



## Maritime Sector

### COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

#### Contents

General Information on COVID-19 .....	4
1. Where can I get information about COVID-19?.....	4
2. Where can I access information and guidance for Seafarers on COVID-19? .....	4
3. Where can I access information on the supports available to business impacted by COVID-19? 4	
National and EU measures for the Maritime Transport Sector .....	5
4. What steps are being taken to ensure passenger safety on-board ferries? .....	5
5. I am arriving into Ireland from overseas – are there any restrictions I should know about? .....	5
6. What vaccines have been approved in Ireland and what does fully vaccinated mean? .....	6
7. Are there any quarantine requirements for passengers arriving from within the EEA? .....	6
8. What is the Digital Covid Certificate? .....	6
9. I am travelling from outside the EEA, are there any quarantine requirements in place? .....	7
10. I am travelling with children, what are the requirements for them? .....	7
11. What does proof of recovery mean? .....	7
12. Who will check my Digital COVID Certificate or other proof of my health status? .....	7
13. I am arriving by leisure craft, do the same travel requirements apply to me? .....	8
14. I am not arriving in to one of the main ports, who do I need to present my documentation to? 8	
15. I have arrived in Ireland with evidence of an antigen test or evidence of my vaccination/recovery status is invalid or expired .....	8
16. I am an essential supply chain worker – do I need to complete a Passenger Locator Form? ..	8
17. My journey originates in Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about?. 8	
18. I am travelling to Ireland via Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about?9	
19. I am transiting Ireland and travelling on to Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about? .....	9
20. I am a seafarer working as part of the essential supply chain, do I need to quarantine on arrival? .....	9
21. Where can I find out information in relation to travel restrictions in other countries? .....	9
22. What measures has the Department put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic? .....	9
23. What measures has the EU put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic? .....	10
24. I am a seafarer/worker in the maritime transport sector, am I classified as an essential worker? .....	10

25. I am a seafarer in the transport sector, I am experiencing symptoms, what should I do when I arrive at port? .....	10
26. I am a seafarer, Am I required to have a Digital Covid Certificate? .....	10
27. Is travel to or from Northern Ireland be affected? .....	11
Cruise and Foreign Fishing Fleets .....	11
28. Are cruise ships still allowed to dock at Irish ports? .....	11
29. Why are foreign fishing trawlers being allowed to land at Irish ports? .....	11
Maritime Passenger Rights .....	11
30. Are passenger rights protected in Ireland and the EU? .....	11
31. I have had to cancel my ferry booking due to travel restrictions, am I entitled to a refund from my ferry operator? .....	12
32. My carrier has cancelled my sailing and has offered me a voucher in lieu of a cash refund, am I required to accept it? .....	12
33. I am a passenger and my booking to travel has been cancelled by the ferry operator due to COVID-19, am I entitled to a refund and compensation? .....	13
Ports and Shipping Services .....	13
34. Will Irish Ports remain open during the pandemic? .....	13
35. Is there guidance available specific to ports to minimise the impact of COVID-19? .....	13
36. Am I an essential worker? .....	13
Maritime Declarations of Health .....	14
37. What are vessels arriving in Ireland from a port outside the Island of Ireland required to do? .....	14
38. What is required of vessels that are on voyages between ports on the island of Ireland or departing and returning to the same Irish port and not calling at any port outside the island of Ireland? .....	15
39. What happens when a crew member or passenger develops COVID-19 symptoms during the course of a voyage? .....	15
40. Who should the required documents be submitted to? .....	15
41. Where can the contact details for the local Environmental Health Office be accessed? .....	15
42. How soon should the Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) be submitted? .....	15
43. What documents are to be completed? .....	15
44. What happens if the documents are not completed in full? .....	16
45. What happens if there is a problem accessing Safe Seas Ireland? .....	16
46. What is the appropriate action to take if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 on-board? .....	16
47. What is the best means of seeking medical advice? .....	16
Certification of Seafarers .....	17
48. Is the Mercantile Marine Office open? .....	17
49. What if a Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency is due to expire? .....	17

