

MEMBER ALERT



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COVID-19: INDUSTRY GUIDANCE ON VACCINATION OF SEAFARERS

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), BIMCO, the Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), the European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSA), the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA), the International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA), the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC), the International Marine Health Association (IMHA), INTERCARGO, InterManager, INTERTANKO, International Support Vessel Owners Association (ISOA), International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and the World Shipping Council (WSC) are collaborating to ensure that seafarers are protected against the COVID-19 disease.

A vaccinations task force has been formed to develop best practice guidance in order to:

- ensure a pragmatic approach is taken by governments to seafarer inoculations;
- develop guidelines setting out all the steps necessary to implement a vaccination program for seafarers; and
- address the legal liabilities for shipowners arising from vaccinations.

The principles adopted recognize that:

1. seafarers have been recognised by UN bodies as 'key workers' and, as such, countries should vaccinate seafarers at the earliest possible opportunity;
2. seafarers should be encouraged to be vaccinated when offered the opportunity;
3. only vaccines on the WHO's Emergency Use List (EUL) should be used. The latest list has been updated on March 23, 2021 and can be found by clicking [here](#); and
4. vaccinated seafarers should be provided with internationally accepted documentation containing standard information that can be used to verify the vaccination.

The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), is a global initiative aimed at equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines led by UNICEF, the Global Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), World Health Organization (WHO), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and others. The shipping industry is working with the relevant United Nations (UN) bodies and has made representations to the COVAX scheme, particularly since most seafarers come from countries eligible for vaccines through that scheme. Similarly, the shipping industry has approached the pharmaceutical industry for access to vaccines for seafarers.

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Multiple UN agencies including the WHO and International Maritime Organization have confirmed that currently vaccines are not available for purchase by a private entity unless a State agency is directly involved. It is noted that some public/private partnerships have been established, notably in the Philippines. However, these are also run by State agencies.

Many ship owners and managers have reported that they have been approached by private entities offering to provide vaccines to seafarers. The industry group would caution against the use of privately obtained vaccines as their legitimacy and efficacy may be questionable.

Your Managers recommend that Members take note of this information and be guided accordingly.