



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Migrant Workers

Blas F. Ople Building, Ortigas Avenue cor. EDSA, Mandaluyong City 1550

Website: www.dmw.gov.ph | Email: feedback@dmw.gov.ph | Hotlines: 8722 1152, 8722 1155, 8822 1159, 8724 3665



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**TEMPORARY CREW CHANGE OF FILIPINO SEAFARERS ONBOARD VESSELS
IN THE DESIGNATED WAR OPERATION AREA (WOA) AND HIGHRISK AREAS
(HRA) IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

In view of the existing ceasefire agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America, as well as the renewed assurances by the Iranian Government to the Philippines that Philippine-flagged vessels, energy sources, and all Filipino seafarers would be allowed safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, the crew change of Filipino seafarers onboard vessels in the designated war operation area (WOA) and high-risk areas (HRA), particularly in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, has been allowed on a temporary, conditional and limited basis.

In order to clarify the provisions of Advisory 9, series of 2026, the foregoing conditions for the proper conduct of crew change of Filipino seafarers onboard vessels in the designated war operation areas (WOAs) and high-risk areas (HRAs), particularly in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, shall be implemented in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations:

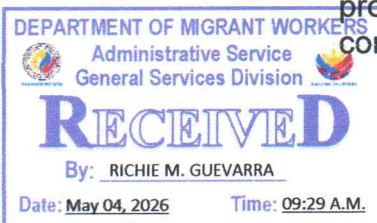
A. CONTINUED OBSERVANCE OF DMW ISSUANCES

- 1) All existing and applicable DMW advisories and directives concerning WOAs and HRAs in the Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, and other warlike, high-risk and extended risk areas remain in full force and effect.
- 2) The seafarer's right to refuse sailing in WOAs and/or HRAs remain in full force and effect, conditioned on the safe, convenient, appropriate and expeditious execution of the same with the protection, safety and welfare of the seafarer as the guidepost.

B. LIMITED CREW CHANGE OPERATIONS

1) Coverage:

Vessels that are within the designated WOAs and/or HRAs within the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, including offshore structures and oil rigs, that have not been attacked and remain seaworthy based on international standards may conduct temporary and limited crew change. The conduct of the crew change shall be conditioned on the safe, convenient, appropriate and expeditious execution of the same with the protection, safety and welfare of the seafarer as the primordial consideration.



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2) Safe Repatriation and Embarkation

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 12021, or the Magna Carta of Filipino Seafarers, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, Filipino seafarers are guaranteed the right to safe passage and secure travel, including safe embarkation, disembarkation, transit, and repatriation. Accordingly, all repatriation and deployment travel arrangements prepared by the principal/shipowner/LMAs must ensure the safety, security, and welfare of the seafarer at all stages of the journey.

3) Reports:

Principals/shipowners/LMAs shall conduct a risk assessment and submit the corresponding risk assessment report to the DMW prior to the intended crew change.

The report shall include, *inter alia*, the following:

- a) names of the Filipino crew to embark and disembark from the vessel;
- b) name of the vessel and its IMO number;
- c) identification of the port from which embarkation/disembarkation shall be conducted;
- d) the identified port's accessibility and security status;
- e) escort/security and transportation arrangements of the disembarking and replacement Filipino crew to and from the ports and airports;
- f) the status of the airports and airspace of the intended flight;
- g) the schedule of the crew change including the travel itinerary of the disembarking and replacement Filipino crew from the point of hire to arrival at the port of embarkation.

The principals/shipowners/LMAs shall likewise provide reports to the DMW upon safe arrival of the disembarking Filipino crew at the point of hire as well as upon embarkation of the replacement Filipino crew onboard the assigned vessel, respectively.

If the vessel where the replacement crew embarked remains within the designated WOAs and/or HRAs, particularly within the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, the principal/shipowners/LMAs shall continue to monitor the condition of the Filipino seafarers onboard and provide periodic reports on the same;

4) Declaration of Acknowledgment of Risk and Waiver of the Right to Refuse Sailing:

Replacement crew shall be fully informed of the risks involved in joining the vessel at conflict zones. LMAs and principals/shipowners shall ensure that matters relative to the Middle East conflict and applicable DMW issuances have been explained to and understood by the replacement crew. Replacement crew shall also be briefed on the



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security protocols prevailing onboard the affected vessel prior to their deployment.

