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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.22
11 June 2020

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

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Singapore Crew Change Guidebook**

Arranging crew changes is one of the biggest challenges the shipping industry is currently facing. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, large numbers of seafarers had their contracts extended, unable to be relieved by a crew change after long tours of duty. This situation is unsustainable and severely affects both the safety and wellbeing of seafarers and the safe operation of ships. It is estimated that starting in mid-June 2020, 300,000 seafarers a month will require international flights to enable ships' crew changeover - about half will travel home by aircraft for repatriation while the other half will join ships. In addition, 70,000 cruise ship staff are currently waiting for their repatriation.

Singapore has submitted, with a request for circulation to all Member States, the attached *Singapore Crew Change Guidebook* (see also <https://www.ssa.org.sg/images/ssa/pdf/SG-Crew-Change-Guidebook.pdf>). Recognizing the ongoing challenges that the industry is facing to effect crew change in Singapore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) initiated the formation of the Singapore Crew Change Working Group with its tripartite partners: the Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) and the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), and in cooperation with the International Maritime Employers' Council Ltd (IMEC) and the World Shipping Council (WSC). The Working Group developed the attached Guidebook which provides guidance to the shipping community on how to effect crew change in Singapore during these extraordinary times.

In this connection, the Secretary-General would like to recall two previous Circular Letters addressing this subject: No.4204/Add.14 on *Recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic prepared by the maritime industry* and No.4204/Add.18 on *Joint statement IMO-ICAO-ILO 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*.

The Secretary-General supports the initiative of Singapore, and Member States and international organizations are invited to take this initiative as a model to develop similar guidance to address crew change.

ANNEX

**COVID-19 PROTOCOL ON
CREW CHANGE AND REPATRIATION
OF SEAFARERS**

SINGAPORE CREW CHANGE GUIDEBOOK

In collaboration with and supported by:



Part of:

SINGAPORE CREW CHANGE GUIDEBOOK – 1 JUNE 2020

PREFACE

The Singapore Crew Change Workgroup (SGCCWG) was initially formed on 2 April, but began formalised videoconference meeting every Tuesday from 7 April to coordinate efforts in Singapore for Crew Change. The SGCCWG is also connected to the larger global worldwide Crew Change Taskforce led by ICS, providing an exchange of updated information regarding changing developments around respective international government restrictions, on air-travel, health advisories on the pandemic, which impact crew change.

The main SGCCWG consists of the following representations, led by the SSA:

- Industry
International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC), Singapore Shipping Association (SSA), World Shipping Council (WSC)
- Union
Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU), Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS)
- Government
Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA)

The SGCCWG strives to provide periodic updates on developments in Singapore to the larger community of Ship owners, Managers, Agents and Crewing/Manning companies, receiving relevant inputs that are considered and implemented in this draft.

A further development team within the SGCCWG was formed pulling resources from experienced ship managers. The members in this team are:

- Singapore Shipping Association
- Synergy Marine Group
- Western Shipping and IMEC board member rep
- Wilhelmsen Ships Service
- World Shipping Council (Asia Pacific rep)

This draft document focuses on the various stages of crew change administration, and the recommended steps following the ICS issued Framework of Crew Change Protocol and based on the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) issued Port Marine Circular (PMC) 26 of 2020.

***Acknowledgement: This document is prepared by Wilhelmsen Ships Service AS, drawing upon feedback from the main SGCCWG

Crew change process for sign on and sign off in Singapore

- A safe and coordinated planning process, ensuring minimal contact between crew and various staff of hotel, transportation providers and launch hire services
- All aspects of the value chain are considered including self-reporting of health status to detect early symptoms and seek prompt medical attention

Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore

Country of Origin

- Start of sign on
- The crew identified for crew change must serve 14-days SHN* at his/her home country prior to his/her departure flight. (For the period of SHN, the crew should abide by the "Health Advisory for Persons Issued Stay-Home Notice" issued by MOH).
- Covid-19 tested with negative result (48 hours) & obtain a fit-to-travel medical certificate (24 hours) at his/her country of origin prior to his/her departure flight.
- Vessel must be in Singapore port prior to crew arrival in Singapore **

