



# RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. As countries worldwide tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, the global maritime industry continues its vital role of ensuring that essential goods such as food and medical supplies reach consumers and medical facilities across the world. Being a major transshipment hub and international centre for maritime businesses, Maritime Singapore remains fully operational to support global trade and supply chains. We will continue to uphold our economic responsibilities while putting in place appropriate measures to protect the health and well-being of all who live and work in Singapore.

2. Singapore takes a rational, evidence-based and calibrated approach in responding to the outbreak. We have progressively stepped up measures based on the risk assessment of developments globally to: (i) minimise the risk of imported cases; (ii) detect cases early; (iii) minimise the change of the virus spreading within Singapore; and (iv) minimise the chances of re-exportation overseas. A chronological snapshot of our measures that are relevant to the maritime community is annexed.

## Early detection and swift response

3. Recognising the need for swift inter-agency and multi-stakeholder co-ordination to respond to the health crisis, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) had engaged agencies and industry partners early. This was done through a Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) on COVID-19 to coordinate our whole-of-government response, consultations with our port terminal operators, PSA and Jurong Port, on port operations and measures for port personnel, as well as frequent engagements with the Singapore Shipping

Association (SSA), Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) and Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS).

4. Pre-emptive measures were also put in place, taking guidance from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO): temperature screening at sea checkpoints to detect suspect cases; requirements to submit a Maritime Declaration of Health; cleaning and disinfection regime by cruise and ferry operators; and travel advisories for affected regions and countries. Information was promptly shared as early as January 2020 via our advisories, press releases and through industry stakeholders. MPA continues to take guidance from circulars promulgated by IMO to respond effectively to global developments affecting international shipping.

## Responding to a global outbreak – facilitating safe crew change

5. Singapore recognises the important role of seafarers in keeping international trade and global supply chains going and is committed to facilitating safe crew change to ensure seafarer well-being. For this reason, Singapore has been facilitating crew change since March 2020, using protocols intended to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread, regardless of the crew's nationality or the vessel's flag.

6. Singapore firmly believes that the successful and safe facilitation of crew change requires the coordination and collective effort of the industry, unions and governments. To this end, we have worked with our industry stakeholders and unions to produce the Singapore Crew Change Guidebook,

which we have made available to the rest of the global maritime community through the IMO. The Guidebook details the Crew Change Safe Corridor, which allows crew change to be carried out in a safe environment to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread to healthy seafarers and to the local community.

7. Together with our unions and trade association, as well as international partners including the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the International Maritime Employers' Council (IMEC) and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), Singapore has also established the first global ground-up tripartite initiative known as the Singapore Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (SG-STAR) Fund. The SG-STAR Fund aims to work with stakeholders in seafaring nations to promote best practices and help catalyse the development of solutions for safe crew changes such as accrediting safe medical and holding facilities in seafaring nations like the Philippines, as well as trialling digital solutions including smart wearable technologies. The total fund now amounts to SGD\$1.68 million (about USD \$1.2 million).

8. Since its launch in August 2020, the SG-STAR Fund has received support from other international organisations including the Global Maritime Forum Maritime Industry Crew Change Taskforce, INTERTANKO, and World Shipping Council; as well as several port authorities including Abu Dhabi, Antwerp, Barcelona, Hamburg, Rotterdam, Sines, and Vancouver. One specific initiative of the SG-STAR Fund is the CrewSafe audit programme developed jointly by government, industry and seafarer unions. The audit programme is based on Singapore's crew change model to establish safe and scalable 'corridors' for crew change that will help ensure quality checks on quarantine/holding, medical and swabbing facilities in crew-supplying countries.

9. Singapore has also set up a Crew Change Facilitation Centre (CFC), a dedicated facility for sign-on crew with effect from 1 September 2020. Designed to enhance the capacity of designated holding facilities by using existing floating accommodations, the CFC was established as a self-contained facility with an onsite medical centre along with testing. Singapore is moving to Phase 2 of its CFC, where the CFC would be used to test-bed emerging technologies that support safer crew change procedures. MPA is also exploring the potential uses of the CFC beyond Phase 2, when circumstances allow for the vaccination of seafarers at the global level, including collaborations with health institutions. Such measures allow Singapore to facilitate more crew

changes in a sustainable manner, whilst keeping both ships and the local community safe.

### **Moving forward together and keeping global trade flowing**

10. International cooperation is essential to ensuring that maritime transport continues to play its vital role of moving essential goods such as food and medical supplies to where they are needed. MPA has been working closely with our bilateral and multilateral partners. We continue to engage key partners such as IMO and the Port Authorities Roundtable (PAR) and to share regular updates with foreign missions and international organisations in Singapore. In April 2020, 20 PAR members issued a Declaration to ensure their ports remain open and to share best practices; to date, more than 50 port authorities from across Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Oceania have come onboard the Declaration.

