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Pay protected for seafarers captured by pirates

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Concerns over fire-fighting capability on box ships

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Warning raised over access to medical care in ports

ENVIRONMENT

Carbon-cutting potential of inland waterways

the global seafarer

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A JAB FOR A JOB?

As the world debates digital vaccine passports, we ask: could non-compliance be a barrier to employment?

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A Federation of Maritime Professionals

Comment

Good mental health policies promote productivity and therefore profitability. What is the shipping industry waiting for, asks Nautilus Federation director **Mark Dickinson**

At the end of last year, Nautilus conducted a survey to gauge the impact of the coronavirus crew change crisis, which revealed not surprisingly that around 50% of members were reconsidering their career at sea because of the way they had been treated. At the same time, a report from the World Maritime University (WMU) found that underreporting and lack of enforcement of hours of work was endemic and resulting in exhaustion for seafarers.

Not only do these two issues raise serious concerns about the physical health of seafarers, they are having an increasing effect on the mental wellbeing of those working at sea.

I recently joined with colleagues from the WMU, the ITF Seafarers' Trust and the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency to talk about the WMU report, and what can be done to ensure it does not gather dust on the shelf but acts as a driver for change and an end to the culture of adjustment the report highlighted and the long hours culture in shipping.

The world cannot continue to ignore seafarers and expect them to work ever longer and harder. Industry, unions, and governments must come together for an in-depth look at the sector and how it functions at all levels.

It is not simply the lack of enforcement of hours of work regulations that needs to change, but the reasons behind it – that seafarers are working far more hours onboard than the legislation allows, than is safe for individuals or safe for all those working at sea. Seafarers' mental and physical wellbeing needs to be a priority.

Progress on mental health awareness for seafarers is coming. This month Nautilus signed a mental health pledge launched by industry body Maritime UK. It commits the Union to improving the quality of mental health and wellbeing provision for both those who work for us and those we represent.

This month sees the launch of practical guidelines for shipping companies on improving



mental wellbeing, which we have developed alongside sister unions and the UK Chamber of Shipping.

Most episodes of mental ill health are short lived. Early interventions, along with a holistic company-wide approach to wellbeing, can negate more serious long-term problems, as well as create a positive working environment for all.

Leading a cross-border trade union organisation, I am always interested in what part culture plays in our approaches to work-life balance, and it should be no surprise to anyone that across the Union our approaches are very similar.

The Netherlands is arguably ahead of the UK in facing up to the challenges of mental health for seafarers. My colleagues in our Rotterdam office ran a series of workshops in 2019 under the theme of 'Mental fitness pays off', where a strategy to mainstream mental health and encourage positive action from shipowners was discussed.

The overriding outcome of that initiative was being able to demonstrate to shipping companies that good mental health policies are a 'win-win' situation. Productivity increases and therefore so does profitability, alongside the reputational benefits from being a forward-thinking organisation.

This is the message I want everybody to embrace. It is good to talk about mental health and it is good to act on improving mental health. We need our members to understand the damage done by working excessive hours and how the institutional failure to record hours of work and rest allows a long hours culture to be normalised. We need employers to recognise the benefits of looking after the mental and physical health of their seafarers – their greatest assets – and we need the public and legislators to understand the role of seafarers in global supply chains and the need to invest in them and respect their fundamental rights to decent work and a safe working environment. **i**

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It is good to talk about mental health and it is good to act on improving mental health



Mental health focus onboard Image: Getty

New guidance for maritime companies on mental health policy planning for seafarers

Maritime employers have been urged to use a new guide – Mentally Healthy Ships – to help implement policies and practices to ensure seafarer mental health.

The guide has been launched by the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) for shipping companies and ship operators. It follows on from ISWAN's earlier series of self-help Good Mental Health Guides, published between 2017 and 2018.

The new guide is aimed at employers and written by Dr Pennie Blackburn, a consultant clinical psychologist and author of the previous guides. It includes procedures and safety planning to ensure due consideration of mental health, as well as information on how to implement the plan.

The Covid-19 pandemic and related crew change crisis have put unprecedented pressure on seafarers, with prolonged time onboard exacerbating existing risks to mental health and presenting new challenges. During the peak of the pandemic, ISWAN's 24-hour helpline SeafarerHelp saw a threefold increase in the number of cases, and it is still dealing with more cases than it did in the same period last year.

The new ISWAN mental health guidance can be downloaded from: www.seafarerswelfare.org

Cargo crane fatality prompts safety recommendations

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) has made safety recommendations following a fatal crushing accident aboard the UK-registered cargo vessel Karina C.