50.	What happens if a seafarer's Certificate of Equivalent Competency is due to be renewed?	17
51.	What if a seafarer is unable to apply for a Certificate of Competency within their home country?	17
52.	What action should a seafarer take when they are unable to renew a completed discharge book?	17
53.	My Seafarers' Medical Certificate has expired or is due to expire and I am unable to secure a medical examination – what should I do?	17
54.	What happens in those instances where the seafarer's employment agreement is due to expire?	18
55.	Will the same terms and conditions apply to seafarer's employment agreements that have been extended?	18
56.	Who is liable for the costs pending repatriation?	18
57.	What will be accepted as valid seagoing service for the revalidation or issue of a Certificate of Competency (CoC)?	18
58.	Who should be contacted in the event of changes to the Minimum Safe Manning Document (MSMD) due to COVID-19 travel restrictions?	18
59.	Is it the IMA's intention to accept expired seafarer certificates of competency/proficiency and medical certificates, when conducting Port State Control inspections?	19
	Surveying and Certification of Irish Registered Ships	19
60.	What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in international trade?	19
61.	What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in Domestic Voyages including fishing vessels?	19
62.	What advice is available in relation to survey and Certification of New-Building ships of all types for the Irish Flag?	19
63.	Where can queries in relation to Ships Radio Licences and Registration of EPIRBs be directed to?	20
64.	What if there is a delay in issuing a hard copy of the Ships Radio Licence?	20
65.	What are the MSO's plans with regard to the servicing of inflatable life-rafts, inflatable Life-jackets and Marine Evacuation Systems (MES)?	20
66.	Is it the MSO's intention to accept expired surveys, when conducting Port State Control inspections?	20
	Maritime Search and Rescue Services (SAR)	20
67.	Is there any change to National SAR arrangements?	20
68.	Am I permitted to partake in water sports or use recreational craft?	21
	Maritime Pollution	21
69.	What do I do if I see a pollution incident at sea or along the coast?	21
	Contact details:	21

## **General Information on COVID-19**

### ***1. Where can I get information about COVID-19?***

#### **Answer**

Detailed information and guidance about COVID-19 can be obtained from the HSE website by visiting

[www2.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus)

Or by calling

1850 24 1850

Information on COVID-19 and supports available can be found here [COVID-19 \(citizensinformation.ie\)](https://citizensinformation.ie/covid-19)

### ***2. Where can I access information and guidance for Seafarers on COVID-19?***

All updates in relation to COVID-19 and the maritime sector are available on [www.seafarers.ie](http://www.seafarers.ie) or email [maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie](mailto:maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie) for any maritime COVID related issues.

### ***3. Where can I access information on the supports available to business impacted by COVID-19?***

Information on the Government supports for COVID-19 impacted business can be found at

<https://dbei.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Supports-for-SMEs/COVID-19-supports/>

The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has established a Business Support Call Centre for information on the government supports available to businesses and enterprises affected by COVID-19.

**Tel:** +353 1 631 2002

**Email:** [infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie](mailto:infobusinesssupport@dbei.gov.ie)

## **National and EU measures for the Maritime Transport Sector**

### ***4. What steps are being taken to ensure passenger safety on-board ferries?***

Protocols for the safe management of passengers in light of COVID-19 have been developed in consultation with the public health authorities and with industry, who are already implementing the measures.

The protocols set out the expectations and requirements on industry to ensure public health safety of passengers, staff and crew.

The measures cover the end-to end passenger journey and the following key requirements:

- health declarations by passengers at check-in;
- production of evidence of a negative result from an antigen or PCR COVID-19 test prior to boarding the ferry;
- only passengers intending to travel can enter the ferry terminal buildings, with limited exceptions for persons accompanying persons with reduced mobility (PRM);
- physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings by passengers and staff;
- increased sanitation measures in relation to aircraft and airports, passenger vessels and ports;

An updated Protocol taking account of recent changes to international travel can be accessed at the

following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/ab625-protocols-for-international-travel/>

### ***5. I am arriving into Ireland from overseas – are there any restrictions I should know about?***

Yes.

Any passengers travelling to Ireland must be in possession of:

- An e-receipt from a passenger locator form completed online. Children under 18 are to be declared on the passenger locator form of their accompanying responsible adult. Unaccompanied minors aged 12 and over must complete their own online passenger locator form. In addition to the passenger locator form, passengers must present one of the following:
  1. Evidence of having been fully vaccinated with a vaccine listed under question 6 below;
  2. Evidence of having recovered from COVID-19 in the previous six months; or
  3. Evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test taken up to 72 hours prior to arrival\*; **Passengers travelling on the basis of a test alone (that have no vaccination or recovery certificate) must have an RT-PCR test – an antigen test won't suffice.**

\*Note: Where a person has been subject to a RT-PCR test administered no less than 11 days and no more than 6 months prior to their arrival in the State and COVID-19 has been detected in the person

at the time of taking the test, this will also be accepted, if proof of recovery as set out at (b) above cannot be secured.

**Passengers will be denied boarding if:**

- they do not have evidence of having completed an online passenger locator form;
- travelling on the basis of a test alone, the test is not a RT-PCR test.

Testing requirements do not apply to children aged 11 and under. Children aged 12-17 are treated the same as adults and must have evidence of a having been fully vaccinated, recovered from Covid-19 or evidence of a negative/not detected result from a RT-PCR.