Singapore Airport

- Immigration and customs clearance
- Baggage collection and head to the arrival hall
- Compulsory meet and greet services provided by SATS or Certis Cisco
- Mandatory Temperature screening when crew disembarks from the airplane
- Crew will be led out to the nursing station set up in the airport for further assessment

Transferring from airport to pier to vessel

- Ship Agent to meet crew at arrival hall (Ship Agent be at the arrival hall 30 mins prior to scheduled flight arrival)
- Crew to board designated private transport
- Immigration and customs clearance for signing on crew at both MSP / WCP
- Crew arrives at the designated pier to board launch boat

Vessel

- Sign on completed
- Master to notify relevant Authorities and Ship Agent to confirm once on-signer are safely onboard vessel

Remarks

COVID - 19 Safety measures

- Face mask and hand sanitiser should be made available to crew at all times.
- Ensure all service suppliers adhere to the MOH procedures and requirements in this process.
- All crew should adhere to MOH safety and hygiene measurements at all times.

Notes:

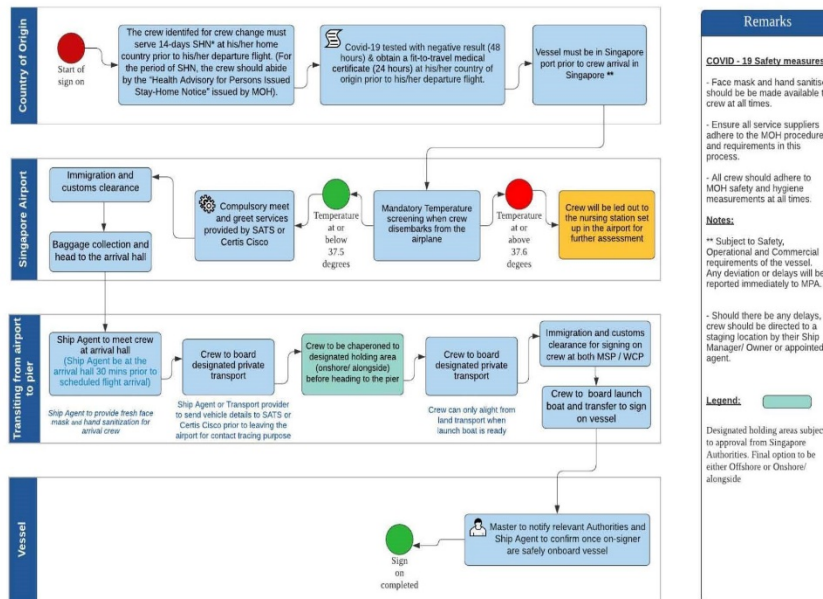
** Subject to Safety, Operational and Commercial requirements of the vessel. Any deviation or delays will be reported immediately to MPA.

- Should there be any delays, crew should be directed to a staging location by their Ship Manager/ Owner or appointed agent.

Figure 1.1

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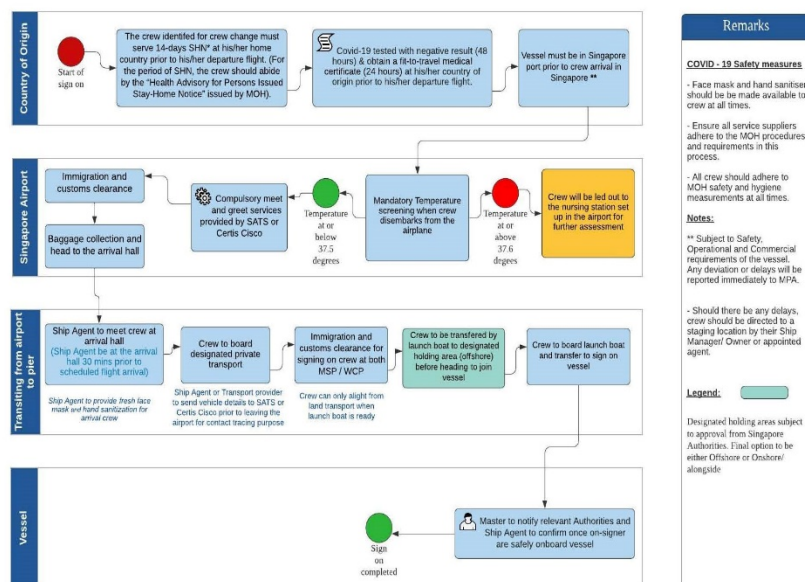
Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility (Onshore/alongside)



