

# GLOBALPANDI

## *Circular for P&I Clubs*

*DATE: 29 APRIL 2020*

***Correspondents for:***

***Britannia, British Marine, Carina, Charterers P&I Club, China P&I Club, EF Marine, GARD, Hydor, ITIC, Korea P&I Club, Nordisk Defence Club (Through Sabatino Pizzolante), North of England P&I Club, MS Amlin, Shipowners P&I Club, Skuld, The Standard P&I Club, Steamship Mutual, The American Club, The London P&I Club, Thomas Miller Specialty, West of England and Through Transport Club (TTC)***

### ***Guidelines for mobilization of seafarers and personnel associated to the ship-port interface***

The National Institute of Aquatic Spaces (INEA) has issued Circular No. 014 (Aviso Especial – 011 COVID-19), dated 27 April 2020, setting up guidelines for the mobilization of seafarers and personnel associated to the ship-port interface, regardless their nationality, while they are within the Venezuelan geographic space. Following recommendations of the IMO, the aquatic authority now identifies the seafarers and personnel referred to as *Key Workers*, facilitating their mobilization. It should be borne in mind that the embarking and disembarking of crews in the domestic ports were prohibited, pursuant Circular No. 010 of 17 March 2020 which has been repealed by the guidelines under comment.

Consequently, the INEA shall issue to the *Key Workers* an official provisional document entitled “safe passage” (salvoconducto), in order to carry out the following activities: Crew changes, medical assistance, termination of contract, repatriation, naval inspections, ship supplying, maintenance and services to ships, garbage collection on board ships, underwater inspections, cargo consolidation, launch, tugboat, cargo and passenger transportation. Said document shall be petitioned by the ship agents, shipping companies and others companies and institutions, via online through the INEA’s website, in a procedure which is said to be expeditious and it should take not more than 24 hours. Seafarers must have a valid health certificate that presumes their good health, irrespective of having to comply with the COVID-19 protocols, as well as a letter of employment, disembarking, embarking, termination of contract, medical assistance as the case might be.

According to the Circular No. 014 the “safe passage” is an instrument recognized by national and international authorities, to allow and facilitate the free transit of the *Key Workers* “without prejudice to what it may be determined by the authorities, especially the sanitary one, at the place of exit and destination”. It is important to point out that ship agents, on behalf of shipowners and charterers will be responsible to ensure the movement of the seafarer until final destination, covering all the expenses related to transportation, food, lodging and travel ticket, for which agents must issue a Letter of Commitment to guarantee the payment of all the necessary logistics for the embarking, disembarking and in general mobilization of the seafarers.

It is of concern, however, point 11 of the circular which states that the guidelines shall not contravene more specific restriction measures to the transit enacted, for instance, by municipalities and regional states, such as curfews, transit restrictions hours, etc. Even so, this should not prevent the implementation of the new guidelines.

It might be expected that with the issuance of Circular No. 014 crew changes will resume at Venezuelan ports subject, of course, to flights availability. The same can be said with regard to disembarking of crew for medical treatment in case of non COVID-19 injuries and illnesses; as a matter fact our office was dealing with a very recent case of a berthed ship where a foreign seafarer was allowed to disembark by the authorities, for medical treatment without any “safe passage” or equivalent.

Members/Clubs are advised to contact ship agents and P&I correspondents, in order to seek comments for specific cases or assistance as it might be needed.

**Should you need any assistance or further information regarding the topic stated above, please feel free to contact**

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