Further information on travel requirements can be found here [www.gov.ie/travel](http://www.gov.ie/travel)

## ***6. What vaccines have been approved in Ireland and what does fully vaccinated mean?***

There are six vaccines that have been approved for use in Ireland – Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Janssen, CoronaVac and SinoPharm/BiBP. For travel to Ireland, fully vaccinated means:

- a) 14 days after the single dose of Janssen vaccine;
- b) 7 days after the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine (Comirnaty);
- c) 14 days after the second dose of Moderna vaccine (Spikevax);
- d) 15 days after the second dose of AstraZeneca vaccine (Vaxzevria);
- e) 14 days after the second dose of CoronaVac (COVID-19 Vaccine (Vero Cell Inactivated));
- f) 14 days after the second dose of SinoPharm/BiBP (Inactivated COVID-19 (VERO CELL) vaccine);
- or
- g) 14 days after the second dose of Covaxin

Note: a person to who has received one dose of a vaccine referred to in (b)-(g) above, no more than 180 days after the person was subject to a positive RT-PCR test, will also be deemed to be a vaccinated person.

Passengers will need to consult requirements in other countries as to what constitutes fully vaccinated, as it may differ to Ireland.

## ***7. Are there any quarantine requirements for passengers arriving from within the EEA?***

No.

There are no quarantine arrangements in place for passengers whose journey originated from within the EEA.

## ***8. What is the Digital Covid Certificate?***

The EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC) is proof (in digital or paper format) that you have either:

- been vaccinated against COVID-19 or
- received a negative COVID-19 test result or
- recovered from COVID-19 in the last 6 months

Your free Digital COVID Certificate will help you to travel safely and more easily within the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***9. I am travelling from outside the EEA, are there any quarantine requirements in place?***

No. There are currently no quarantine arrangements in place where your journey began outside the EEA. Further information on requirements for travel to Ireland is available here [www.gov.ie/travel](https://www.gov.ie/travel)

### ***10. I am travelling with children, what are the requirements for them?***

Children aged 11 and under are not required to have a pre-departure COVID-19 test for travel. Children aged 12-17 are treated the same as adults and must have evidence of having been fully vaccinated, recovered from Covid-19 or evidence of a negative/not detected result from a RT-PCR.

### ***11. What does proof of recovery mean?***

Proof of recovery means a document that certifies that the person has had and recovered from COVID-19 in the previous six months and must contain at least the following:

- a) Surname and Forename;
- b) Date of Birth;
- c) Disease or agent from which the person has recovered; (COVID-19/SARS-CoV-2 or one of its variants)
- d) Date of the holder's first positive NAAT test result;
- e) Member State or third country in which the test was carried out;
- f) Certificate issuer;
- g) Date Certificate valid from;
- h) Date Certificate is valid to; (not more than 6 months after the first positive NAAT test).

### ***12. Who will check my Digital COVID Certificate or other proof of my health status?***

Each state is putting in place its own requirements for the verification of vaccination, recovery or test. Ireland has developed an enhanced passenger locator form (PLF) in which the passenger will declare the status on which they are travelling i.e. vaccination, recovery or RT-PCR test. Passengers will be required to produce an e-receipt from the PLF at boarding and will be denied boarding if they cannot provide evidence of having completed the PLF. In addition, passengers will be required to produce evidence of a negative/ not detected result from a RT-PCR test taken up to 72 hours prior to their arrival in the State. Passengers will be denied boarding where do not produce the required evidence for

completion of a PLF or a RT-PCR test where travelling on the basis of a test alone. Immigration officers may also check for a passenger's PLF and any other verification document on arrival.

***13. I am arriving by leisure craft, do the same travel requirements apply to me?***

Yes. You must have a completed passenger locator form, evidence of having been fully vaccinated, recovered from Covid-19 or evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test.

***14. I am not arriving in to one of the main ports, who do I need to present my documentation to?***

Passengers should retain evidence of having completed their passenger locator form as well as proof of vaccination, recovery and covid test for the duration of their stay. Members of An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive or an agent of the Health Service Executive may seek confirmation of this documentation at any time. All passengers are required by law to co-operate and provide such information when requested. It is an offence not to have such information available and to include false information on a passenger locator form which may result in penalties including fines of up to €2,500 and/or imprisonment.

***15. I have arrived in Ireland with evidence of an antigen test or evidence of my vaccination/recovery status is invalid or expired***

Where a passenger arrives on the basis of an antigen test instead of a RT-PCR test or where their evidence of vaccination/recovery is deemed invalid or expired, that passenger may be subject to a fine and/or imprisonment by authorities.

***16. I am an essential supply chain worker – do I need to complete a Passenger Locator Form?***

**No.** Under the Regulations, international transport workers who are involved in maintaining the essential supply chain (such as pilots, hauliers and maritime crew members) are not required to complete the COVID-19 Passenger Locator Form. Such workers are advised to carry an Annex 3 form to avoid any confusion at boarding.

***17. My journey originates in Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about?***

No. If your journey originates in Northern Ireland, you are not required to complete a passenger locator form or have evidence of being fully vaccinated, recovered from COVID-19 or have evidence of having taken a COVID-19 test prior to your arrival.