SHN – denotes "Stay Home Notice", details is as per laid out in the URL link- <https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice>

Figure 1.2

Process for Sign On Crew - Port of Singapore, using holding facility (Offshore)



SHN – denotes "Stay Home Notice", details is as per laid out in the URL link- <https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice>

Figure 1.3

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Sign on Crew in Port of Singapore – RACI Matrix

S/N	Category	Activity/ Task	MPA/MOT	Ship Manager	Ship Agent	Master	Manning Agency	RACI Matrix
1	Country of Origin	Serving SHN	I	A	I		R	Responsible Owns the activity/task. Person working to achieve the task. Accountable To whom R is accountable. Who must sign off/approve on work before it is effective. No more than one A, but can be zero. The one ultimately answerable for the completion of deliverable or task, and the one who delegates the work to those responsible. <i>NOTE: One role can be both R and A.</i> Consulted Has information and/or capability necessary to complete the work Informed Must be notified of results, but need not be consulted
		COVID -19 Test report and Fit - for - travel documents	I	A	I		R	
2	Singapore Airport	Meet & Greet and Immigration clearance	I	I	A & R			
3	Transit from Airport to Vessel	Transit from Airport to Vessel with approved suppliers	I	I	A & R	I		
4	Arrival at vessel (joining)	Joining vessel (Sign on)	I	I	C	R		

Note: Sign On is confirmed when the following approval is obtained:
(i) Approval from MPA for crew Sign On
(ii) Valid visa issuance by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)
(iii) Approval from National Environment Agency (NEA)

SHN – denotes "Stay Home Notice", details is as per laid out in the URL link- <https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice>

Figure 1.4

To minimise the risk of importation and spread of COVID-19 in Singapore and to the ship, the crew must be transferred directly between the vessel and the point of arrival/departure. Company may wish to take note of the following requirements:

Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
Sign-On Crew A	<p>Crew must serve 14-days SHN*¹ at his/her home country prior to his/her departure flight to Singapore.</p> <p>(For the period of SHN, the crew should abide by the standards equivalent to the "Health Advisory for Persons Issued Stay-Home Notice" issued by MOH).</p> <p>All visa requirements for Singapore must be followed. Countries that require visa to enter Singapore must take into consideration the application period of 10 days processing time that ICA needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crew shall take his/her temperature twice daily and keep a record. Crew shall remain healthy throughout the 14-days SHN period. Crew shall provide a declaration that he/she has complied with the above and provide the temperature records for verification. Company shall, at the point of application, provide a declaration that 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation that the crew has been in quarantine for at least 14 days prior to entering Singapore and has been well throughout that period. Mandatory Temperature screening when crew disembarks from the plane If temperature is above 37.6, it will be led out to the nursing station set up in the airport for further assessment Agent must be present to meet the crew when they arrive. The crew will produce the MPA's approval letter to ICA, the crew will be escorted

¹ * SHN – denotes "Stay Home Notice", details is as per laid out in the URL link- <https://www.gov.sg/article/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-stay-home-notice>

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Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
B	the company shall ensure the crew's compliance, including periodical checks on the crew during the SHN period. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company shall provide details of the SHN such as the location and period of SHN, and how they will ensure compliance. 	and handed over to the agent. Transportation to the ship must be by private (not public) transport in compliance with the safe distancing measures."
	Crew must be Covid-19 tested via PCR method with negative result at his/her country of origin not more than 48 hours prior to his/her departure flight. The crew must also obtain a fit-to-travel medical certificate from doctors registered with the medical authorities at his/her country of origin not more than 24 hours prior to his/her departure flight.	5) Compulsory meet and greet services (Certis/SATS) from Immigration Desk to baggage collection and finally arrival hall - to ensure proper hand-over of each arriving crew to transport company driver
	The vessel shall be in port before the sign on crew arrives in Singapore. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Only in exceptional circumstances and approved by MPA, when the vessel is not yet in port, the crew may be transferred to an approved holding facility before joining the vessel.</i> 	6) Agent to provide fresh face mask and hand sanitisation for arrival crew upon arrival.
D	Master to notify relevant Authority and agent to confirm once signing on crew is/are safely onboard.	7) Transport services to standby 30mins prior flight landing time to receive arriving crew 8) Transportation safety measure: 9) Hand sanitisation process before boarding the vehicle. 10) Reminder will be given that face mask must always be worn in Singapore.