As proof of informed consent, replacement crew, prior to embarkation shall execute a Notarized Declaration of Acknowledgment of Risk and Waiver of the Right to Refuse Sailing, stating that the seafarer: a) has been fully informed of and understands the risks of deployment in Warlike Operations Areas (WOA) / High-Risk Areas (HRA); b) acknowledges his/her right to refuse sailing, without prejudice, as provided under applicable laws and regulations; and c) waives or precludes the exercise his/her right to refuse sailing and voluntarily accepts deployment under the disclosed conditions.

The declaration shall be executed freely and voluntarily, and shall be without prejudice to the exercise by the seafarer of applicable rights under Philippine law, DMW rules and regulations, and applicable international conventions.

5) **Limited Movement:**

While the designation of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman as a WOA and/or HRA remain, the movement of seafarers shall be limited to controlled and secured transit between the vessel, designated ports, airports, and/or temporary accommodations, and shall not include non-essential travel. Any material deviation from planned movement arrangements (e.g., extended stay, rerouting, or transfer to another location) shall be documented and reported to the DMW, with justification based on safety, security, or operational necessity.

The principal/shipowner/LMA shall, at all times, ensure the safety of all Filipino crew during the conduct of crew change and while onboard.

6) **Employment Assistance**

In view of the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and its impact on maritime deployment, LMAs are enjoined to endeavor to provide alternative employment opportunities to Filipino seafarers who may be displaced or unemployed as a result thereof.

To this end, concerned parties are urged to prioritize the redeployment of affected seafarers, facilitate transfers to other principals where feasible, and extend necessary assistance to support their prompt re-employment, in keeping with their obligation to protect and promote the welfare of Filipino seafarers.

C. **SUSPENSION OF CREW CHANGE**

In the event that hostilities resume or escalate in areas affecting crew change operations, all temporary crew change activities shall be **immediately suspended**. Such suspension shall remain in effect until a



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formal and verifiable ceasefire has been declared and duly assessed by the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW), in coordination with relevant government agencies and international counterparts, as stable and sufficient to ensure the safety and security of seafarers.

During the period of suspension, no deployment, repatriation, or transit of seafarers under temporary crew change arrangements shall be authorized, except in highly exceptional circumstances as may be determined by the DMW, subject to strict risk assessment and the adoption of enhanced safety measures.

The resumption of temporary crew change operations shall be subject to a comprehensive evaluation by the DMW, taking into account security conditions, advisories from competent authorities, and the availability of safe and secure transit routes and facilities. All concerned licensed manning agencies and stakeholders shall strictly comply with such directives to ensure the protection and welfare of Overseas Filipino Workers, particularly seafarers operating in or transiting through conflict-affected areas.

D. MONITORING AND REPORTING

LMAs, principals, and shipowners shall immediately report any incident, delay, refusal to sail, stranding, or security-related concerns involving Filipino seafarers through the OFW Welfare Monitoring System (OWMS); and DMW-OASSOC, with copies furnished to the Sea-Based Accreditation Bureau (SBAB) through sbhighrisk@dmw.gov.ph and seabased.asec@dmw.gov.ph.

Periodic updates must be submitted until the situation is resolved or the Filipino seafarers' safety is secured.

Nothing herein shall be interpreted as unilaterally lifting the suspension of crew change operations as directed under Advisory No. 09, s. 2026. The conduct of crew change shall be temporary and is contingent upon the compliance with the conditions set forth herein and the security situation in the designated WOAs and HRAs in the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.

The foregoing is without prejudice to the authority of the DMW to allow, limit or prohibit any crew change in the covered areas based on the evolving circumstances and the submissions of LMAs, principals/shipowners, and seafarers.

For strict compliance.


HANS LEO J. CACDAC
Secretary



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