

**Commonwealth of Dominica****Office of the Maritime Administrator**

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND AUTHORIZED CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES**

**SUBJECT: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)**

**REFERENCE: IMO [MSC/Circ.1068](#)**

**APPLICABILITY: all vessels flying the flag of the Commonwealth of Dominica**

**REQUIREMENTS:**

On 12 March 2003, the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) alerted the world to cases of atypical pneumonia, now known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Since then, the WHO has created a virtual research center, and established a global network, by which treating physicians can share clinical data on treatments and outcomes.

IMO has issued [MSC/Circ.1068](#) on SARS, following consultations between the Secretary-General and the Chairman of the Maritime Safety Committee. The circular aims at increasing awareness about SARS through drawing the Member Governments' attention to information in a submission to the Committee by Singapore.

WHO - Procedures for international ships carrying suspect SARS cases

In addition to the information regarding isolation and protection, international vessels that detect a possible case of SARS in a crewmember or passenger are being required by the WHO to proceed in the following manner:

1. The health authority at the scheduled port of arrival must be informed immediately of the suspect case, and asked if the necessary capacity to isolate, transport and care for the ill crewmember or passenger is available at the port. Depending on the local situation, the master of the vessel may be asked to proceed to another national port that has this capacity.

2. On arrival at the port requested by the health authority, no one may be allowed to leave the vessel until a medical officer has examined the ill crewmember or passenger, as well as the rest of the crew and any passengers on board.
3. If the medical officer for the port determines that the ill crewmember or passenger meets the SARS case definition, the crewmember or passenger must be removed from the vessel, using all necessary precautions, and transported to the designated medical facility.
4. The vessel shall be considered as in isolation, and no one, other than health authority staff or other personnel working directly with the health authority shall be allowed to board or leave the vessel.
5. The vessel will be held in port for a period of 10 days, to ensure that none of the other crewmembers or passengers have been infected with SARS. At the end of the isolation period the vessel will be allowed to proceed to its next port of call provided a medical officer has determined that none of the other crewmembers or passengers has been infected.
6. If for any reason the vessel has to move to another national port during the isolation period, a health officer must be posted on board.

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