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(B) Process for sign off crew

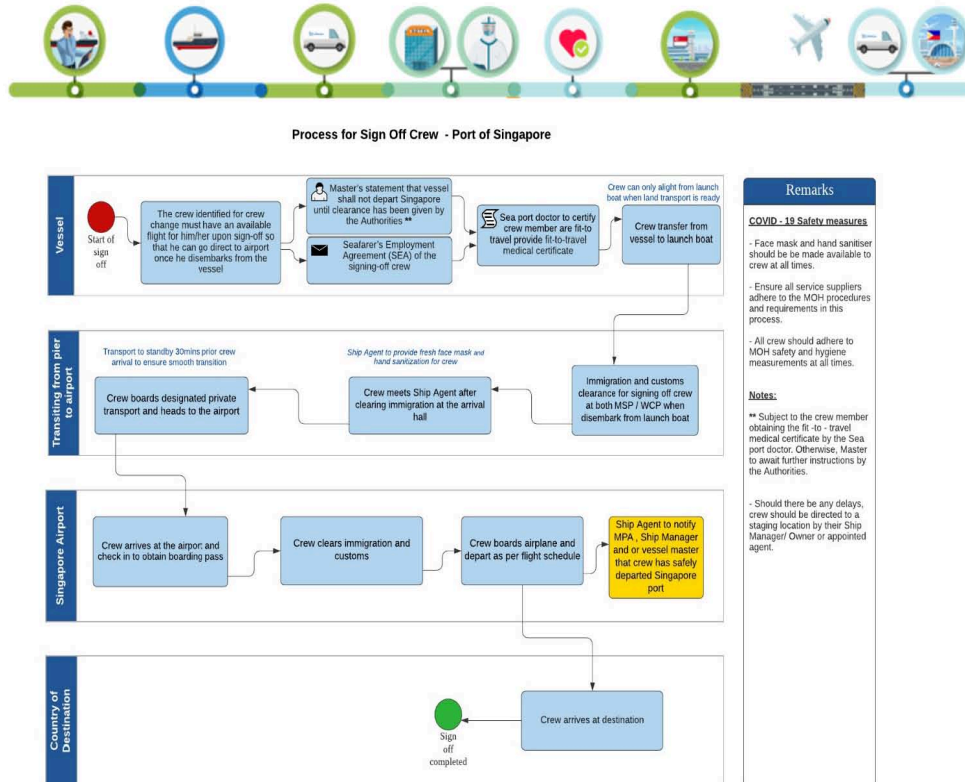


Figure 2.1

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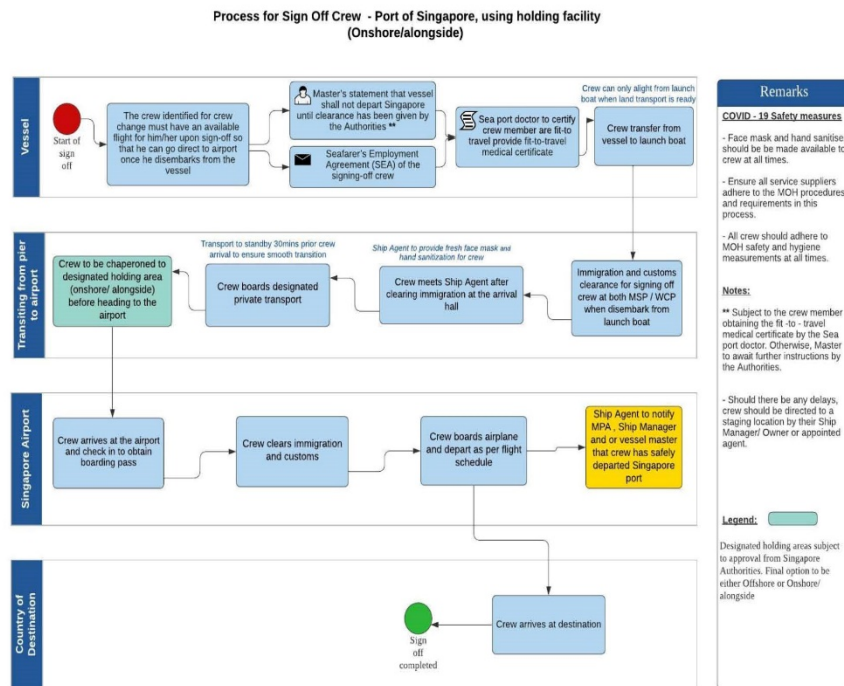


