



# COVID-19 AND MARITIME LABOUR ISSUES: IMPACT AND RESPONSES

WEBINAR

5 June 2020

11:00 to 12:30 CET





# COVID-19 AND MARITIME LABOUR ISSUES: IMPACT AND RESPONSES

5 JUNE 2020



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International Training Centre



Brandt WAGNER

Head of the Transport and Maritime Unit  
Sectoral Policies Department

ILO

# Speakers

- **Corinne Vargha**, Director, International Labour Standards Department, ILO
- **Beatriz Vacotto**, Head of the Maritime Unit, International Labour Standards Department, ILO
- **Julie Carlton**, Chairperson, Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006
- **Sarah Cerche**, Spokesperson, Shipowner Group at ILO
- **Mark Dickinson**, Spokesperson, Seafarer Group at the ILO
- **Frederick Kenney**, Director, Legal Affairs and External Relations Division, IMO
- **Ninglan Wang**, Unit Head a.i., Border Health Risk Dissemination Unit, Health Emergencies Programme, WHO
- **Dr. Suzanne Stannard**, International Maritime Health Association

# Webinar webpage

[https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/events/WCMS\\_746660/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/events/WCMS_746660/lang--en/index.htm)

The screenshot shows the ILO website interface. At the top, the ILO logo and tagline 'Advancing social justice, promoting decent work' are visible. Below this is a navigation menu with categories like 'Countries', 'Topics', and 'Sectors'. A search bar is also present. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'ILO home > Labour standards > Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 > Events > WEBINAR - COVID-19 and Maritime Labour Issues: Impact and Responses ...'. The title of the webinar is prominently displayed. A sub-header reads 'Covid-19 and Maritime Labour Issues'. The main text states: 'Co-organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Training Centre of the ILO, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)'. A 'Tools' section includes options for font size adjustment, printing, and social media sharing. A 'Key resources' section lists two PDF documents: 'Useful links > [pdf 154KB] >' and 'COVID-19 and maritime shipping & fishing > [pdf 227KB] >'. A red arrow points to the 'Key resources' section.

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**Covid-19 and Maritime Labour Issues**

## WEBINAR - COVID-19 and Maritime Labour Issues: Impact and Responses

Co-organized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Training Centre of the ILO, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)

**Type:** Event  
**When:** 5 June 2020  
**Where:** Webinar in English - 11:00 to 12:30 CET

**COVID-19 AND MARITIME LABOUR ISSUES: IMPACT AND RESPONSES**  
3 JUNE 2020

5 June 2020 from 11:00 to 12:30 CET - [Click here](#) > to REGISTER

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global crisis that has impacted all aspects of life and adversely affected the world of work. In the maritime sector, it has severely disrupted shipping operations and affected the work of nearly 2 million seafarers worldwide.

From the beginning of COVID-19 crisis, the International Chamber of Shipping <sup>en</sup>, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) > and numerous government's representatives joined forces with the IMO <sup>en</sup>, the WHO > and the ILO to identify and promote the most appropriate responses to protect seafarers and allow the shipping industry to continue playing its crucial role. While several

**Tools**

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**Key resources**

Useful links > [pdf 154KB] >  
COVID-19 and maritime shipping & fishing > [pdf 227KB] >  
Information note on maritime

# Programme

- **Introductory remarks**
- **Panel:** Current situation and main challenges affecting the living and working conditions of seafarers, in particular in light of the provisions of the ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006)
- **Discussion:** Questions and answers
- **Concluding remarks and closing**



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## Introductory remarks

Corinne VARGHA

Director

International Labour Standards Department

ILO

## Panel

- **Covid-19 and seafarers:** current situation and main challenges affecting the living and working conditions of seafarers, in particular in light of the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006)



# COVID-19 AND MARITIME LABOUR ISSUES: IMPACT AND RESPONSES

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Beatriz VACOTTO

Head of the Maritime Unit

International Labour Standards Department

ILO

# Seafarers' rights during the COVID-19 pandemic: an overview

- Seafarers' safety and health
- Crew change and repatriation: call to consider seafarers as "key workers"
- Maximum period of service on board
- Paid sick leave in case of infection or quarantine
- Shore leave and welfare facilities



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## The UK experience

Julie CARLTON

Chairperson

Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006

# Background

- UK ratified MLC in August 2013
- Adoption of Red Ensign Group policy on promoting seafarer wellbeing – February 2020
- 23 March: Shipping Minister wrote to IMO, ILO and WHO
- UK entered “lockdown” 24 March 2020

