European Maritime Safety Agency

SafeSeaNet
Incident Report Guidelines

Addendum – Reporting COVID-19 cases on board ships

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EMSA

Document History

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1. Introduction

SafeSeaNet is as a tool that can be used by Member States Authorities to facilitate the exchange of information on COVID-19 cases on board ships approaching EU ports. The purpose of this addendum to the Incident Report Guidelines is to provide guidance to the Member States Authorities on how to use SSN Incident Report functionality for this reporting.

The current addendum is only applicable during the COVID-19 pandemic, as such was not included in the Guidelines document. The current version 2.1 of the Incident Report Guidelines is available at EMSA website:

http://emsa.europa.eu/ssn-main/documents/item/1137-ssn-incident-report-guidelines-v120.html

2. How to use SSN Incident Report type "Others" for COVID-19 cases

Member States may share with other Member States, on a voluntary basis and through the **Incident Report type "Others"**, additional information (other than those specifically mentioned in VTMIS Directive) that may consider posing a potential hazard to shipping or a threat to maritime safety, the safety of individuals or the environment.

Such case is the exchange of information on possible cases of COVID-19 infection on board vessels and the measures taken by the competent authorities of Member States. The **Incident Report type "Others"** may be used for serving this purpose.

Member States Authorities with permission to report Incident Reports to SafeSeaNet may use the **SSN web interface - "Send Notifications"** available through the EMSA Portal: https://portal.emsa.europa.eu

Clarifications on the use of Incident Report type "Others" are presented below:

2.1 Which vessels should be reported

Any commercial ship with a COVID-19 case or suspected case on board that has reported the information to the coastal or port authority of a Member State.

2.2 Who is responsible for the transmission of such information

The messages will be inserted in SSN by the responsible authorities of the Member States to report Incident Reports in SSN. The information may be collected via different channels such as through VTSs, port and health Authorities based on the Maritime Health Declaration or other mode of communication (e.g. VHF).

2.3 What information should be shared

The **number of cases of infection** and **suspected cases** including the **date/time of the report**. Additional information considered relevant by the Authority might be also included. It is also possible to attach a document to the Incident Report. **The Incident Report will not contain any personal information.**

An example of the structured message included in the field "Description" is the following:

COVID 19 status on board at 1255Z-20200406 - XX infected - XX suspect - no medical assistance required at present

**The underlined parts will not change*

A common message structure facilitates the easy access to information.

2.4 To whom the information should be transmitted

The Incident Report should be sent only to the Member States located on the planned route of the vessel and the next port of call, or in the same geographical area (that might provide assistance if required). In the field "Action Requested" the following information could be included: *"Information about COVID case".*

