

AUTORIDAD DEL CANAL DE PANAMÁ
VICE PRESIDENCY FOR TRANSIT BUSINESS**ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-12-2020**

April 1, 2020

TO : All Shipping Agents, Owners, and Operators

SUBJECT: Transit of Vessels with Positive or Suspected Cases of COVID-19

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) informs that on March 29, 2020, the waterway facilitated the transit of Holland America's passenger vessels MS Zaandam and MS Rotterdam, despite there were suspected cases of COVID-19 among the passengers and crewmembers on board these vessels.

These transits were approved under extraordinary conditions and for humanitarian reasons. The ACP, in conjunction with the Republic of Panama's Ministry of Health (MINSAs), granted these exceptions and enforced extreme sanitary measures to safeguard the health of ACP employees and reduce to a minimum the number of Canal employees involved in the transit.

Notwithstanding the exceptions granted to these two vessels, shipping agents are reminded that vessels with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 are prohibited from transiting the Panama Canal and must comply with the required quarantine period. All transiting vessels must adhere to the following protocols established by the ACP in response to COVID-19:

- All vessels are required to report the health conditions on board through the Panama Maritime Single Window System (VUMPA). In case of non-compliance and/or providing false information, the vessel will be subject to penalties and/or transit restrictions.
- All vessels are required to report through VUMPA if and when crew changes took place at ports with confirmed COVID-19 cases within 14 days prior to arrival at Panama Canal waters.
- All information reported through VUMPA will be verified prior to the vessel's arrival.
- Upon arrival at Panama Canal waters, a Panama Canal admeasurer will call the vessel via VHF radio to confirm whether there are any crewmembers or passengers on board showing virus-related symptoms.
- The Panama Canal admeasurer will then embark and verify the Maritime Health Declaration information previously submitted and confirmed by the master through VUMPA.
- The admeasurer, after embarking, will again verify with the vessel's master or officer in charge that there are no passengers or crewmembers on board showing COVID-19 virus related symptoms.
- Should there be any suspected cases of COVID-19 on board, and, due to the severity of the symptoms, it could be concluded that there is a contagious disease on board, the Maritime Health Unit of MINSAs will be called to embark the vessel.

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- During this time, boarding and disembarking will be prohibited and the yellow quarantine flag will be flown, denoting that the ship is under quarantine.
- The next steps will be determined following MINSA's inspection.
- MINSA also communicated to all shipping companies that they are required to report any crewmembers or passengers on board exhibiting illness-related symptoms, regardless of whether they are related to COVID-19 or not.

We urge all concerned to adhere to these protocols in order to prevent any further spread of the COVID-19 virus during this difficult period.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Ilya R. Espino de Marotta
Acting Vice President for Transit Business