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Oasis Circular No.: 2002

Subject: Update on the Outbreak of the New Coronavirus in China

Following our last circular dated 22 Jan 2020 alerting clients to the outbreak of a new coronavirus in China, we have received numerous enquiries regarding the latest situation, especially about port operations and measures taken by the authorities to contain the spread of the coronavirus. We hereby provide an update for the reference of our readers.

### 1. About the coronavirus

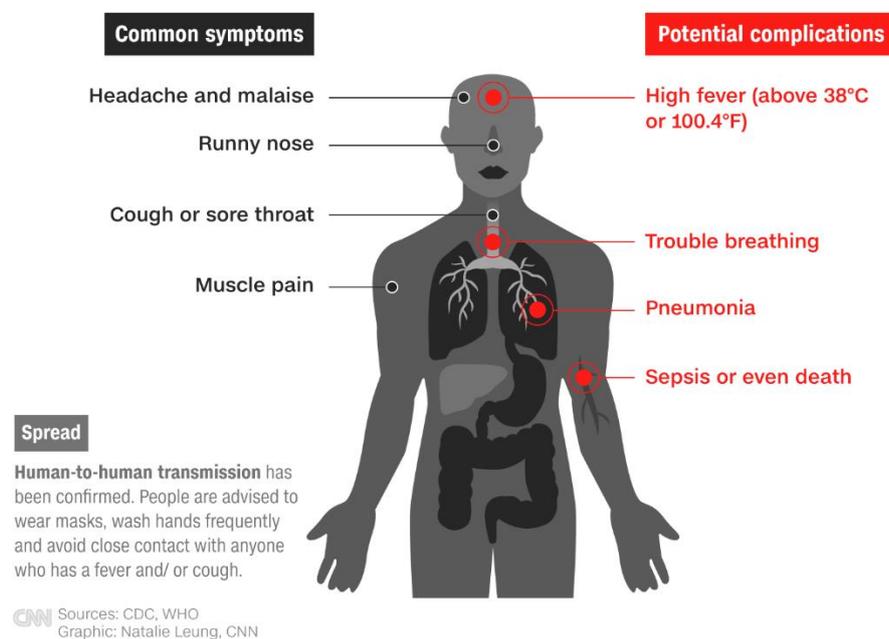
- By 29 Jan 2020, over 6000 cases have been confirmed in mainland China, among which 132 have died and 110 are cured. Besides, over 9000 suspected cases are yet to be tested and confirmed or discounted.



CNN Source: National Health Commission of the PRC. Data correct as of January 29, 01:00 A.M. ET  
Graphic: Natalie Leung and Henrik Pettersson, CNN

(cited from CNN news)

- According to Chinese health authorities, the virus can be **spread from human to human mainly through near distance droplet transmission or physical contact**, and people can be **infectious before any symptoms appear**, meaning that carriers may not realize they are infected before they transmit the virus to others.
- The incubation period is usually **3-7 days**, with 1 day the shortest and 14 days the longest. In case of suspected infection, the isolation period under observation is recommended to be **10 to 14 days**.
- All age groups and gender groups are susceptible to the virus.
- Chinese health experts say that fever, among others, is still one of the most typical symptoms but not a definite one.



(cited from CNN news)

## 2. Emergency responses in China

- The central government, headed by President Xi Jinping, has taken direct control of emergency response operations.
- The state council has extended the Lunar New Year holiday to Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> in order to slow the rate at which people travel from their hometowns to big cities. In Shanghai and some other cities, the local governments further extended the holiday and require that all businesses, except those maintaining the city necessities such as gas stations, pharmacies and supermarkets, etc., shall not be opened before 2400hrs on Feb 9<sup>th</sup>.
- All mass celebrations for the festival have been cancelled and authorities have made very widespread propaganda to raise people's awareness of the virus spread, urging

people to stay at home as far as possible and avoid holding family gatherings or going into crowds. When going out, wearing face masks is highly recommended.