11. We also remain prepared that COVID-19 will be with us for some time. In response to the pandemic, various economic relief measures have been made available to the maritime transport sector including a S\$33 million MaritimeSG Together Package first introduced in May 2020 to provide targeted support for maritime companies, individuals and seafarers. These measures offer immediate relief such as financial support for maritime companies such as port dues concession and rebate on counter rental and overnight berthing; as well as financial and employment support for Singaporean seafarers to help them weather the crisis. Such efforts have allowed the continued provision of essential marine services including bunkering, ship stores and ship supplies. In addition, to strengthen the resilience of the maritime transport sector to the continuing effects of the pandemic, MPA has also offered greater support for upskilling and digital transformation efforts.

More information on Singapore's measures can be found at MPA's dedicated COVID-19 webpage:

[go.gov.sg/MPACOVID-19](https://go.gov.sg/MPACOVID-19)



## Timeline of key measures taken in response to COVID-19 for the maritime sector in Singapore

2020	
<b>23 Jan</b>	Singapore's Ministry of Health (MOH) <a href="#">issued</a> a public travel health advisory
<b>24 Jan</b>	Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on temperature screening at sea checkpoints
<b>27 Jan</b>	MOH issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the composition and terms of reference of the Multi-Ministry Taskforce on COVID-19 (MTF)
<b>29 Jan</b>	Singapore Tourism Board (STB) and MPA issued a <a href="#">joint circular</a> on enhanced measures for cruise lines
<b>30 Jan</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on an advisory to the shipping community on COVID-19
<b>31 Jan</b>	World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a 'global health emergency'; International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued Circular Letter No. 4203 and 4204 on a situation update of COVID-19, measures to take and WHO's advice
<b>1 Feb</b>	Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Information (MTI) issued an <a href="#">advisory</a> on COVID-19 for businesses; MPA issued Port Marine Circulars (PMCs) 2 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 3 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 advising the shipping community and vessels under the Singapore Registry of Ships (SRS), measures implemented by regional ferry operators and port terminal operators and requirement to submit the Maritime Declaration of Health
<b>4 Feb</b>	Singapore's Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and MTI jointly issued an <a href="#">advisory</a> for workplaces and frontline workers
<b>12 Feb</b>	MPA issued PMC 4 of 2020 on heightened measures with additional precautionary measures for large scale events, workplaces, temperature screening at sea checkpoints and cleaning and disinfection regime by cruise and ferry operators
<b>18 Feb</b>	<a href="#">Singapore Budget 2020</a> announcing economic relief measures; MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the first stimulus package for the maritime industry
<b>24 Feb</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on a crew member with COVID-19 who had recovered and the cargo ship resuming normal operations
<b>26 Feb</b>	MPA issued Shipping Circular (SC) 3 of 2020 on the impact of COVID-19 on SRS vessels MPA issued PMC 6 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 7 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas
<b>29 Feb</b>	WHO upgraded global risk of COVID-19 spread to highest level
<b>4 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC 8 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 9 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas
<b>5 Mar</b>	International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) issued a COVID-19 guidance for the industry
<b>9 Mar</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> and MPA, STB and MOH issued a <a href="#">joint statement</a> on precautionary measures taken for cruise ships' scheduled calls at Singapore
<b>10 Mar</b>	MPA, STB and MOH issued two more joint statements (2 and 3) on precautionary measures taken for cruise ships' scheduled calls at Singapore
<b>11 Mar</b>	WHO declares COVID-19 a pandemic
<b>13 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC 10 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 11 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas MOH issued a <a href="#">press release</a> informing, among others, the cessation of port calls for all cruise vessels
<b>16 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC 12 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 13 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas
<b>20 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC 14 ( <i>superseded</i> ) and 15 ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary

	measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas		Circular Letter No. 4204 – Add.5 on guidance relating to the certification of seafarers
<b>23 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">16</a> , <a href="#">17</a> and <a href="#">18</a> ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 updating on the Maritime Declaration of Health and added precautionary measures for vessels with crew or passengers that have travelled to affected areas, as well as advisory for shore personnel and ship crew visiting or working onboard vessels	<b>16 Apr</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">22</a> ( <i>superseded</i> ) and <a href="#">23</a> of 2020 on additional stringent measures for operators of harbour crafts and pleasure crafts, and vessels in port to comply with the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) (Control Order) Regulations 2020
<b>25 Mar</b>	<a href="#">Joint ministerial statement</a> issued by Singapore and 8 <sup>1</sup> other countries to identify and address trade disruptions caused by COVID-19 that could affect the flow of essential goods	<b>24 Apr</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the Declaration signed by 20 port authorities to keep ports open
<b>26 Mar</b>	<a href="#">Resilience Budget 2020</a> announcing additional economic relief measures; MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the second stimulus package for the maritime industry	<b>30 Apr</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> and PMC <a href="#">25</a> of 2020 on the MaritimeSG Together Package for maritime companies, individuals and seafarers
<b>27 Mar</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">19</a> ( <i>superseded</i> ) of 2020 on crew change under special circumstances in the Port of Singapore	<b>30 Apr</b>	MPA issued a Port Marine Notice (PMN) <a href="#">26</a> of 2020, and together with SMOU, SOS and SSA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> calling on ships to sound their horns to show support for seafarers
<b>30 Mar</b>	MPA issued SC <a href="#">5</a> of 2020 on guidelines on the medical examination of seafarers and seafarers' medical certificate	<b>1 May</b>	MTI issued a <a href="#">press release</a> reaffirming Singapore's commitment to facilitate cross-border flows with Australia, Canada, Republic of Korea and New Zealand
<b>3 Apr</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">20</a> of 2020 on suspension of activities at workplace premises in the maritime sector to reduce COVID-19 transmission; MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> affirming that the Port of Singapore remains open; MPA, Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) rolled out a Maritime SG United <a href="#">video</a> to recognise maritime personnel keeping the Port of Singapore running during COVID-19	<b>21 May</b>	MPA and SOS issued a <a href="#">joint release</a> on collaboration to help Singaporean seafarers tide over COVID-19
<b>6 Apr</b>	<a href="#">Solidarity Budget 2020</a> announcing additional economic relief measures	<b>22 May</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">26</a> of 2020 on enhancement to crew change for cargo ships under special circumstances in the Port of Singapore
<b>7 Apr</b>	"Circuit Breaker" implemented	<b>2 Jun</b>	Phase One of re-opening
<b>13 Apr</b>	MPA issued press releases ( <a href="#">1</a> and <a href="#">2</a> ) on two floating accommodation facilities to temporarily house healthy foreign workers as part of efforts to reduce local transmission of COVID-19	<b>12 Jun</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on approved crew change cases in Singapore
<b>14 Apr</b>	MPA issued SC <a href="#">6</a> of 2020 on extension of STCW certificates issued by Singapore following IMO's	<b>18 Jun</b>	MPA issued SC <a href="#">13</a> of 2020 on measures to support seafarers onboard SRS in light of restrictions caused by COVID-19 MPA issued PMC <a href="#">27</a> of 2020 and a <a href="#">press release</a> on updated requirements and measures for Phase Two re-opening
		<b>19 Jun</b>	Phase Two of re-opening
		<b>25 Jun</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on approved cases of crew change crossing 13,000 as Singapore observes the Day of the Seafarer
		<b>24 Jul</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on enhanced safety measures in the Port of Singapore MPA issued SC <a href="#">14</a> of 2020 on best practices for SRS to minimise risk of COVID-19 onboard

<sup>1</sup> Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Lao PDR, Myanmar, New Zealand and Uruguay

<b>15 Aug</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on a crew member onboard an ocean-going ship who tested positive for COVID-19 in Singapore
<b>26 Aug</b>	MTI issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on extending block exemption order for liner shipping agreements
<b>28 Aug</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the establishment of the CFC and SG-STAR Fund for safe crew change
<b>2 Sep</b>	MPA organised the 14th edition of the Singapore Maritime Lecture with a <a href="#">keynote address</a> on building resilience in a post-COVID world
<b>17 Sep</b>	MPA, SSA, SMOU, SOS, ITF, IMEC and ICS issued a <a href="#">joint release</a> on the establishment of the SG-STAR Fund
<b>22 Sep</b>	MTI issued a <a href="#">press release</a> reaffirming Singapore's commitment to support international trade and investment recovery at the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers' Meeting
<b>23 Sep</b>	MPA issued SC <a href="#">16</a> of 2020 on further extension of STCW certificates issued by Singapore
<b>8 Oct</b>	STB issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on safe and gradual resumption of cruising including establishment of CruiseSafe Certification
<b>9 Oct</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">39</a> of 2020 and a <a href="#">press release</a> on extension of assistance to Singaporean seafarers under the Seafarers Relief Package
<b>22 Oct</b>	MOM issued an updated <a href="#">advisory</a> on requirements for safe management measures at the workplace
<b>30 Nov</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">43</a> of 2020 on shore leave for crew working onboard vessels in the Port of Singapore
<b>2 Dec</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on the CrewSafe Audit programme
<b>8 Dec</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">44</a> of 2020 and a <a href="#">press release</a> on extending support through the MaritimeSG Together package
<b>23 Dec</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">47</a> of 2020 on revision to the number of pax onboard pleasure craft in the Port of Singapore during Phase Three re-opening
<b>24 Dec</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on safety at sea for the year-end holiday season
<b>28 Dec</b>	Phase Three of re-opening

2021	
<b>2 Jan</b>	MPA, Economic Development Board (EDB), Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and MOH issued a <a href="#">joint release</a> on measures to safeguard the health and safety of shore-based personnel in the maritime sector
<b>4 Jan</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">2</a> of 2021 on prohibition of crew change in Singapore for crew with recent travel history to the UK and South Africa
<b>6 Jan</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on COVID-19 cases connected to NewOcean 6 Bunker Tanker
<b>14 Jan</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">4</a> of 2021 and a <a href="#">press release</a> on enhanced requirements for shore-based personnel boarding vessels in the Port of Singapore
<b>16 Jan</b>	MOM issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on on-arrival tests for newly arrived foreign workers from marine, construction and process sectors
<b>18 Jan</b>	MPA issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on frontline maritime personnel to receive COVID-19 vaccinations under the Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise (SAVE)
<b>19 Jan</b>	MPA issued PMC <a href="#">5</a> of 2021 on crew change for cargo ships in the Port of Singapore