

Intertanko advises members to prepare for long-term disruption

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The International Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO) has advised its Members to take measures to assist the global efforts to combat the spread of Covid-19. It has urged charterers to take the same flexible and pragmatic approach taken by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Intertanko observed that control measures put in place to combat the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus had hit the tanker industry in four areas:

- the ability to relieve crews from ships;
- the ability to arrange SIRE and CDI inspections;
- the ability to complete repairs and supply spares;
- and the issuance of statutory and Class certification.

The association noted that the inability for seafarers to travel and join ships was affecting the entire shipping industry. The impact on families, the mental welfare of seafarers and issues related to long-term fatigue were very real concerns. For tankers there was the additional impact upon the crew matrix and the breaching of statutory limits on crew trip length.

Intertanko said that the tanker industry was reliant on the seamless implementation of vetting and inspection regimes administered by OCIMF and CDI. However, ships were unable to undertake SIRE and CDI inspections due to inspectors being unable to travel to ships. This meant that many tankers were currently unable to maintain their regular (six-monthly) inspection schedules.

Tankers are complex pieces of machinery and relied on maintenance from specialized technicians joining ships from manufacturers, and spare-part providers. With increasing travel restrictions, both the specialists and spare parts were becoming hard to find, said Intertanko, adding that Flag and Class inspectors were also being prevented from joining ships and therefore were unable to issue certificates.

Intertanko has therefore advised its Members to assume that the problems will last for several months; plan ahead and to undertake a SIRE / CDI inspection at the earliest opportunity, including on loading or idle if possible; and inform charterers of any cancellation of inspection.

ngoing Covid-19 crisis.