3. Examples

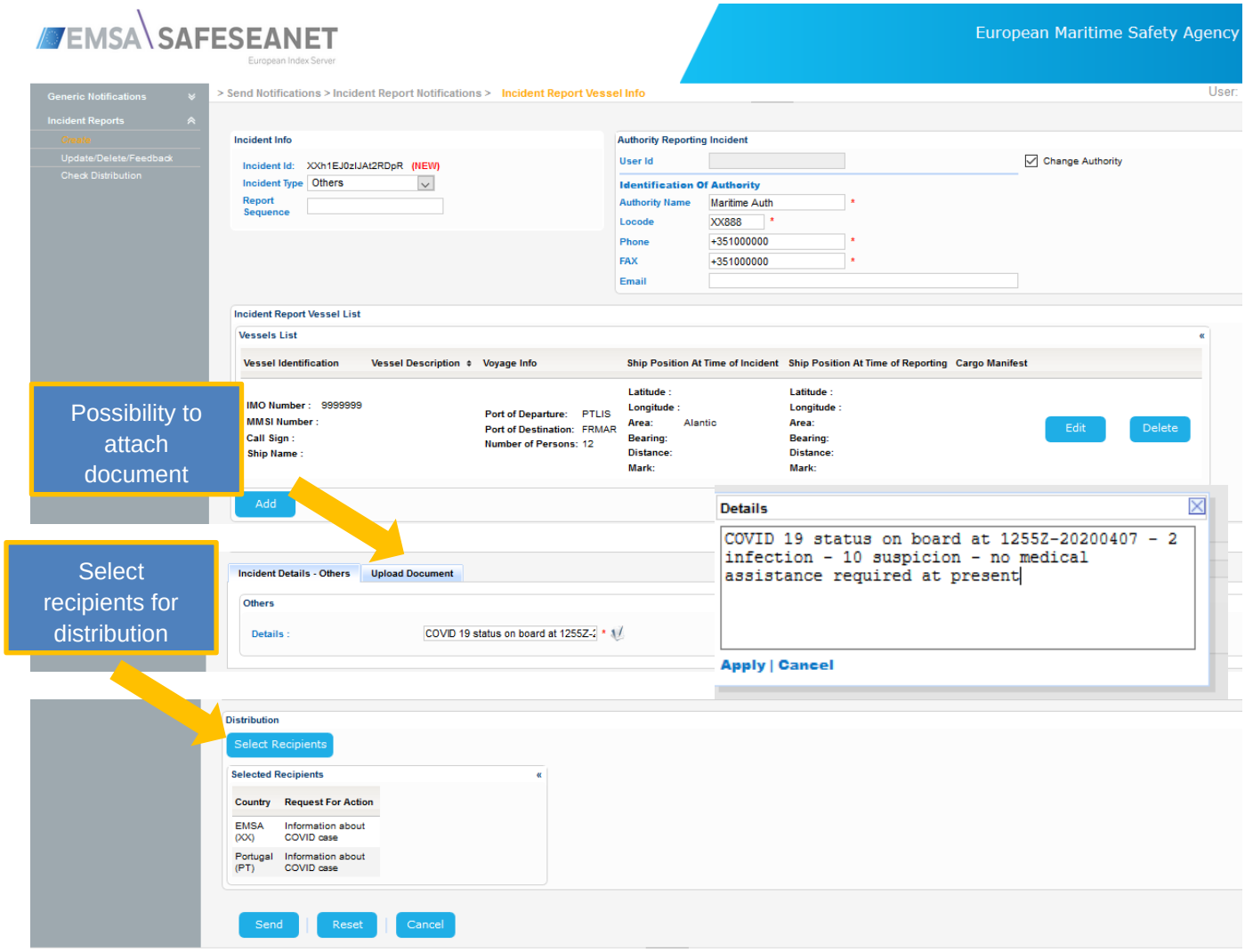
Examples on how to use the Incident Reporting mechanism for the COVID-19 cases are presented below:

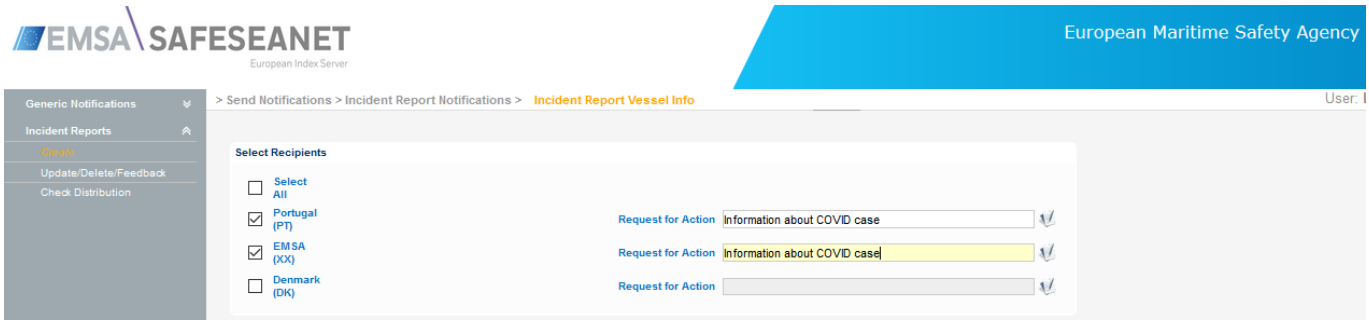
3.1 Example 1: Reporting cases on COVID-19 on board the vessel

The ship master has reported to the coastal station of Member State "A" that there are suspect cases of COVID-19 infection among the crew, but medical assistance is not requested. The ship is continuing her voyage to the next port of call in Member State "B" passing close to the territorial waters of other Member States.

