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**Important Updates on COVID-19 Prevention and Restriction
Policies at Chinese Mainland Ports - Management of
the COVID-19 Disease Downgraded to Class B**

Dear Sir/Madam,

On December 26th, 2022, the National Health Commission of the P.R.C. issued the *Overall Plan on Managing the Novel Coronavirus Infection with Measures against Class B Infectious Diseases* (hereinafter referred to as the “Overall Plan”). In accordance with the *Overall Plan*, starting from January 8th, 2023, China will downgrade management of COVID-19 from a Class A infectious disease to Class B. COVID-19 was previously classified as a Class B infectious disease but subject to the

preventive and control measures for a Class A infectious disease. Prevention and restriction policies on port entry formalities, crew change, and onboard surveys at major ports are adjusted accordingly. We hereby summarize the latest policies and publish this Circular for the reference of the Clubs/Members.

Background

On December 8th, 2022 the Ministry of Transport of P.R.C issued *Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Ports and Their Frontline Personnel (the 12th edition)* (hereinafter referred to as “the 12th Guidelines”). According to *the 12th Guidelines*, nucleic test requirements in some cases are lifted and restrictions on the entry of personnel into port areas are reduced to some extent. For details, please refer to the attached *HUATAI INFO* which was issued on December 12th, 2022.

On December 26th, 2022, the National Health Commission of the P.R.C. issued the *Overall Plan*. According to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, isolation of infected cases, tracking of their close contacts and classification of at-risk areas will be scrapped. According to the Frontier Health and Quarantine Law of the PRC, disease control measures targeting inbound travelers and imported cargoes are lifted.

In January 2023, the Ministry of Transport, jointly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Health Commission, General Administration of Customs, National Immigration Administration and National Administration of Disease Prevention and Control, issued the *Notice on Effectively Conducting Crew change for International Vessels after Management of the COVID-19 Disease Downgraded to Class B*

(hereinafter referred to as “the Notice”), in which the approval procedure for crew change on international vessels are lifted.

Policy Adjustment on Crew Change for International Ships

The above *Notice* has come into effect on January 8th, 2023. According to *the Notice*, inbound crews are no longer subject to ship-wide nucleic tests or isolation in designated facilities. And crew change does not require approval anymore.

1. Crew Change Approval Procedures are Lifted

All localities will no longer implement the examination and approval procedures for the crew change (including landing) of ships sailing on international voyages at domestic ports. While examination and approval systems of entry and exit inspection and temporary entry permits for crew members remain valid.

2. Facilitate Crew Change and Entry

- i) Ship-wide nucleic tests or isolation in designated facilities are no longer implemented on crew members signing off in China. For ships sailing on international voyages and scheduled to change crew at Chinese ports, nucleic tests of crew members shall be adopted 48 hours prior to leaving the last overseas port. The crew members with positive test results should be treated nearby timely.
- ii) The declaration of antigen results may be accepted if the crew members are unable to declare the results of the nucleic acid test within 48 hours prior to entry

into China due to travel reasons.

iii) Crew members whose health declaration and Customs quarantine inspection show no abnormalities can be released into society. If the health declaration of crew members is abnormal or crew members have a fever and other symptoms, the Customs will implement classified disposal according to their investigation results.

As per our local branches, crew change restrictions on both Chinese and foreign seafarers have been lifted at ports such as Tianjin, ports of Hebei Province, Ningbo port, and Xiamen port. At some ports such as Dalian, crew change restrictions are partially lifted and change of Chinese crew members can be arranged smoothly. It is estimated by local agents that foreign crew change will be permitted soon. However, there are also some ports where crew change restrictions lifted in principle but are still being implemented gradually, such as Qingdao port and ports in Guangxi and Guangdong Provinces.

Formalities for Entering Ports

According to *Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Ports and Their Frontline Personnel (the 12th edition)*, seafarers' COVID-19 test information shall be no longer required to be submitted to port Authorities before berthing. However, the following information is still needed.