***18. I am travelling to Ireland via Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about?***

Yes. Any passenger travelling to Ireland from overseas via Northern Ireland must complete a passenger locator form and have evidence of having been fully vaccinated, having recovered from Covid-19 in the previous six months or evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test.

***19. I am transiting Ireland and travelling on to Northern Ireland, are there any restrictions I should know about?***

Yes. Any passenger entering Ireland, even those transiting to Northern Ireland must complete a passenger locator form and have evidence of having been fully vaccinated, having recovered from Covid-19 in the previous six months or evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test. Passengers will be able to declare that they are transiting to Northern Ireland on the passenger locator form. Passengers should also familiarise themselves with public health requirements in place in Northern Ireland.

***20. I am a seafarer working as part of the essential supply chain, do I need to quarantine on arrival?***

No. Further information is available in [Marine Notice 16/2021](#).

***21. Where can I find out information in relation to travel restrictions in other countries?***

Each country has different rules. If travelling within the European Union you can visit the [Reopen Europe](#) website which sets out the requirements for each Member State. For information in relation to travel outside of the European Union, visit the [Department of Foreign Affairs](#) website for specific travel information for each country.

***22. What measures has the Department put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic?***

The Minister put in place a number of temporary contingency measures to provide for flexibility which allowed the sector to continue its work as normally as possible. The measures included a general extension to seafarer documents as well as an extension to ship certificates where it is not possible for a survey to take place before the certificate expires. Those special arrangements expired on 31 December 2021. Shipping services are continuing and Irish ports are open for business with robust business continuity plans in place.

Guidance on COVID-19 and the protection of supply chain workers is available on the Government's website here - [Guidance for Supply Chain Workers](#)

Any specific queries in relation to COVID-19 and measures to mitigate its impact on the maritime transport sector should be sent to [maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie](mailto:maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie)

***23. What measures has the EU put in place to ensure that maritime transport can continue to operate as normally as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic?***

The European Union recognises that the unprecedented situation in which Member States find themselves requires an unprecedented response. There has been intensive engagement over the last number of weeks and a series of rapid measures taken.

To cushion the blow to people's livelihoods and the economy, the Commission adopted a comprehensive economic response to the outbreak on 13 March 2020, followed by the adoption of the Temporary Framework for State Aid Measures on 19 March 2020 and the proposal to activate the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) on 20 March 2020.

In order to keep freight moving across the EU during the current pandemic, on 23 March 2020, the Commission issued guidance on the implementation of the Green Lanes for freight movements. Member States are requested to, without delay, designate all the relevant internal border-crossing points on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) as 'green lane' border crossings. The green lane border crossings should be open to all freight vehicles, whatever goods they are carrying. Crossing the border, including any checks and health screening, should not take more than 15 minutes. This will ensure that freight continues to move across the European supply routes and into Ireland. In Ireland, Dublin, Cork, and Shannon Foynes ports are 'CORE' ports and Rosslare and Waterford ports are 'Comprehensive' ports on the Ten-T Network.

***24. I am a seafarer/worker in the maritime transport sector, am I classified as an essential worker?***

**Yes.** Workers in the maritime transport sector are essential workers in ensuring the supply of essential goods. A full list of essential service providers under new public health guidelines can be found at <https://www.gov.ie/>

***25. I am a seafarer in the transport sector, I am experiencing symptoms, what should I do when I arrive at port?***

Any seafarer that experiences symptoms aboard the vessel should notify the master or health officer who must submit a maritime declaration of health.

***26. I am a seafarer, Am I required to have a Digital Covid Certificate?***

No. Generally, there are no restrictions on seafarers who travelling to Ireland in the course of their duties, including if they are returning immediately home having completed work on board a vessel. Further information is available in [Marine Notice 16/2021](#).

### ***27. Is travel to or from Northern Ireland be affected?***

There will continue to be no restrictions on travel within the island of Ireland. However, if you are travelling from abroad to Ireland via Northern Ireland then you must complete the passenger locator form, and have evidence of having been fully vaccinated, having recovered from Covid-19 in the previous six months or evidence of a negative/not-detected result from a RT-PCR test. Passengers should follow the quarantine requirements associated with their health status and where they have travelled in the previous 14 days. Further information is available here [www.gov.ie/travel](http://www.gov.ie/travel) Passengers travelling to Northern Ireland via Ireland are required to complete the passenger locator form and also have evidence of a covid test as outlined above and they should consult the latest public health guidelines in Northern Ireland.

## **Cruise and Foreign Fishing Fleets**

### ***28. Are cruise ships still allowed to dock at Irish ports?***

**No.** The National Public Health Emergency Team, at their meeting on 24 March 2020, agreed that no cruise ship will be permitted to enter any Irish port or anchor in Irish waters for the foreseeable future. This decision, which was taken in the current extraordinary circumstances of COVID-19 will be kept under review.