Figure 2.2

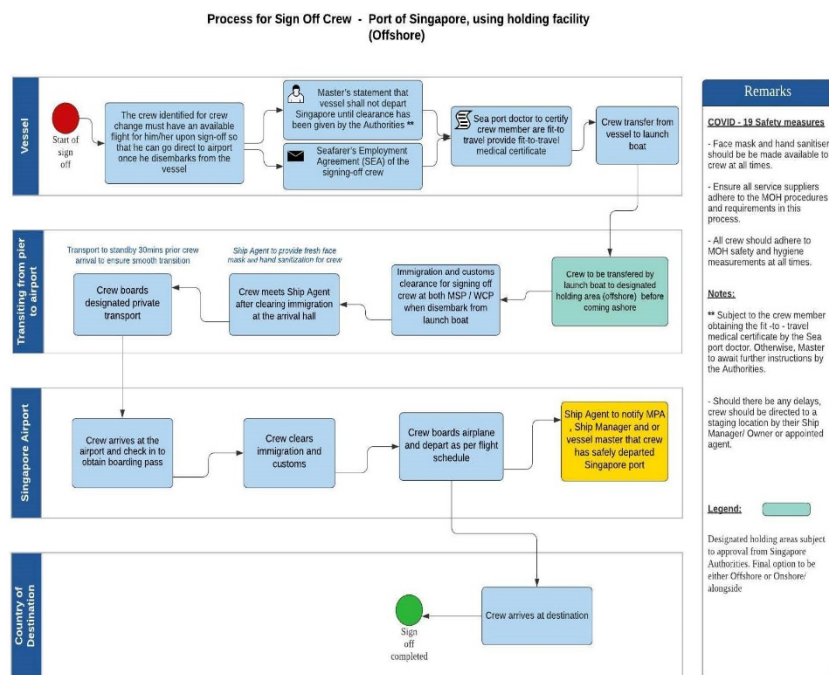


Figure 2.3

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Sign Off Crew in Port of Singapore – RACI Matrix

S/N	Category	Activity/ Task	MPA/MOT	Ship Manager	Ship Agent	Master	Manning Agency	RACI Matrix
1	Vessel Arrival in Singapore	Flight booking	I	A & R	I	I	I	Responsible Owns the activity/task. Person working to achieve the task.
		Master statement and SEA	I	A	I	R	C	Accountable To whom R is accountable. Who must sign off/approve on work before it is effective. No more than one A, but can be zero. The one ultimately answerable for the completion of deliverable or task, and the one who delegates the work to those responsible. <i>NOTE: One role can be both R and A.</i>
		Singapore doctors issuance of Fit - for- travel	I	I	A & R	I		
2	Transit from Vessel to Airport	Transit from Vessel to Airport with approved suppliers	I	I	A & R	I		
3	Singapore Airport	Crew check- in and immigration clearance – with Chaperon	I	I	A & R	I	C	Consulted Has information and/or capability necessary to complete the work
4	Country of Destination	Crew arrives at destination		A			R	Informed Must be notified of results, but need not be consulted

Note: Sign Off is confirmed when the following approval is obtained:
(i) Approval from MPA for crew Sign Off
(ii) Valid visa issuance by Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA)
(iii) Approval from National Environment Agency (NEA)

