

MEASURES TAKEN BY LITHUANIA CONCERNING COVID-19

First and foremost, due to the worldwide coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and quarantine announced through the territory of the Republic of Lithuania from 16 March 2020, all shipping companies, ships and seafarers strictly must follow advice, instructions and guidance from the Lithuanian Government, health and port authorities including those related to infection, risk, disease, treatment, travel or port calls:

Lithuanian Government <http://koronastop.lrv.lt/en/>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania <https://urm.lt/default/en/important-covid19>

Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration considers the COVID-19 outbreak to be force majeure situation and is putting all efforts to provide all necessary assistance, guidance and solutions in any specific situation related to or affecting the shipping.

Being a flag State Lithuania has adopted some relaxations of requirements for the shipping industry.

Ship's statutory certificates

If the Lithuanian flagged ship is in a situation where deadlines cannot be met in relation to conducting annual inspections, renewal of certificates, repair of equipment or urgent maintenance, etc.:

- Shipowners and companies must take efforts to make arrangements for the survey, audit, inspection of their vessels at the earliest opportunity within the window provided by the regulations;
- In case the statutory certificate expires on or after 16st March 2020 and before 30 June 2020 the certificate will remain valid for 3 months from the date of expiry of the certificate without a specific consent or approval from the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration;
- In case of endorsement of statutory certificates when annual, periodical, intermediate, bottom survey, audit, inspection cannot be held within the window, the certificate will remain valid for 3 months after the end of the applicable window without specific consent or approval from the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration;
- The expired or not endorsed certificates are valid along with this notice. Ships are encouraged to retain a copy of this notice on board.
- The extension as indicated above is also applicable to servicing of equipment and issuing of certificates necessary for all statutory surveys including, but not limited to, service providers certifying life-saving appliances, fire-fighting equipment, radio equipment, etc.;
- Other decisions that do not fall under above circumstances will be taken on a case-by-case basis and due regard to the priority of safety;

In case the above mentioned provisions allowing for an extension of the validity of a certificate are used, the shipowner or company shall notify the RO or Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration, as appropriate, and notification shall include information that the ship has a plan how the ship will be brought back in compliance with the requirements.

Issuance and revalidation of seafarers' documents

In view of travel restrictions, seafarers may be forced to spend longer on board than usual as they are not being allowed to leave the vessel. Moreover, training institutions are closed and are not able to do the necessary training required for an extension of seafarer's certificates. Also, due to the effects of

COVID-19, the seafarers' issue of medical certificates has been halted in Lithuania. Taking this into account:

- Validity of all seafarers' documents issued by the Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration (Seaman's Books, Endorsements of Certificates of Competency, Endorsements of GMDSS Radio Operators certificates, Endorsements of Qualification Certificates, Endorsements of Recognition of Certificates of Competency issued by Foreign States, Certificates of Proficiency, Special Certificates) which have expired starting from the 16 March 2020, are granted an extended validity from the date of expiry till the 30 September 2020. No application to Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration by an individual seafarer is needed for this purpose.
- Decisions concerning the extension of validity of documents which do not fall under above circumstances will be taken on a case-by-case basis;
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania and Lithuanian Transport Safety Administration allow the usage of expired medical certificates on board of ships for 3 months following the expiration date;
- The competent authorities of Lithuania request the competent authorities of other States to permit the continued employment of Lithuanian seafarers on their flagged ships after the expiry of the medical certificate in accordance with the decisions taken by these States;
- To ensure that seafarers' doctors and other medical staff are protected against the COVID-19, a seafarer shall, for medical certification purposes, apply to the certification center no earlier than 14 days after returning from the voyage given no apparent symptoms occur.

Additional information

- Port of Klaipėda is open for navigation except for cruise shipping.
- Travelling restrictions have also caused difficulties for specialized staff, such as inspectors, to access the vessels and conduct legally required inspections. Therefore, Flag State inspections, audits, assessments, etc., for Lithuanian flagged ships located in foreign ports are now suspended.
- Port State control of a foreign ships calling Lithuanian ports will be performed after the assessment of potential risks and consultations with National Public Health Center and taking into account guidelines established by IMO <http://www.imo.org/en/MediaCentre/HotTopics/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx> and Paris MoU <https://www.parismou.org/paris-mou-guidance-regarding-impact-covid-19>.
- Premises of Lithuanian Transport Administration have restricted access.
- Seafarers' health survey in the Klaipėda Seamen's Hospital is suspended.
- The implementation of full-time training and education is suspended.
- In view of epidemic situation regarding COVID-19 disease (coronavirus infection) and in order to reduce the spread of the disease internationally, the National Public Health Center under the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania (NPHC) is conducting enhanced medical quarantine control at Lithuanian border crossing points.
- Please be informed that in order to avoid an unnecessary interference for the international carriage of goods and the limitation of the movement of goods, the medical quarantine control procedures are applied in Klaipėda State Seaport in accordance with the International Health Regulations of the World Health Organization, as follows:
- 24 h prior arrival the master of the ship shall submit a Maritime Declaration of Health, as required by International Health Regulations approved by World Health Organization, confirming that all crew members are healthy;
- Information about crew's health has to be confirmed 2 hours prior arrival to the port.

If the Maritime Declaration of Health contains an information about a sick person on board the ship, actions must be taken as follows:

- The ship shall be moored at the quay;
- NPHC personnel comes on board to investigate the epidemiological situation;
- When a person is detected with COVID-19 symptoms, he is transported to a medical institution by an ambulance;
- As directed by the NPHC, common areas and the cabin(s) on board the ship must be cleaned and disinfected by the ship's appointed personnel, if not available - by a Lithuanian licensed company;
- Only after cleaning and disinfecting the ship, activities and work of agents, stevedores, surveyors are allowed on board, so that the works of unloading/loading the cargo could begin;
- Crew is not allowed to leave the ship;
- Persons (e. g. ship's agent) who are in contact with the ship's responsible personnel (captain, chief mate, etc.) must wear personal protective equipment;
- Non-crew members, who had no contact with crew members, are allowed to participate in the loading / unloading the cargo after ship's cleaning and disinfection.

Please note that information is regularly updated with respect to decisions of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. For updated information please visit <https://ltsa.lrv.lt/en/news/information-of-the-lithuanian-transport-safety-administration-which-is-important-for-shipping-and-seafarers-after-the-announcement-of-the-quarantine>.