

Guidelines regarding seafarers signing on and off ships in Norwegian ports

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In agreement with several bodies, including employers' organisations and labour organisations, the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) presents the following guidelines to ensure crew changes and also the transport of goods and medicines.



PHOTO: Marit Nilsen/Sjøfartsdirektoratet

The Norwegian government has taken drastic action to prevent the coronavirus from spreading. These actions affect shipping to a great extent. Ships must be able to sail in order to ensure export and import of necessary goods and medicines. An important precondition to make the ships able to sail is that crew changes are carried out while the infection control measures are being observed.

In the event of an infection on board or crew members working hours beyond provisions on regular working hours and rest, the ship may have to remain stationary and crew members may be dismissed.

There are new additions to the general travel restrictions on work journeys to maintain infrastructural operations.

- Work journeys maintaining a fundamental need for transport in society, e.g. shipping and other cargo transport may be carried out as smoothly as possible.
- Work journeys to maintain the production of oil and gas on the Norwegian continental shelf may be carried out as smoothly as possible.
- Port calls for ships carrying goods and supplies must be ensured.

The NMA wants to stress that it is extremely important to find immediate solutions to ensure a safe change of crew at Norwegian ports.

It is important that the crew on board are particularly vigilant with regard to infection control measures, especially by focusing on good hygiene routines.

The NMA suggests the following options:

Crew members signing off in Norway

- Crew members and other persons on board who have not had any contact with persons outside the ship, who are signing off in Norway after at least 14 days on board and who do not have any symptoms, may be regarded as not infected and do not need to be put in quarantine.
- Agents/companies shall in other cases, pending a return, make sure that local quarantine locations are established for crew not residing in Norway.
- When transport has been confirmed and it is time to return, the company will use established routines to get the relevant crew out of Norway.

Crew signing on in Norway

In order to keep ships sailing, there must be good routines to get the crew into Norway and on board the vessels.

The company must plan well and carry out good risk assessments to get the crew on board without being infected.

Vessels engaged on domestic voyages

Crew members having symptoms or suspecting they are infected must follow regular quarantine or isolation routines established by Norwegian authorities.

The situation is developing fast, and there could be changes due to the guidelines from superior authorities.

The employers' organisations and labour organisations endorse this document.

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