- i) Ports of call, berthing/unberthing information within the preceding 14 days before vessel's arrival.
- ii) Crew's general information and health condition. Information on Crew changes, embarkation and disembarkation personnel, materials and supplies delivery and personnel contact during berthing.
- iii) Ship's quarantine and epidemic prevention measures.
- iv) Information on sewage treatment plant and ballast water management system.
- v) Information on reefer containers and refrigerated cargo in bulk.
- vi) Information on disinfection and transfer of garbage from ships.

But as per some of our local branches, there are still ports that require ships to provide the 48-hour antigen test result and fill in the Entry Health Declaration Card when ships go through the formalities of entry inspection. It is recommended that ships comply with the agent's arrangement in this connection. In addition, according to our local branches, the 72-hour nucleic test requirement before embarkation at overseas port for on-signors is lifted. After berthing, ships are no longer subject to compulsory nucleic tests. Compulsory disinfection is no longer conducted and ships' discharging or loading operation will not be affected even if there are infected crews onboard.

Policy Adjustment on Onboard Survey

As per our local branches, most ports such as Dalian, Tianjin, Ningbo, Zhoushan, Shanghai, and ports along the Yangzi River, ports in Guangdong and Guangxi Province, onboard surveys are permitted in principle. And isolation in designated facilities is no longer in place. However, some inconvenience might be expected when serving onboard according to some surveyors.

As COVID-19 has been listed as a Class B disease managed with Class B measures, epidemic policies adjustment on various aspects are being gradually implemented at different processes locally. It is recommended to contact the local agent or Huatai local branches for the latest port requirements before the ship calls at a Chinese port.

Should you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact us (pni.bj@huatai-serv.com) or our local branches.

Best regards,



CUI Jiyu

Head of Marine Team

Attachment:

HUATAI INFO - New Version of Guidelines Issued by the Ministry of Transport of P.R.C.



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New Version of Guidelines Issued by the Ministry of Transport of P.R.C.

Based on Chinese government's new policy on improving epidemic prevention and control measures, a new version of *Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Ports and Their Frontline Personnel (the 12th edition)* (hereinafter referred to as 'the 12th Guidelines') was issued by Ministry of Transport of P.R.C. on 8 December 2022, according to which, nucleic tests requirements in some cases are lifted, and restrictions on personnel entering

ports are reduced to some extent. Some points related to international vessels are interpreted as follows.

I. Seafarers' COVID-19 test results will not be required before vessels calling.

Given the scope of vessels are not specified, vessels on international voyages shall be included herein.

In addition, according to the 12th Guidelines, the following information still needs to be submitted before berthing.

i) Ports of call, berthing/unberthing information within the preceding 14 days before vessel's arrival.

ii) Crew's general information and health condition. Crew changes, embarkation and disembarkation personnel, materials and supplies delivery and personnel contact during berthing.

iii) Ship's quarantine and epidemic prevention measures.

iv) Sewage treatment plant and ballast water management system.

v) Reefer containers and refrigerated cargo in bulk.

vi) Disinfection and transfer of garbage from ships.

II. Loading or discharging operation can only be proceeded in a safe manner on the premise that vessel accepted quarantine by the Customs, obtained quarantine certification materials and letters of commitment for crews' health condition were submitted by the shipping company or its agent.

III. Port operation for domestic trade will no longer restrict port operation personnel to board the ship or ship's crew to enter the port operation area. However, for ships on international voyages, the measures of "avoiding unnecessary embarkation" by port operation personnel and "avoiding unnecessary disembarkation" by ship's crew shall be adopted. Crews are prohibited from entering foreign trade port operation areas. Ship-to-shore interaction of ships on international voyages is under strict control, and the ship's crew shall not disembark except for the necessities of life and production and in emergencies.

In addition, there are some epidemic prevention and restriction measures yet to be modified. For example, closed-loop management is still required for ship agents and surveyors passing through port area to board ships on international voyages.

Huatai Marine will continue to focus on the situation of epidemic prevention and control measures and keep you posted.