- At least 15 cities, including Wuhan and other cities in Hubei province have been placed under full or partial lockdown. Wuhan itself has been effectively quarantined, with all routes in and out of the city closed or highly regulated. The central government announced it is sending additional medical staff along with army medical personnel to help the city's stretched hospital staff.
- In many other places of China, public transportation such as intercity railways, shuttle buses and ferries are downsized and intensely monitored, or even cancelled in some cities. Private cars can still be used for intercity travel but are also closely checked; at some places only cars with local plate numbers can cross the city border.
- The Ministry of Transportation in China has initiated level II emergency response and issued an internal notice to its subordinate government bodies including local MSA offices, requiring them to work closely with medical and health authorities and to take effective measures to prevent and control the spread of the coronavirus.

Apart from raising guidance and requirements in terms of road transportation and intercity transportation, the notice also requires that proper measures should be taken at ports. Ferry terminals and cruise terminals are required to be disinfected, ventilated and monitored closely. Cargo terminals are required to cooperate with maritime authorities to reduce personal contact as much as possible.

- China Customs have also issued a notice, requiring visitors to report fever, coughing or difficulty in breathing to local Customs and cooperate with the Customs to check temperature and conduct medical examination, etc.

Meantime, China Customs are granting quick clearance to ships carrying medical equipment and stuff that are urgently needed in anti-virus control and treatment.

### **3. Shipping activities**

- Currently, the operation of cargo ships at all the sea ports is going on normally, amid an increased state of alert in response to the coronavirus, although detailed requirements in different ports may vary slightly.

If there are Chinese crewmembers on board, local Customs may enquire if any crewmember has visited Wuhan or made close physical contact with anyone from Wuhan in the past month.

If any crewmember shows a higher temperature than normal or other symptoms of the virus infection, the Customs will ask the crewmember to be tested to confirm if he/she is indeed infected by the new coronavirus, so that proper measures can be taken in time to contain further spreading.

- At some ports, loading and or discharging operation may be slow due to the lack of stevedores and terminal staff who are away for the prolonged lunar new year holiday.
- Wuhan is an inland river port on Yangtze river. Except one direct container line between Wuhan and Japan, most of its imported cargo is carried by feeder vessels. Since Jan 23rd, except vessels carrying coal and oil cargo and other daily necessities for the local people, other vessels should avoid calling Wuhan port and depart from the terminals, with loading, discharging or anchoring forbidden until further notice.
- Due to inaccessibility of public intercity transportation at some places, if a surveyor or any other service provider is needed to attend on board, especially at smaller ports where surveyors are not available locally and have to travel there from other places, it will take longer or be more difficult to arrange their attendance although we will do our best to arrange.

#### **4. Recommendations to ships calling at ports in China or having recently called at ports in China**

- If any crewmember on board has visited Wuhan or made close physical contact with anyone from Wuhan in the past month, pay close attention to his health condition and report immediately if any abnormalities are found.
- In case of any suspected infection case on board, advise the local agent and report to the local Customs immediately, so that the necessary medical test and shore examination can be arranged as early as possible. Meantime, precautionary measures such as isolation should be taken immediately to avoid further spreading.  
Currently, the result of the new coronavirus test can be available within a few hours. If the test shows negative result, then the crewmember can return on board to resume duty. If the test result is positive, the authorities will take necessary actions accordingly.
- Crew change should be avoided during ships' call at Chinese ports in order to reduce risks.
- Raise crewmembers' awareness of the coronavirus risk and ask them to be more careful with personal hygiene such as

- wearing masks and wearing them properly whenever it is practical, particularly when the ship is at berth,
  - washing hand more frequently with detergents,
  - cooking food properly and avoiding eating raw meat,
  - avoid sharing food, towels and tableware with others,
  - maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- When the ship is in port, following measures are recommended:
- avoid crew shore leave as far as possible,
  - ask crewmembers to minimize contact with people from shore and to wear a mask when doing so,
  - arrange watchman to check for symptoms and the body temperature of people who board the ship and refuse the access to those who show symptoms of fever,
  - closely control the embarked personnel and limit their activities on board to the extent of necessity,
  - disinfect the closed areas if possible.

We hope the above is of assistance. Should you have any query, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Best regards,

Oasis P&I Services Company Limited