

Guidance on Issues for Petroleum Inspectors during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction and Scope

The pandemic known as COVID-19 has posed challenges for everyone, individuals and corporations. The spread of infection has been very rapid and reaction to the rise in infections has, necessarily, been dynamic and remains so. The challenges to inspection companies and their staff are specific and relate largely to balancing three matters:

- a) The need to comply with all World Health Organisation, government regulations and local advice.
- b) The need to protect all individuals from the risk of infection and this extends beyond the member company to any third-party individuals such as terminal, vessel and port staff who will interact throughout an operation.
- c) The role played by member companies in trade as many contracts require independent inspection and testing as proof of compliance with commercial conditions.

The following guidance is provided to members, but is also intended for use with all stakeholders, not simply Inspectors and Inspection companies, in order to assist in alignment, understanding and cooperation during the pandemic.

Operating Principles

All operations will continued to be performed in line with the TIC Council Code of Practice, however when member companies receive nominations, addition consideration will be given to the following items in line with the heightened country and port restrictions at the time of the operation:

- a) **Access limitations:** In response to the pandemic social distancing advice calls for the minimum of interaction between people, and in line with such advice, many terminals and ships have instituted additional protocols controlling access to bring it to an absolute minimum.
- b) **Local regulations:** All local regulations, including temporary emergency ones, must be considered. Issues such as additional PPE, hygiene requirements, travel/quarantine restrictions and the incidence of illness amongst staff must be considered.
- c) **Third party stakeholder requirements.** Many stakeholders such as shipping companies, refineries and terminals have instituted their own controls and protocols. All of these involve limitations on the activity of inspectors.

d) **Staff welfare:** All staff safety will be the primary concern and will be protected. This pandemic will cause additional stress, through the introduction of extra PPE will also potentially give rise to some delay. The limitations on interaction and social distancing, will limit established work routines as well and personal wellbeing.

Stop Work Authority remains the prerogative of all workers, and, should an individual feel unsafe or have any concerns, including those regarding COVID-19, they are duty bound to exercise that authority.

e) **Planning:** Each member company will have a Business Continuity Plan in place for each location and this will also include pandemics, however a specific COVID-19 response plan should be in place. This plan should include:

- Member organisational guidance
- Meeting and gathering guidance including work site protocols
- Additional PPE requirements
- Sanitation protocols in line with World Health Organisation and government recommendations
- Procedure to follow in the event of exposure to COVID-19
- Procedure to following with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Contact details including responsibilities, contacts and escalation protocols

Summary

Some operations pose very specific challenges, where social distancing is necessary, offshore lightering, STS transfers, FPSO operations are obvious examples.

Whilst every effort will be made to perform all required tasks, it may be that certain measurements or samples simply cannot be obtained. It might also be that documents will need to be issued electronically to the vessel and terminal, to minimise physical contact, and signatures added electronically rather than on original documents. These will be communicated to the principal(s) and explained, but no responsibility can be assigned to the inspector for any limitations or delays imposed.

It is the member company obligation that any issues or restrictions, both known and potential, be communicated to their principle(s). As each country is at a different stage of the pandemic, these restrictions will vary from country to country and with the speed to the spread these are changing at a rapid pace.

Useful References and Links / Bibliography

Energy Institute blog, including excellent Bow Tie on COVID 19

<https://blog.energyinst.org/2020/03/31/how-a-bow-tie-can-help-fight-covid-19/>

https://www.energyinst.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/726377/Bow-Tie-for-Covid-19-EI-and-CCPS-April-9-2020.pdf

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/standards.html>

<https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/coronavirus#covid-ec-news>

<https://osha.europa.eu/en/highlights/covid-19-guidance-workplace>

<https://sustainableworldports.org/world-ports-covid19-information-portal/>