During the incident, which took place in May 2019, a second officer was killed while completing cargo operations prior to sailing from Seville. The officer climbed into a small gap between a stack of cargo hold hatch covers and the gantry crane used to move them, probably to cross the vessel. The crane operator accidentally crushed the seafarer by closing the gap.

The MAIB investigation established that safety practices aboard the vessel were not being followed and that the drug and alcohol policy of the operator, Carisbrooke Shipping Ltd, was not effectively enforced. The victim is known to have consumed excess alcohol prior to the accident.

In addition, the incident was not reported for several months because the operator was slow to properly follow up on the accident. The operator



The accident occurred aboard the Karina C Image: Farid Mernissi

also failed to quickly follow up on another crushing incident involving a crane two months earlier, delaying changes to safety standards.

MAIB advised Carisbrooke Shipping to improve the safety culture on its vessel by ensuring that crew understand and adhere to safe systems of work, and to look at ways of improving gantry crane warning systems.

The company has taken several steps, such as updating its gantry crane operating procedures and fitting additional emergency stops to cranes.

Captain Andrew Moll, chief inspector of marine accidents, said: 'This accident could have been avoided if personnel operating Karina C's deck that day had adhered to established safe working practices. The limited space available and ambient noise on deck mean that travelling gantry cranes, common on many operators' vessels, can be particularly hazardous.

'Recently they have been involved in a number of fatal accidents.'

MCA prosecutes Greek company over hatch cover death

Greek ship management company Sky Mare Navigation has been fined £120,000 and ordered to pay £23,973 in legal costs following the death of a seafarer in February 2018.

The employee, Alfred Ismaili, was crushed to death by a hatch cover that he was attempting to close during a lifting operation onboard the general cargo vessel SMN Explorer in King's Lynn.

Mr Ismaili had attempted to climb up the inside of the cover to access the equipment needed to secure it to a crane, in the absence of a proper procedure



The Liberian-flagged SMN Explorer. Image: Marine Accident Investigation Branch

and precautions for performing the operation.

No reasonable risk assessment had taken place and the operation had not been properly planned. An investigation by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency

(MCA) found evidence of poor safety culture and tolerance of poor safety practice.

The company pleaded guilty to charges of failing to comply with the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment) Regulations 2006.

MCA lead maritime investigator Dee Upshall said: 'If a risk assessment had been carried out, or if Mr Ismaili had been given instruction or properly supervised, as should have been the case, this death could have been prevented.'

STAND UP FOR RIGHTS

UN secretary general Antonio Guterres 'human rights violations harm us all': www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day/messages

HOME WORKING SAFETY

Trades Union Congress (TUC) video on working safely from home during the Coronavirus pandemic: bit.ly/3gOUq0C

Netherlands safety body calls for clampdown on river cruise safety

Nautilus is backing demands from Dutch safety experts for a far-reaching clampdown on the operating standards of river cruise vessels.

The calls follow an incident in which Swiss cruise vessel Viking Idun collided with a Maltese-flagged chemical tanker just after midnight on 1 April 2019. Both vessels suffered 'severe' damage in the

incident, which occurred in the Western Scheldt. A hole more than 8m long was torn in the side of the tanker, which was carrying benzene, heptane and methanol, but its double skin prevented a spillage. Some of the 171 passengers onboard Viking Idun suffered minor injuries.

The Dutch Safety Board said its investigation had shown this was not an isolated incident and had uncovered questions about the safety culture onboard river cruise vessels.

Investigators found that there were six different nationalities among the Viking Idun's seven nautical crew, and their inadequate command of English meant that VHF marine



Viking Idun collided with a Maltese-flagged chemical tanker on 1 April 2019 Image: Dutch Safety Board

Western Scheldt to safely navigate the 'complex' area at night. The crew had also failed to report that Idun had run aground a few hours before as it attempted to make room for a passing car carrier.

The Dutch Safety Board warned that the growing popularity of river cruises 'demands additional emphasis on safety'. The report notes the lack of structured international inspection arrangements for river cruise vessels. It urges the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management to improve supervision of river cruise ships, enforce language requirements, and ensure accidents are fully investigated and lessons are shared with international partners.

Rope safety check failures led to serious injuries

The challenges facing crew members in checking the safety of lifesaving equipment have been highlighted once again following an accident in which three seafarers suffered serious injuries when a rescue boat fell 17m into the sea during a drill.