### ***29. Why are foreign fishing trawlers being allowed to land at Irish ports?***

Workers in the maritime sector are essential workers in ensuring the supply of essential goods. They should be able to do their work, while their health and safety and that of those they come in contact with is protected to the greatest extent possible.

Guidance has been issued to ships captains and skippers to ensure that those on fishing trawlers landing at Irish Ports know what they must do to protect themselves and others while carrying out their work – landing catch. While they have exemptions as essential workers to carry out their duties, at all other times, while in Irish Ports, fishing trawler workers are required to follow the guidance which is in place for the general Irish Population including maintaining physical distancing and self-isolating.

This means they should limit their contact with others to the greatest extent possible both during work time and when not working.

## **Maritime Passenger Rights**

### ***30. Are passenger rights protected in Ireland and the EU?***

Yes. The EU is the only area in the world where citizens are protected by a full set of passenger rights – whether they travel by air, rail, ship, bus or coach. Carriers have to provide information, offer reimbursement or re-routing to passengers whose service has been cancelled or delayed. Carriers must also offer care in terms of meals and accommodation. There are also additional rights for disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility.

***31. I have had to cancel my ferry booking due to travel restrictions, am I entitled to a refund from my ferry operator?***

The EU's passenger rights regulations do not address situations where passengers cannot travel or want to cancel a trip on their own initiative. Whether or not a passenger is reimbursed in such cases depends on the type of ticket (reimbursable, possibility to rebook) as specified in the carrier's terms and conditions.

It appears that various carriers are offering vouchers to passengers, who do not want to (or are not authorised to) travel any more as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. Passengers can use these vouchers for another trip with the same carrier within a timeframe established by the carrier.

This situation has to be distinguished from the situation where the carrier cancels the journey (see question below) and offers only a voucher instead of the choice between reimbursement and re-routing. If the carrier proposes a voucher, this offer cannot affect the passenger's right to opt for reimbursement instead.

***32. My carrier has cancelled my sailing and has offered me a voucher in lieu of a cash refund, am I required to accept it?***

No. On March 18 2020 the EU Commission issued guidelines as to how passenger rights regulations are to be applied in the situation of a global pandemic.

Where a carrier reasonably expects a passenger service to be cancelled or delayed in departure from a port terminal for more than 90 minutes, the carrier must offer passengers a choice between two possibilities:

- a) re-routing to the final destination under comparable conditions, as set out in the transport contract, at the earliest opportunity and at no additional cost;

or

- b) reimbursement of the ticket price and, where relevant, a return service free of charge to the first point of departure, as set out in the transport contract, at the earliest opportunity.

This obligation remains unchanged.

However, passengers must recognise that the situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic has created a great deal of uncertainty for maritime carriers, and that "earliest opportunity" may, in the current circumstance, result in quite a considerable delay. Where passengers are considering travel at a later date but have no fixed timescale, they are encouraged to accept the voucher instead of a cash refund.

**Should you have any further queries regarding your rights as a passenger, please contact the National Transport Authority online at: <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/eu-passenger-rights/> or phone: 01-8798300**

**33. *I am a passenger and my booking to travel has been cancelled by the ferry operator due to COVID-19, am I entitled to a refund and compensation?***

While Passenger Rights Regulations also makes provision for additional compensation for cancellations it does provide for certain exemptions from the right to compensation, on account of extraordinary circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes such an extraordinary circumstance and therefore carriers will not be obliged to pay additional compensation for cancellations due to the outbreak.

## **Ports and Shipping Services**

**34. *Will Irish Ports remain open during the pandemic?***

**Yes.** Our commercial ports have been preparing for the implications of the COVID-19 outbreak for many weeks. All of our ports are in regular contact with the public health authorities regarding guidance on containment of the coronavirus and the maintenance of supply chains for the country. The work of the ports, port service operators and shipping sector are vital at this time. It is imperative that the health and safety of these workers is protected while they work to transport goods internationally. All Department of Health and HSE guidelines have been rigorously adhered to, in order to safeguard employees, customers and the public.

Our ports have developed robust business continuity plans that will ensure the uninterrupted functioning of port services during this emergency period.

**35. *Is there guidance available specific to ports to minimise the impact of COVID-19?***

All ports have developed guidance for a Port setting and put in place mitigation measures to minimise identified risks. All passengers are legally required to wear face coverings in the terminal buildings.

**36. *Am I an essential worker?***

The Department of an Taoiseach published a list of essential workers which includes a transport related category as follows:

Transport Storage and Communication

- land transport (e.g. bus, rail and taxi services)
- road, rail, sea and air freight
- sea and air passenger services; ports and airports
- warehousing and support activities for transportation including cargo-handling; postal and courier activities; network control and critical maintenance (including roads); and safety related functions

Personnel involved in Maritime Search and Rescue are covered under the *Public Administration and Defence* category as 'Public administration activities necessary to support essential services and provision of social protection benefits (including Civil Service and Local Government)' and as

‘Community/Voluntary services’.