# IMO Circular letter 4236: UK commitments

- Fully committed to the welfare of seafarers of all nationalities
- Continue to recognized international obligations (shore leave, transit and transfer of seafarers)
- Ports remain open
- Endeavour to provide medical care
- Where possible, access to communication provided for contact with homes

# Responsibilities

- Crew on UK flagged ships any where in the world
- Crew on ships of any flag in UK waters
- Non-UK ships calling in UK ports

# MLC Issues

- Repatriation
  - to UK
  - from UK
  - from UK ships anywhere to third countries
- Extension of SEAs
- Expiring seafarer certificates (CoCs, medical)
- H&S on board

# Collaboration

- Cross-government meetings
  - Department for Transport
  - Foreign and Commonwealth Office
  - Public health authorities on infection control
  - Ports and port health authorities
- Regular meetings with industry and unions
- Other maritime administrations



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## Observations from a Shipowner Perspective

Sarah CERCHE

Spokesperson

Shipowner Group at the ILO

# Initial reaction to the corona virus outbreak

- Late 2019: the spread of COVID 19 has impacted on international shipping
- Early 2020: significant restrictions on travel / border closures
- Port States: seafarers not being permitted access to medical care ashore
- Global: reduction in commercial flights + entry restrictions = no crew changes
- Industry: attention to the plight of seafarers,  
some continue to sail well in excess of their contract end date

# Crew changes and repatriation

- Shipowners (and seafarers) increasingly frustrated. Barriers include:
  - Border restrictions
  - Unclear responsibilities within states
  - Quarantine requirement (entry/departure/resident)
  - Lack of commercial flights
  - Consular closure – visa and passports
  - Changing goal posts
  - Lack of consistency in recognition of seafarers as “key workers”
  - Lack of consistent protocol for entry into countries (testing/quarantine/domestic transfers)

Some successes – soon to be released report

# What the MLC requires - Reg. 2.5

## Repatriation and obligations on parties

### When?

- 1 End of SEA
- 2 SEA terminated
- 3 Seafarers can no longer carry out duties

### What?

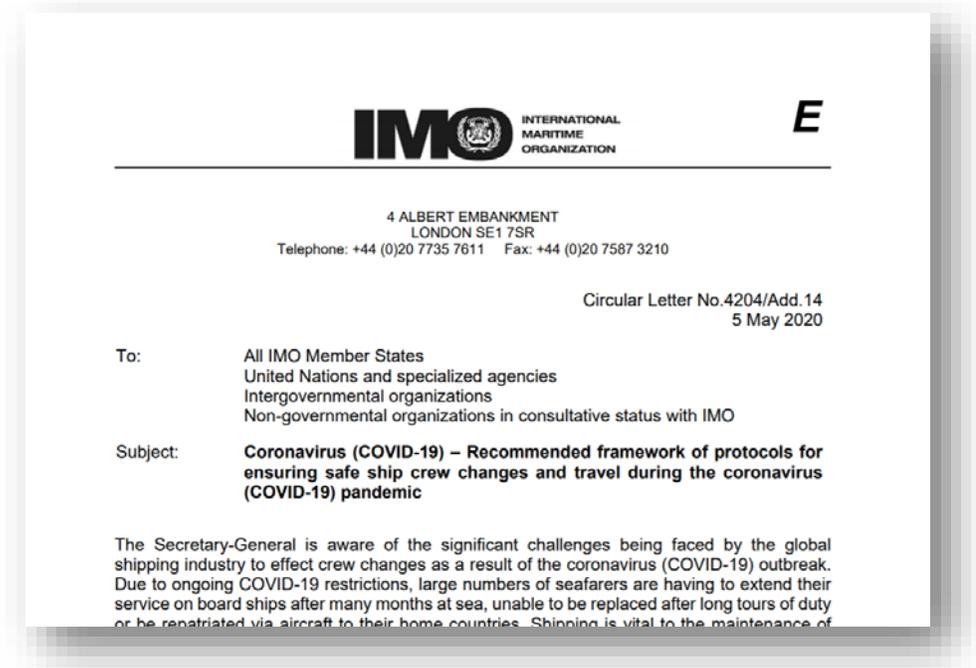
Members to require laws and regulation to set out entitlements of repatriation to be afforded to seafarers by shipowners