An investigation onboard the Danish-flagged tanker Torm Maren in April 2020 found the wire lifting rope was severely corroded and its load capacity was significantly reduced, causing it to part.

The Danish Maritime Accident Investigation Board (DMAIB)

found that the wire rope was used or checked by various crew members on 45 separate occasions since it was fitted in 2018 and had undergone a check only five days before.

However, investigators said that crew members did not have the training or expertise to make a proper assessment of the condition of the wire rope. The ship's planned maintenance system (PMS) relied on the officers in charge of the inspection making subjective judgements about the rope's condition based on

guidance offered by the manufacturer's manual – but there was no such guidance. The report also notes that PMS activities were compartmentalised, which meant that only one person was assessing each component.

Investigators found that the officers placed trust in the examinations of the rescue boat system by service providers and did not envisage that the rope deteriorating between checks.

The DMAIB said the company has taken measures to prevent similar accidents in future.

Irish Safety Board report

A new report presented to the Irish legislature has found that the country's Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) is 'not fit for purpose'.

Marine Hazard Limited found the MCIB may not have been looking into all matters which it has a legal requirement to investigate, including some serious incidents, and questions the investigation process in other cases. It follows a judgment last year by the European Court of Justice, which said that the MCIB's independence was not guaranteed because its board included senior civil servants.

Crew Matters app

Nautilus has welcomed a new Crew Matters app launched by the Isle of Man Ship Registry, which also features services offered by the Union.

The Isle of Man has become the first flag state to launch a seafarer welfare app, developed with training platform Tapiit Live. It is available to around 10,000 seafarers sailing on more than 400 vessels under the Isle of Man flag.

In addition to welfare-related support, the app stores all seafarer documentation in a single location, and provides a link to Nautilus services.

Crew welfare guidance

INTERTANKO has updated its Crew Welfare Management and Mental Wellness guide. The updated guidance includes advice on helping seafarers to deal with emotional stress and overcome negative feelings.

Free mental health services

Specialists in seafarer mental health support services offered seafarers and shore-based staff free access to clinical psychologists and a confidential 24/7 mental health hotline to help them over the festive period.

Mental Health Support Solutions (MHSS) is increasingly concerned that some seafarers may not be getting the right level of support they need during this difficult time. Email: info@mentalhealth-support.com or visit the MHSS website.



In brief

ITF Canada's Peter Lahay to co-chair new national welfare board

International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) national co-ordinator Peter Lahay has become a founding co-chair of a new National Seafarers Welfare Board (NSWB) in Canada.

Hosted by Transport Canada, the NSWB will co-ordinate seafarer welfare in Canada. It will advise government on policy and regulatory issues such as shore leave and crew changes, and promote workers' access to recreational, cultural and medical services, and shore-based welfare.

'While Canada has a lot to be proud



Lahay: Canada must accept responsibilities as a leading adopter of the Maritime Labour Convention Image: ITF

of in stepping up as a global pandemic crew change hub, we still have a long way to go. As a nation we must accept our responsibility as a leading adopter of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) to enforce seafarers repatriation and duration of employment standards of the MLC. Let us do the hard work and let us begin getting crew home if certain owners refuse,' Mr Lahay said in a LinkedIn post.

The board is made up of labour unions, marine missions, ship owners, terminals, ports, and agents representing foreign vessel owners in Canada. Transport Canada will act as a Secretariat providing co-ordination and support.

Debbie Murray from the Association of Canadian Port Authorities chairs the board. Peter Lahay and Dr Jason Zuidema of the Maritime Ministry Association are co-chairs. [i](#)

Governments under pressure to make seafarers key workers

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) says that governments are under more pressure to designate seafarers as key workers following landmark resolutions at the United Nations and the International Labour Organization's (ILO) governing body.

The UN resolution calls on national governments to take urgent action to resolve the crew change crisis.

'The adoption of Indonesia's resolution by the UN General Assembly has put seafarers and their ongoing struggle firmly at the centre of governments' attention as the consumer holiday season approaches and industry concern over potential forced labour in their supply chains reaches new highs,' ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton said.

'We now have the full authority of the United Nations General Assembly saying that if countries want to participate in the global economy, then they must recognise this global workforce as key workers. Governments are starting to realise that they need to act now if they want to avoid being blamed for this pressing humanitarian – and potentially economic – crisis. The heat is on.'

The governing body of the International



ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton Image: ITF

Labour Organization (ILO) has also adopted a resolution on key worker status.