Coast Guard Volunteers, RNLI, CRBI and Coast Guard Helicopter crews are advised to carry either work identification or a letter issued by their organisations indicating that they are an essential employee/volunteer and are advised to always carry two forms of ID.

The list and accompanying guidance is published on Gov.ie at this link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c9158-essential-services/>

It is important to keep all elements of the supply chain moving and therefore it should be noted that staff involved in warehousing and support activities are deemed essential workers, even if they are not dealing with essential goods.

The guidance contains advice to employers and employees as follows:

What employers should do:

- refer to this guidance to decide whether your organisation is providing an essential service;
- if you are providing an essential service, you should identify those employees (including sub-contractors etc.) who are essential to the provision of that service and notify them (this can be done by category of employee or by individual; it could include all employees of the organisation).
- if you are providing an essential service, latest public health guidance should be followed at all times.

Note: it is not necessary to seek official authorization.

What employees should do:

- if your employer notifies you that you are an essential employee, or that you belong to a category of essential employees, you are permitted to travel to and from work.
- when travelling to and from work, you should at all times bring with you either a work identification or a letter from your employer indicating that you are an essential employee, as well as one other form of identification.
- if you are self-employed, a farmer or agricultural worker, or a member of the clergy, you should carry one form of identification with you at all times.

## **Maritime Declarations of Health**

### ***37. What are vessels arriving in Ireland from a port outside the Island of Ireland required to do?***

The requirement for every vessel to submit a maritime declaration of health has been removed. In line with pre-pandemic requirements, the Master of the vessel or the health officer must only submit a maritime declaration of health where a crew member or passenger falls ill aboard the vessel.

**38. *What is required of vessels that are on voyages between ports on the island of Ireland or departing and returning to the same Irish port and not calling at any port outside the island of Ireland?***

The Masters of vessels on such voyages are not required to submit a Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) or crew list, at present.

**39. *What happens when a crew member or passenger develops COVID-19 symptoms during the course of a voyage?***

Where any crew member or passenger, falls ill during a voyage, the Master(s) shall submit a Maritime Declaration of Health.

**40. *Who should the required documents be submitted to?***

Where a Maritime Declaration of Health is required it shall be submitted as follows:

For Safe Seas Ireland registered users only – submission is via [www.safeseasireland.ie](http://www.safeseasireland.ie)  
[LIVE Safe Seas Ireland Login](#) For non-Safe Seas Ireland users – submit to the local Environmental Health Office

**41. *Where can the contact details for the local Environmental Health Office be accessed?***

The contact details of the local Environmental Health Office can be requested from the Harbour Master. Where the port has no Harbour Master, the contact details can be requested from the nearest port with a Harbour Master. It is the responsibility of the master to confirm the relevant contact details for the destination port before the commencement of any voyage.

**42. *How soon should the Maritime Declaration of Health (MDoH) be submitted?***

The MDoH must be completed and submitted **no more than 24 hours before arrival** or where the health status of anyone on-board changes after submission of a MDoH, an updated MDoH shall be submitted **no later than 4 hours before arrival**.

**43. *What documents are to be completed?***

Where a maritime declaration of health is required, the following documents are required to be completed:

1. The Maritime Declaration of Health (as per International Health Regulations 2005, Annex 8 model) which should include:
  - a) last 30 days Port of call, and

- b) list of all crew and passengers having joined since commencement of international voyage. If none joined state "Not applicable".
2. Crew list and Passenger List.

#### ***44. What happens if the documents are not completed in full?***

Ship entry may be refused in case of incomplete reporting.

#### ***45. What happens if there is a problem accessing Safe Seas Ireland?***

In the event of a loss of service to Safe Seas Ireland all MDoH to be submitted, via email, to [ehnationaloffice@hse.ie](mailto:ehnationaloffice@hse.ie) and the local Harbour Master.

#### ***46. What is the appropriate action to take if there is a suspected case of COVID-19 on-board?***

In the case of a passenger/crew member presenting with acute respiratory infection with sudden onset of at least one of the symptoms lists above, the assistance of a medical professional should be sought immediately.

#### ***47. What is the best means of seeking medical advice?***

*For events at sea in Irish waters: -*

Liaise with the National Maritime Telemedical Assistance Service (Medico Cork). Contact via the Irish Coast Guard on telephone 112 or VHF Radio.

[http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork\\_about.php](http://emed.ie/Administration/MedicoCork/MedicoCork_about.php)

*For events in port: -*

Call HSE National Ambulance Control on 021-4640038 for case management and Public Health assessment. Notify the Port Authority of the suspected case as soon as possible and preferably not less than 24 hours before arrival.

To make contact outside of business hours (i.e. Monday-Friday from 17h00-09h00, and on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays), please telephone the Public Health out-of-hours service and ask for the on-call Public Health Specialist. If you do not have the number for the local out-of- hours Public Health Service, please contact your Harbour Master for these details.

