

MSQ VTS Direction 09/2020

COVID-19 Threat – vessels inbound QLD Ports

Issued 05 March 2020

Background

In light of Australia's escalated response to the current threat of the COVID-19, I have directed that Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) adopt a proactive stance in managing the risks associated with incoming shipping to Queensland's ports.

Direction

General Manager has issued a new Direction under section 191A of the *Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Act 1994*.

This direction applies to the masters of all ships in Queensland waters if:

- **the ship left, or transited through a port in mainland China or South Korea (both of which are a relevant country) in the last 14 days, or**
- **the ship intends to enter a Queensland Compulsory pilotage area.**

The ship must not enter a Queensland pilotage area until 14 days have elapsed since the ship's departure from mainland China or South Korea.

Effective immediately, Queensland's Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) will require all foreign trading ships that are inbound to Queensland Port Pilotage areas to provide the following information until further notice:

- 1) **Report whether the vessel has departed mainland China or South Korea within the past 14 days.**
- 2) **Report if any Crew Member or passenger has visited Mainland China or South Korea within the past 14 days.**
- 3) **Report if any Crew Member or passenger is showing any of the Novel Coronavirus symptoms that include fever, flu-like symptoms cough, sore throat, headache or difficulty breathing.**

If the answer is **NO** to Questions 1, 2 and 3, MSQ will then inform all parties including Marine Pilots, and ships agent of the clear declaration. Vessel can proceed as scheduled.

If the answer is **YES** to Questions 1, 2 or 3:

The vessel is **NOT** to enter a Queensland Compulsory Pilotage Area nor embark a Marine Pilot until 14 days since departing or transiting through mainland China has elapsed. Question 3 is to be repeated to the vessel on its call into VTS after the 14 days has elapsed.

The 14 day quarantine period will commence at pilot away time in China or South Korea which will be the last time the crew of a vessel will have interacted with a person from Mainland China or South Korea.

To calculate the time in which an Australian pilot can board a vessel, add 2 hrs to the pilot away time and then add 14 days.

*(For example, if the Pilot away time in China is 1000 11/2020 (+0800 UTC),
the earliest Australian Pilot Boarding time will be 1200 25/2020 (+1000 UTC))*

If the answer is **YES** to question 3, VTS is to advise the RHM immediately and follow any instructions given. MSQ will make the appropriate notifications to State and Federal agencies for further advice. The vessel is **NOT** to enter a Queensland Compulsory Pilotage Area nor embark a Marine Pilot and be directed to remain outside of the Compulsory Pilotage Area until assessed and cleared by appropriate government qualified personnel.

If in the event a ship is non-compliant by not providing answers to the questions, the ship is to be directed to remain outside the VTS area or port limits until such time as the above questions have been answered.

VTS is to record the number of ships vetted with identifying the result of the questioning. A report from each VTS centre is to be provided to Townsville VTS centre every 24 hours at 1600 daily.

Townsville VTS is to submit collated reports to the General Manager MSQ by 1630 daily.

If in the event a member of the public or boating community contacts VTS regarding any response from a ship they are to respond with "*MSQ will make the appropriate notifications to State and Federal agencies for further advice*".

These precautionary measures are consistent with Queensland Health's posture on the need to minimise risk across the state. Queensland's Regional Harbour Masters can be contacted for further advice or information as required.

This direction is subject to change based on advice provided by the Australian Department of Health This direction will remain in effect until further notice.