

MEMBER ALERT

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CREW CHANGES AT PORTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC): COVID-19

Members are advised that the PRC government has opened up ten ports for crew changes: Dalian, Tianjin, Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Haikou.

The crew change notice, issued by the Ministry of Transport, introduces a quarantine circuit-breaker mechanism.

It stipulates that a shipping company's foreign crew change operations will be suspended for 15 days if there are five COVID-19 cases detected in their fleet; or suspended for 30 days if there are ten COVID-19 cases in their fleet. If there are more than ten positive cases found in its fleet, the shipping company will not be allowed to undertake a crew change until it passes a fresh assessment conducted by the relevant authorities.

Foreign crew signing off must comply with PRC's entry and staying regulations during the epidemic period.

The port of disembarkation must have a facility to arrange "point-to-point" transfers from the arriving ship to the point of departure within the same city. The ship from which the crew are disembarking must have left its last foreign port of call more than 14 days before arriving in the PRC.

The crew disembarking the ship must demonstrate a sound health and quarantine record, and both those seafarers signing-off and those signing-on to the ship in question have to produce a negative COVID-19 test.

The shipping company is also required to rent a car to transfer the foreign crew from the point of disembarkation to the point of departure within the same city, or it must embark those crew members onto another, outbound ship immediately upon disembarking the ship upon which they arrived.

In addition, all shipping companies are advised to closely monitor the port's local quarantine conditions.

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Your Managers understand that the various PRC ports may take different pragmatic approaches when dealing with foreign crew changes. In practice, the final decision lies ultimately with the local port government, including its office of epidemic prevention and control, instead of the Ministry of Transport (MOT) in Beijing.

Your Managers recommend that Members planning to implement crew changes in the PRC should consult their local agents for the latest requirements of the port in question, and generally be guided accordingly.