## **Certification of Seafarers**

### ***48. Is the Mercantile Marine Office open?***

The Marine Mercantile Office is currently closed to the public. Staff are available to answer queries which should be sent to [admin@seafarers.ie](mailto:admin@seafarers.ie). All queries in relation to revalidation of Certificates of Competency should be sent to [seafarersTEC@transport.gov.ie](mailto:seafarersTEC@transport.gov.ie).

### ***49. What if a Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency is due to expire?***

Any Irish Certificate of Competency, or Certificate of Proficiency for service on tankers, issued to a seafarer by the IMA, in line with the International Convention on Standards, Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and/or national regulations, had been extended until the end of December 2021. No further extensions are being provided. Please contact [admin@seafarers.ie](mailto:admin@seafarers.ie) in relation to specific queries.

### ***50. What happens if a seafarer's Certificate of Equivalent Competency is due to be renewed?***

Should the seafarer's national Certificate of Competency be due for renewal an application for an Irish Certificate of Equivalent Competency can be made through email.

### ***51. What if a seafarer is unable to apply for a Certificate of Competency within their home country?***

In those instances in which a seafarer is unable to apply for Certificate of Competency within their home country, they must request a written declaration from the relevant administration in their home country stating that their Certificate of Competency has been extended for a period of months which should then be submitted to the IMA for review.

### ***52. What action should a seafarer take when they are unable to renew a completed discharge book?***

Seafarers that are unable to renew a completed (full) discharge book should request that all seafarer discharges or engagements are recorded on paper (paper discharge).

### ***53. My Seafarers' Medical Certificate has expired or is due to expire and I am unable to secure a medical examination – what should I do?***

A further extension of up to 3 months was provided for medical Certificates issued to seafarers under the seafarers' medical examination scheme, which expired between 31 December 2020 and 31 October 2021. No further extensions are being provided and the seafarer should arrange to undergo a medical examination as soon as possible in order to continue working on board the vessel.

***54. What happens in those instances where the seafarer's employment agreement is due to expire?***

Where a seafarer's employment agreement (SEA) has expired and a seafarer has reached the maximum period of service and/or repatriation of the seafarer is difficult due to current travel restrictions, the SEA may be extended by up to 6 months from the date of expiry **but only with the agreement of the seafarer.**

***55. Will the same terms and conditions apply to seafarer's employment agreements that have been extended?***

In this situation, the same terms and conditions as originally agreed will continue to apply. Any Agreement to such an extension must be signed by the seafarer and witnessed by a person not party to the Agreement.

***56. Who is liable for the costs pending repatriation?***

Shipping companies remain liable for costs pending repatriation. These include but are not limited to medical care, crew transfer, isolation etc.

If a shipping company is in doubt, they should contact the financial security provider to confirm that the insurance or other financial security is in place for additional costs.

***57. What will be accepted as valid seagoing service for the revalidation or issue of a Certificate of Competency (CoC)?***

All days spent on the ship when it is fully crewed and operational or if placed in warm lay-up, will be accepted as valid seagoing service for the revalidation or issue of a CoC.

Sea service for cadets currently completing a sea phase will be subject to review.

***58. Who should be contacted in the event of changes to the Minimum Safe Manning Document (MSMD) due to COVID-19 travel restrictions?***

If a crew member needs to leave the ship due to urgent circumstances and cannot be replaced immediately due to COVID-19 travel restrictions the shipowner/company manager should contact the Marine Survey Office for a dispensation or revised MSMD as may be applicable.

***59. Is it the IMA's intention to accept expired seafarer certificates of competency/proficiency and medical certificates, when conducting Port State Control inspections?***

The IMA will accept expired seafarer certificates of competency/proficiency and medical certificates where the flag administration has granted an extension due to the current circumstances. In these circumstances, the shipowner may be asked to produce any letter of dispensation issued by the flag State and details of any measures put in place in order to comply with any conditions imposed by the flag State, including where appropriate, amendments to relevant parts of the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance – Part 1 & II. Shipowners may also be required to provide details of how crew entitlements under the Maritime Labour Convention are to be protected in light of an extended stay on board and what plans, if necessary, the shipowner has to repatriate them.

## **Surveying and Certification of Irish Registered Ships**

***60. What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in international trade?***

Companies should endeavour to arrange surveys within the applicable time window as normal. Where this is not possible, due to personnel and travel restrictions that are currently in place around the world, the Department has decided owners or ISM operating companies should contract the Marine Survey Office directly who will advise on this matter on a case-by-case basis.

***61. What advice is available in relation to survey and certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in Domestic Voyages including fishing vessels?***

The survey of ships and passenger boats engaged in domestic voyages and fishing vessels will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Owners should apply for survey in the usual manner and they will be contacted by the Marine Survey Office (MSO) to discuss arrangements.