### Who?

Each Member shall facilitate the repatriation of seafarers serving on ships which call at its ports or pass through its territorial or internal waters, as well as a replacement on board

# Crew change protocols

- Shipowners:
  - keen to work with governments
  - understand what assurances they need to facilitate crew changes
- ICS & other stakeholders:
  - crew change protocols
  - circulated by the IMO



# What the MLC requires - Reg. 4.1

## Medical care and safety on board

**“Each Member shall ensure that seafarers on board ships in its territory who are in need of immediate medical care are given access to the Members medical facilities on shore.”**

- Difficulty getting access to medical care ashore
- Ships are not being allowed along side
- Provision of medical care extremely difficult
- Increasing pressure of those on board – welfare and safety a significant concern
- Best practice infection control measures: Industry working with WHO and others

# Industry Guidance / Tripartite Cooperation

 International Chamber of Shipping  
Shaping the Future of Shipping

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

### Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers



Version 2.1 – 29 May 2020

 International Labour Organization

 International Maritime Organization

Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended

▶ **Statement of the Officers of the STC<sup>1</sup> on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

The global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is creating dire circumstances for the shipping industry and seafarers. Daily life in many countries has been heavily restricted, yet societies still need their supplies of food, medicine and everyday goods, and factories require materials and logistics to ship their products. This underlines the need for robust international supply chains and emphasizes the critical importance of maritime trade to the global economy, which relies on shipping for 90 per cent of all goods.

The Officers of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, representing Seafarers, Shipowners and Governments, **urge the International Labour Office to raise awareness among governments, including labour supplying States and port and flag State authorities**, that the goods on which we all rely in our everyday lives are transported by seafarers and that these **seafarers are just as worthy as everyone else and should be treated with dignity and respect to ensure that they can continue to provide their vital services to the world.**

In these unprecedented circumstances, it is imperative that Member States ensure that the flow of essential goods, energy, food, medicines and many other products is not disrupted by measures that impede the safe and efficient movement of ships and the seafarers who operate them. In this respect, the Officers of the STC would like to raise the following important points that need to be urgently addressed by Member States:

▶ Seafarers should be officially recognized as **key workers**, and be granted exemptions from any travel restrictions and special considerations to enable them to join and leave

<sup>1</sup> The Special Tripartite Committee (STC) is the tripartite body established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, to keep the working of the Convention under continuous review. The Officers of the STC have been appointed by the ILO Governing Body for a period of three years. They are currently: Ms Julie Carlton from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Chairperson), Mr Martin Marini from Singapore (Government Vice-Chairperson), Mr David Heindel from the United States of America (Seafarer Vice-Chairperson) and Mr Max Johns from Germany (Shipowner Vice-Chairperson). In the framework of this unprecedented crisis, the ILO reached out to them to build the most appropriate

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**A Joint Statement on designation of seafarers, marine personnel, fishing vessel personnel, offshore energy sector personnel, aviation personnel, air cargo supply chain personnel, and service provider personnel at airports and ports as key workers, and on facilitation of crew changes in ports and airports in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**  
22 May 2020

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has placed the entire world in an unprecedented situation. To slow the spread of the disease and mitigate its impacts, travel is being curtailed and borders are being closed. Transport hubs are being affected. Some ports and airports are being closed and ships and aircraft denied entry.

More than 80% of global trade by volume is moved by maritime transport, which is the lifeblood of the global economy, and is dependent on the world's 2 million seafarers who operate the world's merchant ships. It is estimated that from the middle of June 2020 around 150,000 seafarers a month will require international flights in order to be changed over from the ships that they operate, about half travelling by aircraft for repatriation, the other half joining ships.

Commercial fishing provides a major source of the world's food, and the crews of fishing vessels must also be periodically changed to avoid fatigue.

Air transport carried about 4.5 billion passengers in 2019, according to preliminary ICAO figures while airfreight represents 35% of the value of goods shipped in all modes combined. The total number of licensed aviation professionals, which include pilots, air traffic controllers and licensed maintenance technicians, was 887,000 in 2019, according to ICAO personnel statistics and forecasts.

