

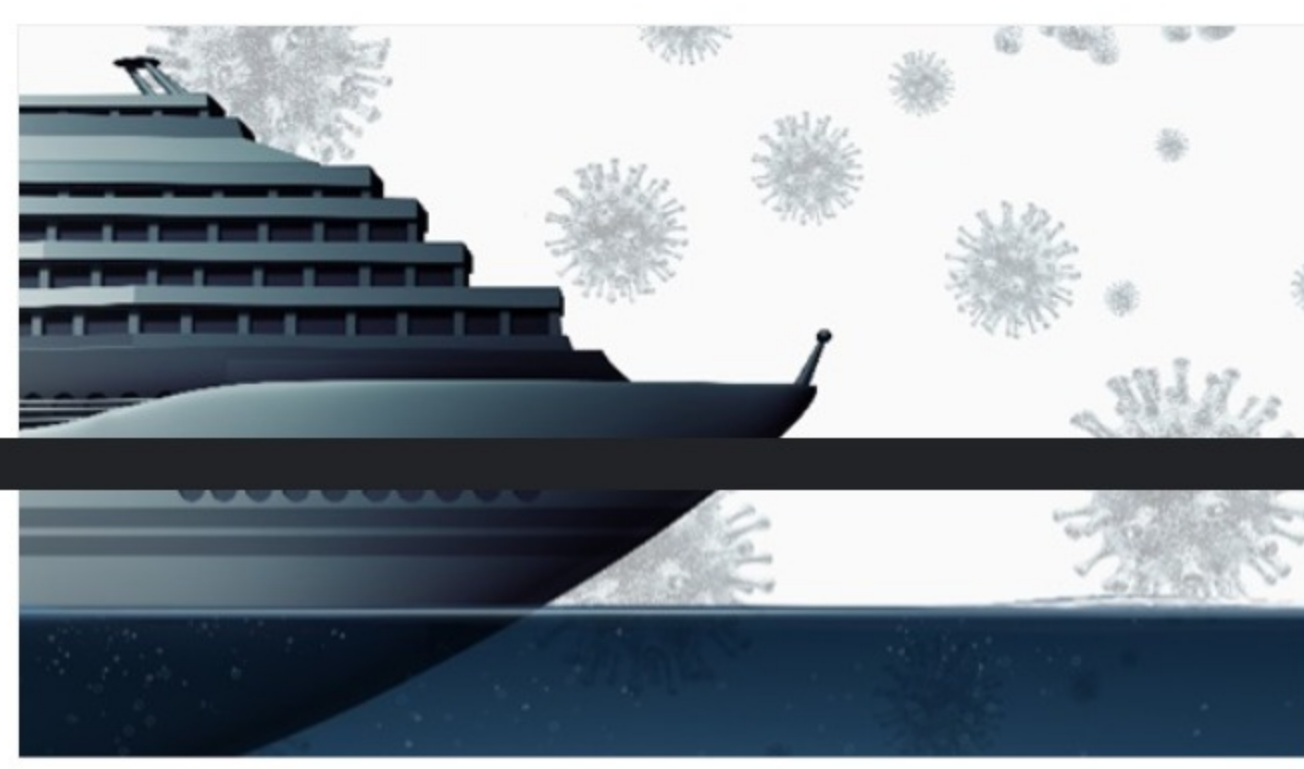
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06 Apr 2020

**COVID-19: Impact on how P&I clubs do business**

Standard Club senior claims executive Nicholas Mavrias | 06 Apr 2020



This pandemic has presented a multitude of challenges and clearly demonstrated the need for preparedness and contingency plans and how far these were achieved in various sectors prior to the onset of this pandemic. COVID-19 has also demonstrated the difference in approach between countries facing the pandemic and how these can, and have, significant far-reaching implications.

It is a testament to the value of IT departments in responding to any business interruption by implementing business continuity plans (BC) at short notice. So far we have not seen any significant issues in the level of service we provide members.

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Another issue that has become increasingly evident as we continue to deal with claims during this period is how the virus has changed the way we approach the handling of such claims, especially logistically.

Generally, all clubs' rules will cover seafarers should they be stricken by the virus in the course of duty. Most clubs will also cover expenses incurred as a direct consequence of an outbreak of infectious disease on the ship, including quarantine and disinfection expenses.

In spite of the cover being in place, it has become obvious that the virus has tested the resources of the club when dealing with other claims not necessarily associated with COVID-19, as logistical issues have arisen due to increasing government regulations.

A perfect example of this has been a number of non COVID-19-related illnesses, injuries or deaths, where correspondents have not been able to assist due to government regulations having restricted movements within the country or barred any entry into the country; in some instances, even in cases of emergency. As such, clubs have been forced to take extraordinary measures that have inevitably increased the club's, and members', exposure by increasing the costs tremendously.

This global health emergency has also transformed the way P&I Clubs function. The situation has placed additional focus on companies having to coordinate, and implement BCP plans for such situations in the future, in order to provide the staff the means to work remotely while maintaining the exact level of service to which members are accustomed.

It has also re-emphasised the importance of maintaining strong working relationships with correspondents and service providers which are heavily relied upon in such circumstances. It is vital that there is a coordinated effort in supporting and assisting members during these trying times while ensuring the health and safety of all those involved, not only ashore but out at sea as well.

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