

## COVID-19 Update (22nd December 2020)

OSRL Members will doubtless have heard of a new variant strain of Covid-19 identified in South East England. Initial analysis suggests that the variant has a transmission advantage over previous strains and this is causing understandable concern.

The discovery of this new strain resulted in many countries (circa 40 as of 08:00 hrs GMT 22nd Dec) closing their airspace to passenger flights from the UK. France has also placed a 48-hour ban on 'accompanied' goods vehicles entering the country from the UK.

Whilst this will have an impact on OSRL's ability to respond from its Southampton base, the global nature of OSRL's operations and the strength of our logistics team allows us to remain confident in our ability to support Members at this time.

Concerning response personnel, OSRL has sufficient trained and experienced personnel at our other global locations to enable us to continue responding in accordance with the Service Level Agreement.

Infection rates remain low in three of our global locations; Singapore, Bahrain and Norway and these consequently have good availability of passenger flights and few entry restrictions from other countries.

Our UK-based personnel have access to rapid testing, and although passenger flights may be limited, we can still access business jet options. As is always the case, OSRL will require the assistance of the mobilising party to gain any necessary entry approvals.

With respect to mobilising surface response equipment, again, our globally-distributed model offers strong resilience; with equipment stocks in Singapore, Fort Lauderdale and Bahrain all response-ready with air-freight options as previously reported in other communications.

Air-freight options are also still available from the UK. The initial view from our aircraft charter broker is that cargo flights are not being made subject to the same restrictions and are allowed to continue. They continue to review the situation. However Members should be aware that, with a reduction in direct passenger flights, there is a commensurate reduction in the availability of belly-freight options.

Road freight of equipment to Europe via France remains possible, despite the ban on 'accompanied' loads. A UK driver will instead drop off a trailer at a ferry terminal which is shunted onto the ferry and then picked up by a continental driver on arrival in France. Some 80% of all trailers usually travel by this means, so it is a perfectly standard operation for our logistics providers.

Finally, we should add that although the new strain of Covid-19 appears to be more transmissible, the World Health Organisation has stated that there is no current evidence to suggest the new strain causes a higher mortality rate or that it affects vaccines and treatments. However, urgent work is underway to confirm this latter point.

As always, we remain just a phone call away, ready to virtually support you and your operations. Should you have any questions, please email [CMT@oilspillresponse.com](mailto:CMT@oilspillresponse.com) or contact our Duty Managers.



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