***62. What advice is available in relation to survey and Certification of New-Building ships of all types for the Irish Flag?***

Due to increased travel restrictions it is not possible for MSO Surveyors to travel to shipyards overseas. Therefore, the survey of new-building ships for the Irish flag of all types will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the shipyard and shipowner. In such cases the shipyard and shipowner should make direct contact with the MSO who will discuss arrangements.

***63. Where can queries in relation to Ships Radio Licences and Registration of EPIRBs be directed to?***

Ship Radio Licence/Transfer Applications, EPIRB Registrations and general maritime radio-communications related queries should be e-mailed directly to [RadioSurveyors@transport.gov.ie](mailto:RadioSurveyors@transport.gov.ie)

Relevant forms are available in an editable format at the following link, <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1d6ea4-maritime-radio/>

***64. What if there is a delay in issuing a hard copy of the Ships Radio Licence?***

As there may be delays in issuing hard copies of licences, a PDF version of the Ships Radio Licence and associated documentation may be emailed to applicants during this period. This PDF should be printed and retained onboard the vessel and be available for inspection purposes.

***65. What are the MSO's plans with regard to the servicing of inflatable life-rafts, inflatable Life-jackets and Marine Evacuation Systems (MES)?***

Routine Servicing of Life Saving Apparatus under SOLAS III Regulation 20.8.1.1 and national legislation permits an Administration to extend the period of servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and Marine Evacuation Systems (MES) to 17 months where servicing at the required interval is impracticable. The MSO recognises that servicing facilities may not be available due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 and therefore, on application to the MSO and subject to an onboard inspection by the Master, an extension will be considered of the servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and MES by five months after expiry to a maximum total of 17 months. Routine on-board inspections of Life Saving Apparatus should continue as normal on equipment subject to the above extensions.

***66. Is it the MSO's intention to accept expired surveys, when conducting Port State Control inspections?***

The Paris MoU on Port State Control issued Temporary Guidance related to COVID-19 for Port State Control Authorities on 18 March 2020 in which they require that when a ship does not comply with the requirements of the surveys, inspections and audits contained in the relevant conventions, the ship must provide evidence to the port State that the flag State has agreed to an exceptional delay specific to COVID-19. There should also be evidence that the ship has a plan that covers how the ship will be brought back into the regular survey or audit cycle.

## **Maritime Search and Rescue Services (SAR)**

***67. Is there any change to National SAR arrangements?***

**No, there is no change to the national SAR arrangements.**

- a. The Coast Guard will continue to coordinate Maritime SAR services through its three Rescue Coordination Centres at Dublin, Malin and Valentia operating on a 24/7 basis.

- b. These centres keep a constant watch on Ch16 VHF, 2182 Mhz, maritime frequencies and coordinate the national response to any EPIRB, PLB or ELT alerts.
- c. Coast Guard Rescue Coordination centres can also be contacted via ECAS by dialling 112 or 999 and asking for *Coast Guard*.

#### **SAR Resources**

- a. The Coast Guard SAR helicopter contract, with day and night services operates out of Dublin, Sligo, Shannon and Waterford.
- b. Volunteer Coast Guard Units provide Rescue Boats, Cliff Rescue and Shoreline search capabilities and act as the eyes and ears of the RCCs. They are also available to assist the Principal Response Agencies with other emergency service as may be requested.
- c. RNLI services are unchanged and Coast Guard and RNLI remain in constant contact to address any issues arising.
- d. Locally based Community Rescue Boats, as coordinated by the Coast Guard, are also available to assist with local SAR requirement.

### ***68. Am I permitted to partake in water sports or use recreational craft?***

People are permitted to engage in outdoor sporting on an individual basis.

Members of the public should use caution if engaged in water sports, and are requested to avoid swimming in areas with which they are not familiar, and preferably to keep to areas where there are lifeguards on duty. Further information on lifeguard services is available here <https://watersafety.ie/>

Swimmers must adhere to the national guidelines on social distancing and note that children require constant uninterrupted supervision near water.

Remember *No lifejacket – No excuse*; A lifejacket should always be worn when on or near the water including when fishing from the shore.

## **Maritime Pollution**

### ***69. What do I do if I see a pollution incident at sea or along the coast?***

Contact the Coast Guard via CH 16 VHF or ECAS 112/999 and provide a description of the sighting.

### **Contact details:**

Department of Transport – [info@transport.gov.ie](mailto:info@transport.gov.ie)

COVID-19 related maritime issues – [maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie](mailto:maritimecovid@transport.gov.ie)

Marine Notices – [marinenotices@transport.gov.ie](mailto:marinenotices@transport.gov.ie)

Mercantile Marine Office – [admin@seafarers.ie](mailto:admin@seafarers.ie)

Marine Survey Office – [mso@transport.gov.ie](mailto:mso@transport.gov.ie)

HSE – [www2.hse.ie/coronavirus](http://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus) or by calling 1850 24 1850

