



April 30, 2009

OP'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING NO. A-06- 2009

TO: ALL STEAMSHIP AGENTS, OWNERS, AND OPERATORS

SUBJECT: H1N1 SWINE FLU VIRUS

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) is concerned with the recent outbreak of the H1N1 Swine Flu virus that has generated alarm in many countries. Currently, the ACP requires that vessels declare animal information and any diseases on board, as well as their last ten port calls; however, effective immediately, the ACP will also require that vessels declare, prior to their arrival at Canal Waters, the following information in the "Visit Remarks" section of the EDCS *Ship Due* Form:

- Whether any of the declared port calls are located in countries identified by the World Health Organization as having outbreaks of the H1N1 Swine Flu virus; and
- Whether passengers or crewmembers on board are experiencing flu-like symptoms, such as high fever, cough, fatigue, severe headache, vomiting, or lack of appetite, and what has been the evolution of these symptoms.

Among the countries identified as having outbreaks of the H1N1 Swine Flu virus are Mexico, Canada, United States, Spain, Germany, New Zealand and Great Britain. Masters shall consult the World Health Organization's website www.who.org and/or www.paho.org daily in order to verify if new countries have been identified as having outbreaks of this virus.

Declaring the above information prior to arriving at Panama Canal waters is imperative in order to apply appropriate preventive measures to counter any possible spreading of this virus. Vessels reporting any of the above conditions could be subject to health measures that may include, but are not limited to, sanitary and health authorities boarding the vessel to verify what has been declared.

As a reminder, the Maritime Regulations for the Operation of the Panama Canal state that embarking/disembarking in Canal waters is prohibited until a vessel has been declared safe in accordance with public health regulations.

We wish to assure the maritime community that the ACP is implementing appropriate measures to ensure that its personnel required to board vessels will not represent a risk to their crew for the propagation of the Swine Flu virus.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Manuel E. Benítez
Executive Vice President of Operations