Material and relevant information produced during the COVID-19 pandemic so far by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) is set out in the annex. In particular, this includes, inter alia:

- IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.14 of 5 May 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic;
- IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.13 of 5 May 2020, Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Recommendations for Governments and relevant national authorities on facilitating the movement of offshore energy sector personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ICAO State letter EC 6/3 – 20/46 of 18 March 2020, Adherence to relevant ICAO Annex 9 – Facilitation Standards; and Actions taken by Member States to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) by air transport and to protect the health of air travellers and the aviation personnel;
- ICAO State letter EC 6/3 – 20/55 of 15 April 2020, Speedy authorization of repatriation flights; and
- ICAO Electronic Bulletin 2020/30 of 11 May 2020, Implementing a public health corridor to protect flight crew during the COVID-19 pandemic (cargo operations).



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Mark DICKINSON  
Spokesperson  
Seafarer Group at the ILO



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Frederick KENNEY

Director

Legal Affairs and External Relations Division

IMO

# IMO EFFORTS TO ADDRESS LABOUR ISSUES

- GUIDANCE

- CL 4204 Series
  - Available on IMO Website
  - Add.6 – Recommendations for Governments
  - Add.14 - Protocols for Crew Changes
  - Add.16 – Guidelines for the Ship/Shore Interface
  - Add.18 - Joint IMO/ILO/ICAO Statement

- COMMUNICATIONS

- IMO Website: [WWW.IMO.ORG](http://WWW.IMO.ORG) – click in the Red COVID-19 Banner
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn)

- SEAFARERS CRISIS ACTION TEAM

- Terms of Reference
- Activities



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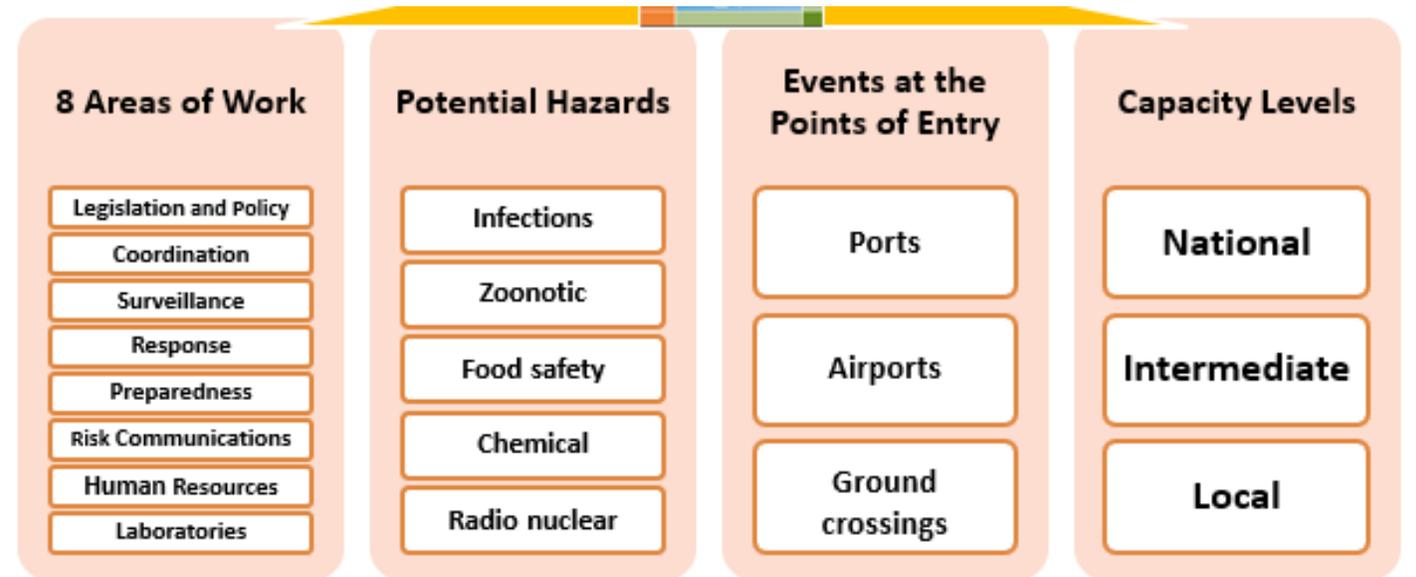
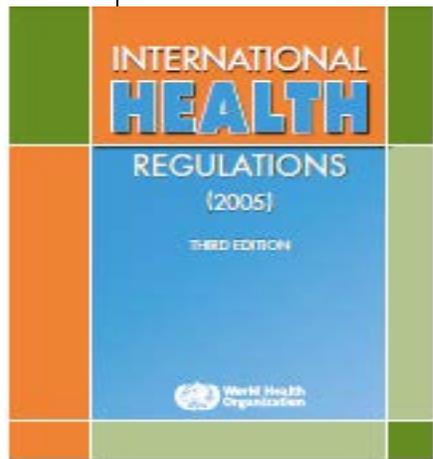
Ninglan WANG

