



South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1

Date: 10 October 2014

Marine Notice No. 25 of 2014

Medical Evacuations from Vessels (MEDEVAC)

TO MASTERS, SHIP OWNERS AND OPERATORS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SHIPS, RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS, MARINE EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS AND THEIR AGENTS, SHIP BUILDERS/REPAIRERS, INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, SAMSA SURVEYORS, MARITIME INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS CREW/STORES TRANSFER VESSELS, YACHTS AND FISHING VESSELS .

Summary

This Marine Notice serves to inform industry of the procedure to be followed when considering the evacuation of crew members off vessels due to medical reasons irrespective of severity or nature of medical condition. To ensure that we remain consistent and abide by the various Government health directives and advisories and also World Health Organisation warnings with regard to Communicable Disease it is prudent that we implement the following measures in order to safeguard South Africa and its citizens.

Background

With the increase in World Health Organisation warnings' relating to infectious diseases like EBOLA it has become necessary to tighten up on the access granted to persons who display signs of possible infection not just via vessel to shore interaction but also when the sick or injured crew are brought ashore.

1. This marine notice serves to inform all on the correct reporting channels and make everyone aware of who has the authority to allow the medical emergency evacuation (Medevac) of crew members from vessels to take place.

As soon as it becomes known that there is / are persons on board vessels with illness/sickness/injury or death and/or requiring medical evacuation for whatever reason into South Africa the following procedure is to be strictly adhered to -

- The Master must obtain radio medical advice (may be by email/text) from Telkom Radio and complete the appropriate TMAS (Telemedical Advice at Sea) documents
- The doctor evaluating the case will consider case definitions for infectious diseases when providing advice
- The doctor must advise the MRCC of his/her advice and any Medevac Decision

- The Master of the Vessel must contact and inform the nearest Port Authority (TNPA Port Control office) of the Medevac Decision. The details to be included in this report are;
 - Standard text TMAS format information
 - Last 10 Ports of Call where personnel embarked or disembarked
 - Three separate body temperature recordings of the patient to be evacuated taken at intervals of at least 4 hours where applicable.
 - Whether the vessel took passengers, crew or goods from any of the countries identified as posing a risk or any other area affected by the Ebola Virus within the previous 21 days
 - Also report any crew changes that may have occurred from any of these countries
- Masters are to ensure that local agents if not appointed, are appointed and given all necessary details pertaining to the request including information relevant to infectious diseases above.
- Masters of vessels requiring assistance/Medevac must report all illness/sickness and deaths of crew / passengers on board within the last 21 days, to the Port Authority either directly or through a shipping agent
- Agents appointed to co-ordinate Medevacs must contact the Port Authority to provide all necessary information relevant to infectious diseases and to establish whether permission is granted to land patients by Medevac.
- Masters/Agents should immediately report illness/sickness/injury or death on board to the Port Authority to facilitate appropriate health response
- A Medevac may only occur with the written permission of the Port Authority or the MRCC after consultations with Port Health has taken place.
- Such permission will include instructions from the Port Authority and/or MRCC on the methodology/means applied during the Medevac- which includes the presence of a Port Health Official at any Medevac
- Vessel agents are to ensure that the master provide the Port Authority with all the required clearance applications. Agents may obtain such directly from Port Authority Office within their regions.
- Only persons and organisations trained in infectious disease control measures with the required capacity and equipment are permitted to conduct a Medevac when Communicable Disease Case definitions are met.
- All the prescribed measures as per Port Authorities are to be met by the agents on behalf of the vessels and the Port Authorities are to ensure the necessary actions are taken should the vessel require quarantine.

Key points to remember relating to Ebola

- Symptoms include fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, sore throat, and weakness, followed by diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach pain. In addition, skin rash, red eyes, and internal and external bleeding may be seen in some patients.
- Travellers could be infected if they come into contact with blood or body fluids from someone who is sick or has died from Ebola, sick wildlife or meat from an infected animal. Health care providers caring for Ebola patients and family and friends in close contact with an ill person are at highest risk because they may come into contact with blood or body fluids.

- The incubation period is approximately 21 days and individuals should be monitored if they were in an area with an Ebola outbreak, especially if they were in contact with blood or body fluids, items that have come in contact with blood or body fluids, animals or raw meat or hospitals where Ebola patients are being treated.

2. This notice shall remain in force until further notice.

10 October 2014

SM6/5/2/1

Issued by and obtainable from:
The South African Maritime Safety Authority
146 Lunnon Road
Hillcrest, Pretoria

PO Box 13186
Hatfield 0028

Tel: +27 12 366 2600

Fax: +27 12 366 2601

E-mail: marinenotices@samsa.org.za

Web Site : www.samsa.org.za