Mark Dickinson, Nautilus Federation director and Seafarers' Group spokesperson at the ILO said a comprehensive draft for the resolution was supplied by the social partners, which provides detail on what governments need to do to give 'key worker' status real meaning.

'We congratulate the member states who voted in favour of the resolution,' Mr Dickinson said. 'We will seek to make governments give real effect to the resolution's intentions. We hope that the call to action will mean states now act as champions for resolving this crisis.'

'This ILO resolution throws down the gauntlet to flag states to enforce seafarers' human and labour rights. If they fail, seafaring unions and our allies will call them out.' [i](#)

IMO develops 'universal logo' for seafarers

A unique 'seafarer symbol' is being developed to enable crew to identify and access dedicated resources on ship, in port and in transit to/from ships.

The symbol is intended to help the large numbers of seafarers who have struggled to access services during the pandemic and improve safety in the longer term.

The International Maritime Organization's maritime safety committee is working with the International Labour Organization



'Logo' should help seafarers access services Image: Getty

(ILO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) to develop a universal non-text logo or symbol for seafarers.

Such a logo is also expected to

have a longer-term benefit by guiding seafarers to services.

This should ultimately support better safety outcomes, according to the IMO. [i](#)

PERSON OF THE YEAR

Lloyd's List names The Seafarer as number one on its 2020 list of the top 100 people in maritime: bit.ly/381IRAe

WOMEN IN MARITIME

A Danish taskforce makes recommendations on boosting female representation in the sector: www.danishshipping.dk/women



MLC law change to protect pay for seafarers captured by pirates

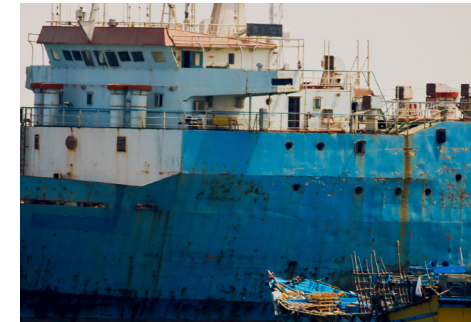
Nautilus has welcomed the introduction of new international employment rights for seafarers captured by pirates, which came into force on 26 December 2020.

The new rights are set out in the 2018 amendments to the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). They ensure that a Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA) will stay in place while a seafarer is held captive by pirates on or off the ship – even if the seafarer's contract expires or is terminated by the shipowner.

This means that seafarers will continue to be paid their full wages while in captivity and receive any other entitlements due from the shipowner under the terms of their SEA, collective bargaining agreement or national law of the flag state. These entitlements could include holiday pay and pension contributions.

As a country which has ratified the MLC, the UK is committed to adopting the 2018 amendments into national law, and Nautilus took part earlier this year in a government consultation on how best to do this.

Nautilus legal director Charles Boyle



A pirate 'mother ship' off Somalia Image: Getty

commented: 'This is a very welcome addition to the MLC, as it will ensure that captured seafarers' families will be financially supported throughout the period of captivity, at a time when they will be suffering much stress and worry. It is also a very timely amendment, as there has been a resurgence of piracy incidents reported in the press recently.'

'The UK has faithfully implemented the amendments, to take effect from 26 December, and all other MLC states are required to have the changes in place by that date at the latest.' [i](#)

Further moves to cut ship pollution approved by IMO in new 'carbon intensity' code

Draft amendments to the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships (MARPOL) have been approved which will require ships to combine technical and operational approaches to reduce carbon emissions. The dual approach will impact how the ship is retrofitted and how it operates.

The 1973 MARPOL Convention is the main international convention covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes.

The IMO's marine environment protection committee (MEPC) met virtually in November 2020 to draft the new mandatory amendments, which aim to speed up the cutting of carbon emissions on existing ships.

The amendments include the technical requirement to reduce carbon intensity based on a new Energy Efficiency Existing Ship Index; and the operational carbon intensity reduction requirements, based on a new operational carbon intensity indicator.

Ships of 5,000 gross tonnage

and above need to ensure continuous improvement of the ship's operational carbon intensity and will get a specific rating levels – A, B, C, D or E – indicating a major superior, minor superior, moderate, minor inferior, or inferior performance level. A ship rated D for three consecutive years, or E, for example, would have to submit a corrective action plan. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide incentives to ships rated as A or B.