Figure 2.4

To minimise the risk of importation and spread COVID-19 in Singapore, the crew must be transferred directly between the vessel and the point of arrival/departure. Company may wish to take note of the following requirements:

Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
Sign-Off Crew	A The crew must have an available flight for him/her upon sign-off so that he can go direct to airport once he disembarks from the vessel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved medical doctor to certify crew members are fit-to travel prior to sign-off. No sharing of Passenger launch boats for crew and service engineers/technicians Agent will transport the crew using private transport to the airport for the crew to clear ICA. The crew will be escorted to the plane. Transport to standby 30 mins before picking sign off crew
	B Crew is not allowed to remain on shore in Singapore while waiting for his flight. - <i>Only in exceptional circumstances and approved by MPA, the crew may be transferred to an approved holding facility while waiting for his flight, the ship he/she signed off from can depart.</i>	
	C Seafarer's Employment Agreement (SEA) of the signing-off crew.	
	D Fit-to-travel medical certificate issued by an approved medical doctor in Singapore prior to the crew's disembarkation from his/her ship.	
	E Master's statement that vessel shall not depart Singapore until the crew departed on his scheduled flight.	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only in exceptional circumstances and approved by MPA the crew can be transferred to an approved holding facility while waiting for his flight, the ship he/she signed off from may be permitted to depart. 	
Phase Descriptor	Check List	Mitigating Factor
Land / Sea Transport Provider	<p>A Wear mask at all times.</p> <p>B Sanitise and disinfect seats/interior prior receiving the next onboard crew</p> <p>Ensure all crew sanitise their hands once in vehicle/launch</p> <p>C Sanitise and disinfect seats/interior after dropping off crew.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating cross contamination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All transport vendors are to practice MTI Covid-19 guidelines and safety measures. All vendors' segregation plans are to be submitted to the relevant authorities. Drivers and boatman are to remind crew on the Covid-19 safety measures. All vendors are to abide to the NEA cleaning guidelines

If the above requirements can be met in line with Port Marine Circular 26, kindly submit the following documents to MPA to process the request:

- Application form as attached. (Complete one per crew)
- Letter of undertaking by owner/agent/operator.
- Scanned copies of crew's passport.
- Flight itinerary for both sign-on and sign-off crew.

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- E. Written confirmation that the last port of call was more than 14 days ago and that the crew remained well throughout; or, if the last port of call was less than 14 days ago, the crew has not gone ashore for the last 14 days and remains well.
- F. Written health declaration by all crew members that they are asymptomatic and have not had contact with a known or suspect case of COVID-19 in the 14 days preceding arrival in Singapore.
- G. A copy of the ship's Maritime Declaration of Health in accordance with Port Marine Circular No. 16 of 2020.

Please note that the documents **A, B, C, and D (just flight itinerary not e-ticket)** shall be submitted at least **fourteen (14)** days prior to the scheduled signing on/off date of the crew, unless expressly stated otherwise. Documents E and F must be submitted at the earliest possible instance before the vessel's arrival. Document G must be submitted 12 hours before the vessel arrives in Singapore. Any changes to documents or information submitted must be notified to MPA immediately. Failure to comply with the deadlines may result in the rejection of the request.

For Ship Owners and Managers;

- a) Application for crew change has to be made at least 14 days in advance of the intended crew change date.
- b) Strict compliance with the requirements for sign-on and sign-off crew must be adhered to.
- c) All efforts must be made to time ship and flight schedule so that direct transfer between ship and flight can be carried out for the crew change. Should the above not be possible, ship owners and managers should explore options of chartered flights or place the crew temporarily onboard another ship in port while waiting for the intended ship/flight.
- d) All efforts must be made to seek approval from other port authorities for crew change to be carried out.
- e) If the request for crew change in Singapore is not approved, the company should plan for the crew change to be conducted at other ports which allow crew change to be done.

More importantly, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic around the world, ship owners and managers cannot expect business-as-usual. The potential strain on public health resources arising from crew change will necessarily mean that the total number of crew change will be significantly reduced globally. Ship owners and managers must play a role to manage the expectations of crew and provide incentives and a good working environment for crew to be willing to serve longer contracts onboard, subject to the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention, so as to minimise the number of instances crew change is needed during this pandemic.