-20) *Vessel Reporting Requirements for Illness or Death* which may be used for verification can be accessed [here](#) *Attestation Letter*.

A copy of MSIB 09-20 can be read [here](#) *Marine Safety Information Bulletin*.

Acting on behalf of the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has developed in cooperation with other federal agencies, State and local governments and the private sector, an *Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce Advisory List*.

While the list is not mandatory, instead leaving each individual jurisdiction to decide which of their workforce is considered essential for the continued safe operation of its ports, its overall aim is to ensure continuity of services throughout the US. Although not an exhaustive list, the following personnel are considered essential for sustaining the continuous flow of maritime commerce:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchant mariners; • Federal and state pilots; • Stevedores, longshoremen, and line handlers; • Representatives of seafarers' welfare and labour organizations; • Marine consultants, naval architects, marine exchanges, surveyors and shipyard workers; • Classification Society and Recognized Organization surveyors and auditors; • Vessel owners, operators, shipping agents and marine dispatchers; • Technical representatives and contractors; • Bridge operators and bridge repair personnel; • Lock and dam operators and workers; • Lighthouse servicing and repair personnel; • Commercial barge fleet facility personnel; | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment, cargo, crane and dredging operators; • Truck drivers, launch/tug/towing operators and other intermodal transportation workers; • Vendors and ship chandlers providing ship services, husbandry and provisions; • Federal & State Agency personnel (e.g., Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, Army Corps of Engineers, local health & safety organization) <p>Full details of the CISA advisory can be found here CISA Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce.</p> <p>Additional guidance can also be found in the USCGs safety bulletin, (MISB 11-20) entitled <i>Maintaining Maritime Commerce and Identification of Essential Maritime Critical Infrastructure Workers</i>, a copy of which can be found here Identification of Essential Maritime Critical Infrastructure Workers.</p> <p>Recognized Organizations (ROs) and Third Party Organizations (TPOs) that are conducting surveys and audits may request extensions on a case-by-case basis.</p> |
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To help protect the country's essential maritime workforce during the present COVID-19 crisis, the USCG has issued MISB 10-20 entitled *COVID-19 – Guidance for Maritime Operators on Compliance with Federal Drug Testing Requirements*. In brief, the current USCG policy on drug testing will remain in effect. A copy can be found [here](#) Drug Testing Requirements .

On 24th March 2020 The American Waterways Operators (AWO) launched its new dedicated COVID-19 web-page. The web-page contains information and resources to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and provide guidance to the US tugboat, towboat and barge during these challenging times.

AWO says: "The COVID-19 web-page includes links to official government public health guidance, best practices for safeguarding vessel operators against the virus, and resources to help maritime transportation companies sustain continued business operations. The resources also include template letters that companies can use to identify their employees as "Essential Critical Infrastructure" personnel consistent with recent Department of Homeland Security guidance, to expedite their work travel as shelter-in-place orders continue to proliferate nationwide".

If Members require any further information on these new provisions they should contact the Loss Prevention Department. Comprehensive general guidance on the effects of Covid-19 – including FAQs – can also be found on the Club's dedicated Coronavirus webpage.