The amendments are likely to be ratified in 2021. [i](#)

FUTURE SEASCAPES

A new exhibition reimagines famous maritime paintings in a low-carbon future: bit.ly/3nurgWM

SAFETY AT SEA

Listen in to webinar recordings from the programme for Safety at Sea Week: bit.ly/3mpZERH

In brief

IMO video stresses that seafarer rights are human rights

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has released a new video to mark the International Day of Human Rights. IMO used the day to issue a strong call for seafarers' fundamental rights to be respected, following on from the Nautilus campaigning and various global efforts to put pressure on governments to designate seafarers as key workers.

'If shipping stopped the whole world would grind to a halt,' chief engineer Matt Forster says during the video. 'We are supplying the world. It is not that we want to be praised as



Chief engineer Matt Forster Image: IMO

heroes, we just want to be able to go to work and come home again.'

Mr Forster and his colleague were among the 400,000 seafarers trapped onboard during the pandemic who knew they couldn't come home.

'Everyone was quite shocked, and you just saw all the doors closing around you, all the ports; airports; and you just saw all these windows of opportunity [to get home] getting away from you,' explains Mr Forster.

'For me the biggest psychological effect was you couldn't see an end. None of us signed up for this unjustified prison sentence.'

Mr Forster is one of several seafarers interviewed who were finally able to get home, but who participated in the IMO video 'to tell the world that there are still stranded seafarers out there.' [i](#)



In brief

ECSCA and ETF call on EU member states to make seafarers a priority in pandemic

The European Community Shipowners' Association (ECSCA) and European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have issued a joint letter calling on European Union member states to prioritise seafarers for vaccination against Covid-19 and end the crew change crisis.

The letter, signed by ECSCA secretary general Martin Dorsman and ETF acting general secretary Livia Spera, recognises efforts by the European Commission and member states in recent months but asks for further consideration for seafarers during the resurgence of the virus.

'In this second wave and beyond, we have seen the reinstatement of certain restrictions and a lack of medical attention for seafarers who have tested positive for Covid-19. We urge transport ministers to continue to call on colleagues responsible for health and home affairs to ensure seafarers' travel to and from vessels and their right to medical attention,' the letter reads.

'Flag states have an important role to play here in leading by example in facilitating crew changes in their ports and supporting their flagged vessels in efforts to undertake crew changes and repatriations globally.'

The ETF and ECSCA ask that all remaining member states recognise seafarers as key workers and facilitate their travel by exempting them from restrictions – including any travel restrictions for people who have not been vaccinated – so that crew changes, repatriations and medical assistance can take place.

They also request that seafarers be considered as a priority group for vaccination and that the bloc uses its diplomatic influence with other countries to achieve international recognition for seafarers as key workers.

Neptune Declaration must spark industry change

Signatories to the Neptune Declaration on Seafarer Wellbeing and Crew Change must ensure better protections for seafarers, according to Nautilus Federation director, Mark Dickinson.

'My hope is that there is a conversation beyond the pandemic. We want to ensure that the crew change crisis doesn't happen again, and the point Nautilus has been

making is that the structure and governance of the industry needs to be looked at,' Mr Dickinson said. 'I hope that we can address the issue of flags of convenience and their corrosive impact on the industry.'

The Declaration was signed by more than 300 organisations, which have pledged to use their influence to get seafarers home. Signatories include ship owners A.P. Møller-Mærsk, MSC and MOL, charterers BP, Shell, Cargill, Unilever and Rio Tinto and investment firm Fidelity.

It demands that governments recognise seafarers as key workers and give them priority to receive vaccines; calls for the implementation of 'gold standard' health protocols; and suggests increased collaboration between ship operators and charterers to



▲ Nautilus Federation director, Mark Dickinson

facilitate crew changes. It also asks the airline industry to establish airlift capacity between crew changing hubs and seafaring nations.

'It is encouraging that wider stakeholder groups and organisations beyond ship owners – charterers, finance, investment houses, technology companies – are recognising that they have a role to play in guaranteeing and ensuring seafarers get their rights,' Nautilus Federation director, Mark Dickinson said.

'I welcome the acknowledgement in the Declaration that there needs to be a conversation about the resilience of the maritime supply chains in the light of Covid-19.

'It demonstrates that these players in the maritime supply chain recognise that they have a responsibility to protect seafarers and their rights,' he said.

Singapore prioritises seafarers for Covid vaccine

Singapore is offering Covid-19 vaccines to frontline maritime personnel, becoming one of the first countries to prioritise seafarers for the job. Under the country's Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise, seafarers, port workers, harbour pilots, cargo officers, marine surveyors and marine superintendents who are required to work onboard are eligible.