Unit Head a.i., Border Health Risk Dissemination  
Unit, Health Emergencies Programme,  
WHO

# International Health Regulations (2005)

*"to prevent, protect against, control and respond to an international spread of disease, while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade (Art. 2)"*

- ❖ From three diseases to all public health hazards, irrespective of origin or source
- ❖ From preset measures to adapted response
- ❖ From control of borders to containment at source



- ✓ their surveillance, reporting, notification, verification, response and collaboration activities;
- ✓ their activities concerning designated airports, ports and ground crossings. Including inspections of conveyances

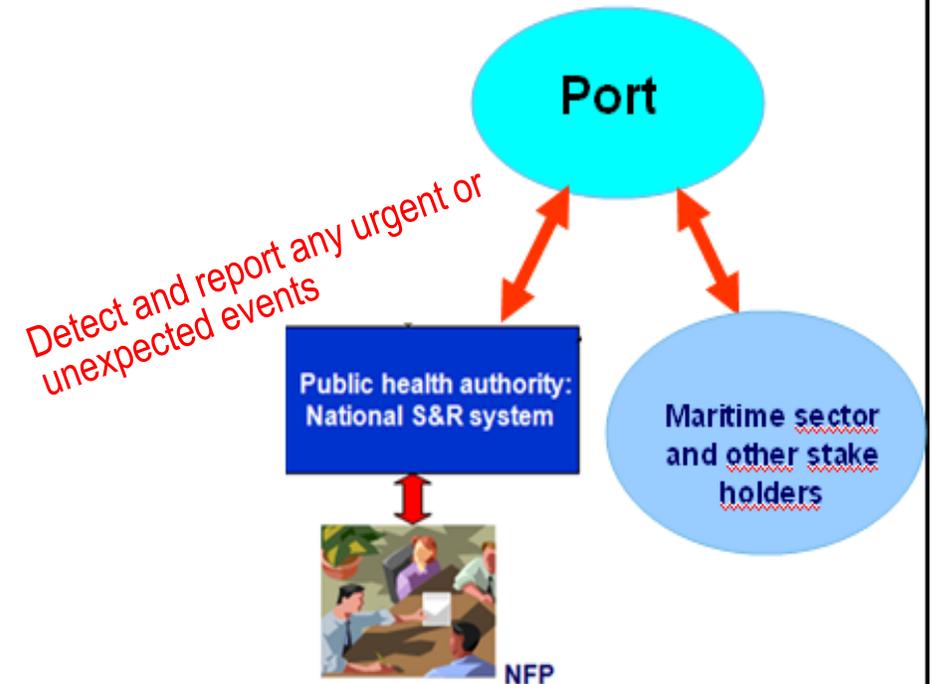
# Example: Communications concerning ill passengers and other health risks detected onboard

## Art 28. 2

Subject to Article 43 or as provided in applicable international agreements, ships or shall not be refused free pratique by States Parties for public health reasons; in particular they shall not be prevented from embarking or disembarking, discharging or loading cargo or stores, or taking on fuel, water, food and supplies. States Parties may subject the granting of free pratique to inspection and, if a source of infection or contamination is found on board, the carrying out of necessary disinfection, decontamination, disinsection or deratting, or other measures necessary to prevent the spread of the infection or contamination.

