

4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR  
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

Circular Letter No.4220/Add.7  
17 May 2021

To: All IMO Members  
United Nations and specialized agencies  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status  
Liberation movements

Subject: **Update on the status of the International Maritime Organization  
Headquarters building and telecommuting arrangements due to the  
COVID-19 pandemic**

1 Further to Circular Letters No.4220/Add.1 of 18 March 2020, No.4220/Add.2 of 10 September 2020, No.4220/Add.3 of 2 November 2020, No.4220/Add.4 of 2 December 2020, No.4220/Add.5 of 6 January 2021 and No.4220/Add.6 of 9 April 2021 providing information on the status of the IMO Headquarters building at 4 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7SR; the purpose of this circular letter is to update Member States, international organizations and other interested persons regarding access to the Headquarters building.

2 The IMO Secretariat has been closely monitoring developments of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at local and global levels and has followed advice provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of the United Kingdom (as the host government) and actions taken by other UN agencies.

3 In order to protect staff and visitors and to contribute to wider efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and in view of the new measures introduced by the host government, the Secretary-General would like to advise on the introduction of the following measures regarding access to the Headquarters building, effective from 17 May 2021.

4 The IMO Headquarters building will be open for limited access, superseding the guidelines in Circular Letter No.4220/Add.6, as follows:

- .1 for Secretariat staff, working remotely making full use of remote working and teleconferencing continues to be the main working modality. However, a limited number of staff may work in the Headquarters building each day, with priority given to those supporting remote sessions of the IMO organs. Staff may also be available to meet with delegates and other visitors in the Headquarters building, and to ensure social distancing can be maintained, meetings will be limited to a maximum of 15 people depending on the available meeting room;

- .2 delegates and other visitors wishing to visit the Headquarters building may do so, by appointment. To schedule a visit, please contact the person or division/department you intend to meet and copy IMO Security in all communications ([security@imo.org](mailto:security@imo.org));
- .3 unless specific authorization is granted, delegate and visitor access is limited to the ground, first floor meeting room areas, and the cafeteria on the fourth floor only. No delegates or visitors may enter the Secretariat spaces on floors 2 to 8. The Maritime Knowledge Centre continues to be unavailable for physical access, but those wishing to conduct research should contact the MKC at [mkc@imo.org](mailto:mkc@imo.org) for assistance;
- .4 the cafeteria will reopen with a limited service and may be accessible for external visitors who have been granted access as stated in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2;
- .5 the Delegates Lounge will be closed for upgrading work to the lighting, and further information will be shared when the Lounge becomes available for access again;
- .6 should any visitor/delegate develop any COVID-19-related symptoms up to seven days after having visited the Headquarters building, such visitor/delegate is requested to report the symptoms to NHS 111 and/or the GP and report for a COVID-19 test. You are also requested to inform the Organization as soon as possible. Visitors/delegates are also requested to inform the Organization of the results of their test. The Staff Nurse, Ms. Audrey Courtney ([hws@imo.org](mailto:hws@imo.org)), should be notified, copying [security@imo.org](mailto:security@imo.org) and [lspataro@imo.org](mailto:lspataro@imo.org). Any visitor/delegate who has been in close contact with a person who developed symptoms will be contacted and advised to self-isolate for the next 14 days:
  - .1 if the COVID-19 test result is negative, those having been informed to self-isolate will be contacted as no further action is necessary; and
  - .2 if the COVID-19 test result is positive, those having been informed to self-isolate will be contacted and advised to report for a COVID-19 test.

5 The forty-fifth session of the Facilitation Committee, to be held from 1 to 4 June and on 7 June 2021, will pilot a return of delegates to the IMO building to follow and participate in its remote session, subject to the following requirements:

- .1 attendance will be limited to 50 delegates, on a first come, first served basis, and restricted to those who have registered to attend FAL 45;
- .2 delegates must register to attend FAL 45 in the usual manner through the OMRS;
- .3 an email invitation will be sent during the week of 17 May 2021 with instructions on how to register your place at the IMO building. If you have registered for FAL 45 and not received this email by 21 May 2021, please email [administration@imo.org](mailto:administration@imo.org) if you wish to follow the meeting from the IMO building;

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- .4 further information on COVID-19 safety measures to be complied with will be provided to the delegates registered to attend from the IMO building during the week of 24 May 2021;
  - .5 delegates will need to bring their own IT equipment, including headset, and will use the IMO Wi-Fi to follow the meeting; and
  - .6 delegates will be required to arrive at the IMO building after 9 a.m. UTC+1 and to vacate the building no later than 4 p.m. UTC+1 to ensure that cleaning can take place.

6 Following the completion of this pilot exercise, further information will be provided for similar participation at future remote sessions of IMO organs.

7 All individuals granted access to the Headquarters building will be subject to the following requirements:

- .1 all IMO entry passes for delegates have been deactivated; therefore it will be necessary to be screened before going through the security gates for entry;
- .2 access to the building is only possible through the front lobby. Persons coming from the car park should walk up the designated ramp to reach the front lobby;
- .3 upon entry into the building (i.e. at the security desk), all persons will have their body temperature read by non-contact means. Any person with a reading above 37.8°C will not be allowed access to the IMO Headquarters building;
- .4 all delegates and visitors must sign in and out at the Security Desk and provide name, telephone number/email address as part of the track and trace measures. All data provided will be destroyed after 30 days;
- .5 all persons must observe social distancing guidance (currently 2 m, if not possible, stay 1 m plus apart) in all parts of the building; and
- .6 all persons must wear face masks whilst in the building, unless eating or drinking. Wearing of gloves is optional. All persons should bring their own masks and gloves. A limited number of masks and gloves may be available at the Security Desk for those who forget to bring them. Persons should wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizer dispensers have been installed throughout the building for easy access.

8 Staff members remain available to assist with any queries, as usual. However, given the limited access to the Headquarters building as described in this circular letter, delegations are requested to continue to use electronic means of communication with the Secretariat as much as possible. The programme of remote IMO meetings is not affected by these new measures and will continue as scheduled in document PROG/129/Rev.1 of 29 April 2021.

9 The Secretary-General requests your forbearance in these unique circumstances and looks forward to continued cooperation and collaboration. Full normal operation of the IMO Headquarters building will resume as soon as feasible.

10 This guidance will remain under review and will be updated as appropriate.