

Remote inspections under the OCIMF programmes

Context

In some circumstances, COVID-19 is limiting the ability of an OCIMF inspector to be physically present on board a vessel to carry out a SIRE inspection. As a result, OCIMF has introduced remote inspections – as a temporary measure – to ensure the inspection regime continues without unduly exposing the inspector or the vessel’s crew to the risk of a COVID-19 infection.

OCIMF has successfully trialled remote inspections under the SIRE and OVID programmes and has conducted and implemented a robust management of change process. As a result, OCIMF has made remote inspections under SIRE and OVID programmes available as an additional, temporary, option for its members to consider as part of their marine assurance processes.

Remote inspections are being offered as an option to enable data collection in exceptional circumstances where physical inspections are not possible due to COVID-19 and where existing inspection reports may not be sufficient as deemed by a submitting company.

OCIMF will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and depending on the results may choose to extend the Remote Inspection regime or remove it completely.

When to commission a remote inspection

The choice of opting for a remote inspection lies entirely with a submitting company or programme recipient and not the vessel operator. A submitting company will decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to commission a remote inspection - and a programme recipient will decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to accept a remote inspection report. Therefore, acceptance of a remote inspection by a submitting company or programme recipient cannot be guaranteed.

While OCIMF will not influence the decision to opt for a remote inspection over a physical inspection, it does offer a number of factors to aid the decision. These are clearly stated in the remote inspection guidelines available to download www.ocimf.org; and include but not limited to:

- The risk of transmitting COVID-19 due to a physical inspection.
- The existence of cases/symptoms of COVID-19 onboard the vessel to be inspected.
- The vessel’s location and previous schedule.
- Travel restrictions associated with the vessel’s location.
- The possibility of conducting a physical inspection at a later date that will satisfy the submitting company’s requirements.
- The possibility that valid inspection reports are available which satisfy the submitting company’s or Programme Recipient’s requirements.

Process

Inspections are requested through the usual channels. The vessel operator will not have the option to select a remote inspection when requesting an inspection. A submitting company may choose to initiate this option and request relevant information from the vessel operator.



Once a remote inspection has been selected and commissioned by a submitting company, the vessel operator and inspector will be notified via automated messages.

For vessel operators:

Vessel operators will be provided with a link to the online Inspection Editor which will allow access to the Operator Data-Submission questions and guidance notes.

At least two days prior to the inspector engaging with the vessel, the operator must:

- Upload a pre-defined list of certificates and documents to the relevant repositories
- Respond to all Operator Data-Submission questions.
- Submit a declaration that the submissions are the most recent versions available.

For inspectors:

The Inspector will be notified when the operator submits their declaration. The inspector will be able to access their inspection editor which will contain all the responses made by the operator as well as all the questions that require an inspector's response.

The inspector must:

- Review all operator responses and comment as appropriate.
- Review all operator certificates and documents.
- Respond to the Remote Inspection Questions using data provided by the operator and by engaging with the vessel by telephone/video.

The completed Inspection Questionnaire is then provided to the submitting company for their review and validation. Once validated, the report is published to the programme website.

Document access and data security

A Certificates Repository and an Inspection Documents Repository are available for operators to upload relevant vessel certificates, inspection documents, photographs.

Operators retain access to these repositories at all times allowing them to keep certificates and inspection documents up-to-date at all times.

The nominated inspector and the submitting company are provided with access to these repositories once the Inspection Booking Code is issued until the inspection report is published.

All certificates and inspection documents are stored on an independent and secure Digital Rights Management (DRM) server which validates the access rights of each viewer and ensures that documents cannot be copied, printed or downloaded – they may only be reviewed online.

Further information

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