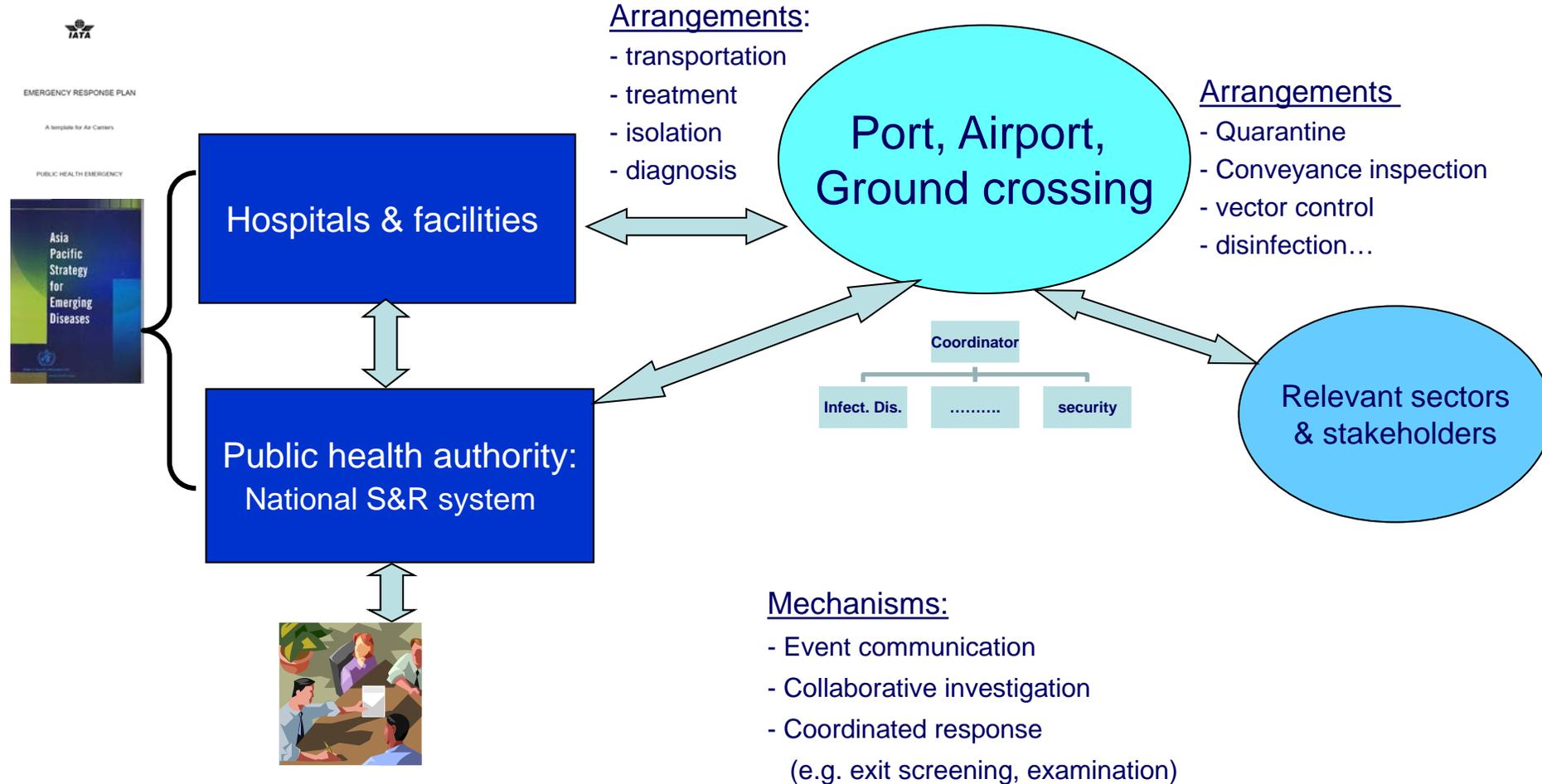
## Art 28 .4

Officers in command of ships and pilots, or their agents, shall make known to the port or airport control, as early as possible before arrival at the port or airport of destination, any cases of illness indicative of disease of an infectious nature or evidence of a public health risk on board as soon as such illnesses or public health risks are made known to the officer or pilot.