The Member State "A" decides to disseminate information to the other Member States which might be requested to provide medical assistance should the health situation on board deteriorates. An Incident Report type "Others" is then shared via SSN with the following "Description":

> *COVID 19 status on board at 1255Z-20200407 - 2 infected - 10 suspect - no medical assistance required at present*





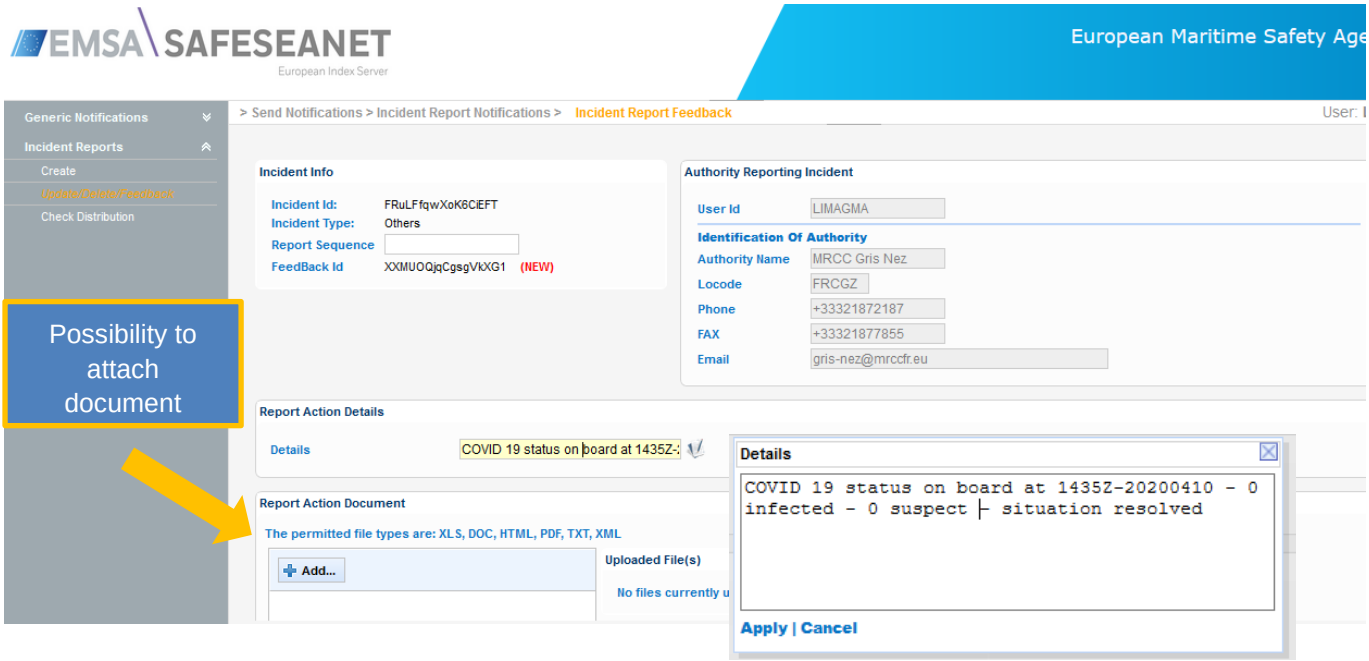
Following the reception of such information, the Member States concerned may take appropriate actions and the next port of call in Member State “B” prepare to provide medical assistance.

3.2 Example 2: Providing feedback to Incident Report on COVID-19 cases

As a follow up to the previous example, the ship arrives at the port of call in Member State “B”, where medical assistance is provided. The 2 infected crew members are taken to hospital for further tests and the 10 suspected cases are checked and found not affected by COVID-19. The ship waits for the disinfection operation and the infected crew change before the ship departs for the next port of call in Member State “C”.

The Member State “B” should inform the other Member States sending a feedback message via the Incident Report type “Others” which is shared via SSN with the following “Description”:

COVID 19 status on board at 1435Z-20200410 - 0 infected - 0 suspect – situation resolved



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