

Cruising prepares a steady comeback from Covid-19



NEW REQUIREMENTS More cruise ships are about to resume operations. How and when should they prepare? What new regulations should they take into consideration, and how can the quality of operations be enhanced to a new normal? Captain Jan Solum, Area Manager East - North America, DNV, shares his insights and some answers to these questions.

After a year of insecurity, the cruise business is coming back all over the world, but at different speeds and operations in various cruise locations. While services out of Asian ports have begun before others, as have some countries in Europe, travelling out of United States and Caribbean ports is expected to start a bit later.

Today, we estimate that about 85% of the global cruise industry is waiting or in the process of starting up. In April this year there were around 25 cruise ships that had resumed operations, while in July about 100 cruise ships were likely to be in service again. The booking rates for cruise companies are at the best level since the beginning of the pandemic, so it is likely that the cruise industry will rebound quickly.

Fulfilling new requirements due to Covid-19

Each port, and country, has requirements and guidelines that need to be followed.

Some ports have more extensive and prescriptive regulations, while others follow more general guidelines. Some flag administrations have also issued guidelines and expectations that need to be considered. In addition, there are industry guidelines, like the Healthy Sail Panel recommendations and the EMSA Guidelines.

Building on the extensive medical expertise from certifying 650 hospitals in the United States, DNV has conducted more than 4,000 audits to ensure requirements for the prevention of infection risks and healthcare-associated infections are met.

These requirements have been adjusted to meet the needs of the cruise industry to ensure that vessels that are certified by CIP-M (Certification in Infection Prevention and Control for Maritime) meet all the necessary regulations and requirements relating to operations for each vessel. Using internal healthcare department experts, together with experienced cruise

vessel maritime auditors, DNV is supporting the industry by ensuring that ships are ready to operate from an infection, prevention, and control perspective.

Time now to start preparations

Cruise lines should start preparing now, or as early as possible. Ships have been idle for a year, with reduced crew on board, and many maintenance jobs may not have been carried out in accordance with the planned maintenance system. In addition, many crews have left the sector for jobs ashore, so finding normal cruise staff and resources with knowledge, competence and cruise experience may be a challenge.

Cruise ships classed by DNV are mostly current on all statutory and classification certifications since, together with its customers, it was decided to keep the majority of the fleet ready to resume service at short notice, benefiting from approved remote surveys.

However, some may have elected to lay up their vessels, If so, they need to reactivate them in a timely and planned manner. Formerly laid-up vessels must complete all overdue surveys and rectify overdue deficiencies prior to resuming service, including drydock in some cases.

Key steps to take in resuming operations

Besides crew familiarisation, technical equipment may not have been periodically maintained over recent months and should be given high priority and focus. This includes life-saving and fire-fighting equipment, environment-related equipment such as scrubber installations, sensor calibrations and ballast water management systems, and essential technical machinery.

Breakdowns resulting from inadequate planning can be very costly and lead to significant downtime or delays in starting up, far exceeding maintenance or preparation costs. A number of ships may decide to resume operation with reduced manning, and so emergency-related systems must be adjusted accordingly, such as muster lists,

emergency plans and response teams, for example. Reduced manning may also affect planning in how to handle the various types of emergencies on board, so related plans may need a full review.

Ensuring that crew are best prepared is essential

Internal training programmes and protocols should be suitably adjusted to reflect the different operations with which a cruise vessel enters service, compared with normal business. Even experienced operators need to consider the start-up as resembling a new company and should plan accordingly.

This includes making and implementing procedures and standards relating to the new area of infection prevention and control. The safety management system needs to be adjusted accordingly.

The use of a computer-based training system could help the crew to become familiar with the new operations, and some training can also be undertaken before embarking. It is also important to bear in mind that renewals of seafarers' documentation (MLC 2006, STCW and Medical



The cruise industry is preparing to resume operation

Source: DNV

Certification) may be a challenge, as some countries may lack certain personnel or the ability to authorise documents due to local Covid-19 challenges.

EUROPORT 2021
2-5 Nov | Rotterdam Ahoy

ROTTERDAM AHÖY

THE MARITIME WORLD TOGETHER, TODAY, TOMORROW

51.9244201, 4.4777325

EUROPORT.NL

REGISTER NOW FOR A FREE VISIT

in, twitter, facebook, instagram, youtube

Since many decades Europort has been the exhibition and meeting place where the international maritime industry gets together to connect, cooperate and innovate. Now, 80 years in the process, the need to meet face-to-face may be stronger than ever. We are convinced that, in this digital era, personal encounters are indispensable to our industry.

Interested in participation? Please contact our team through info@europort.nl