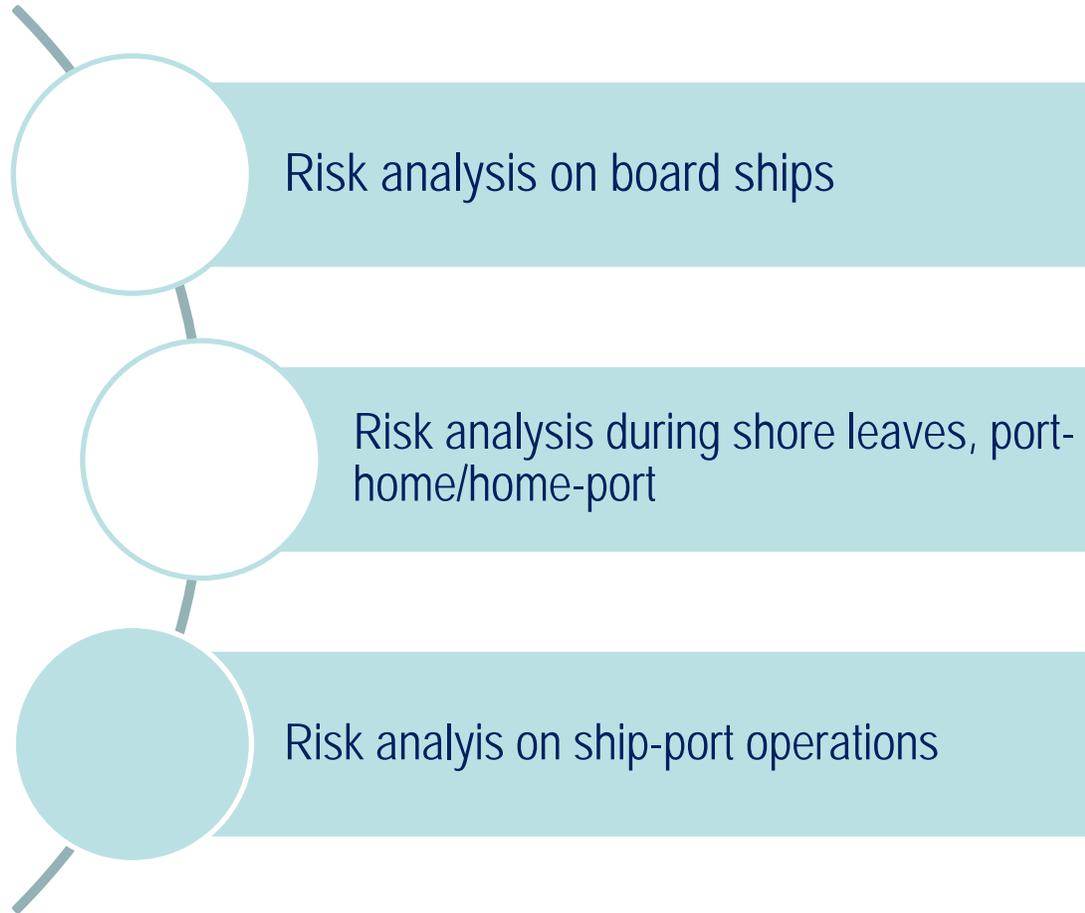


# Managing public health events at POE

Arrangement, communication & coordination



NFP



- Physical distancing COVID-19
- Hand hygiene
- Respiratory etiquette
- Symptom screening
- Temperature screening
- Cleaning/disinfection
- Masks/Face coverings
- Testing ( not enough evidence)
- Contact tracing
- Self-monitoring or quarantine
- Access to medical facilities on shore



<https://extranet.who.int/hslp/training/course/view.php?id=326>

- easy to navigate and read through in about 1 hour
- a few scenarios dispersed throughout the course
- a few questions in the end to assess the learners comprehension



# COVID-19 AND MARITIME LABOUR ISSUES: IMPACT AND RESPONSES

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Dr. Suzanne STANNARD  
International Maritime  
Health Association

# Regulations/Conventions

- International Health Regulations
  - Ships not prevented from entering port due to public health reasons
- Maritime Labour Convention 2006
  - Access to medical facilities ashore
  - Access to occupational health protection and medical care comparable to that ashore
  - Crew covered by adequate measures to protect health

# Health care services



- Vary widely across the world
- Currently working under increased pressure and with restrictions
- Not all services available to locals or seafarers
- Most ports continuing to ensure seafarers have access to medical care
- Are some examples where this is not the case and this cannot be defended

# Primary care and prescriptions

- Increased use of telephone and video consultations
- Access should be possible and facilities should be used whilst the ship is in port
- What is the drug required and is it available in this port?
- Good communication key to facilitate consultation and repeat prescription



# Use of Personal Protective Equipment

- Risk assessment and planning required
- Ensure physical distancing, good respiratory hygiene and hand washing at all times
- Use of masks **in addition** to these measures as per ship or local policy
- Good communication as per requirements is key



# Testing and crew changes

- Quarantine of seafarers pre boarding is ideal
- Local policies and the availability of testing is variable
- PCR tests done in laboratories, still up to 30% false negatives
- Rapid diagnostic tests for virus or antibodies remain largely unvalidated at present
- Result must be interpreted as a small part of the overall risk assessment





Thank you!

CONTACTS

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