Seafarers who have their full course of vaccination will be subjected to fewer testing



▲ The first Singaporean seafarer to be vaccinated, Muhamad Nashrin Bin Ayub
Image: Singapore Maritime Officers' Union

requirements, according to the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.

SMOU general secretary Mary

Liew commented: 'We look forward to working with the Nautilus Federation to call for similar actions worldwide.'

SEAFARERS HAPPINESS INDEX

Latest Index highlights crew change misery, but also a better life onboard for some:
bitly.com/seafarer_happiness

FORGOTTEN HISTORY

Professor David Olusoga's online lesson about the British Empire's forgotten seafarers, the lascars:
bit.ly/census_mn_history



Charterers aggravating crew change crisis, says IMO chief

Charterers are 'aggravating' the ongoing crew change crisis and further threatening the safety of navigation with their 'no crew change' clauses, according to International Maritime Organization (IMO) secretary-general Kitack Lim.

Mr Lim said 'no crew change' clauses in charterparties exacerbate the dire situation of stranded seafarers and undermine the efforts undertaken to resolve the crew change crisis, which is entering its 10th month.

These clauses, which are demanded by certain charterers, state that no crew changes can occur while the charterer's cargo is onboard – meaning ships are not allowed to deviate to ports where crew changes could take place.

IMO Seafarer Crisis Action Team has been made aware of this worrying development. In November 2020, dry bulk operators' association INTERCARGO also reportedly slammed some charterers in the dry bulk sector for preventing crew changes



▲ 'No crew change' clauses mean ships are not allowed to deviate to ports where crew changes could take place. Image: IMO

during the period of the charter, despite the shipowner agreeing to accept the associated costs.

In a strong statement, supported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), Mr Lim called upon all charterers to refrain from requesting 'no crew change' clauses, and for shipowners and operators to reject them.

'Such clauses exacerbate the mental and

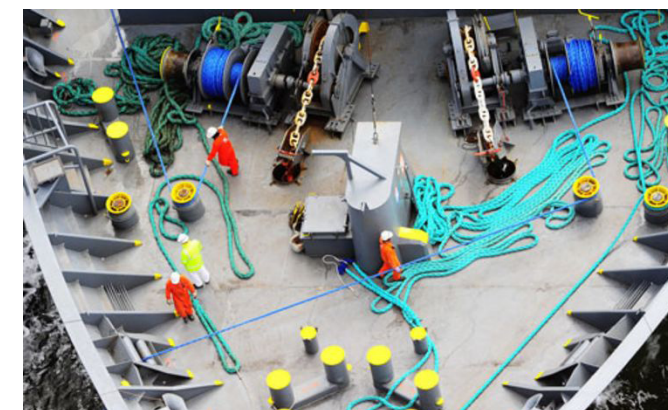
physical fatigue among exhausted seafarers, undermine compliance with the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) and further threaten the safety of navigation,' Mr Lim said. He added that alternative contractual clauses that do allow for crew changes during the pandemic are available and should be used.

'Responsible' investment firm backs global efforts to achieve crew relief and repatriation

Investment firm Fidelity has joined the campaign to designate seafarers as key workers – declaring that the crew change crisis is 'not just a shipping problem, but first a humanitarian crisis and then a global supply chain risk'.

The company has called for 11-month onboard maximums to be followed.

In a letter posted on the Principles for Responsible Investment website, Fidelity asks member asset managers to urgently sign its letter to the UN. 'The environmental



▲ Image: Danny Cornelissen

consequences of a serious maritime accident involving these cargoes could be catastrophic for

our oceans and our security. As investors, it is clear that this is no longer solely a shipping industry

problem nor a crisis that the shipping industry can resolve on their own. Shipping is responsible for 90% of global trade and holds the key not just to a global economic recovery but to maintaining our way of life.'

Fidelity said the International Chamber of Shipping estimates the number of seafarers affected could soon reach one million if this issue is not addressed.

Nautilus is leading a campaign calling on all governments and the United Nations to ensure seafarers are designated as key workers.

DIGITAL CHAPLAINCY

Listen to port chaplain Rev. Lance Lukin's podcasts on self care, mental health, advocacy and more:
bit.ly/3qx4qyY

SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT

SeafarerHelp is the free, confidential, multilingual helpline for seafarers, open 24/7:
www.seafarerhelp.org

CREW CHANGE CRISIS IN PICTURES

Engineer Cezar Gabriel photographed his time stranded onboard for Royal Museums Greenwich:
bit.ly/crewchangephotos



Ensure 'no crew change' clauses do not breach MLC, Union warns

Nautilus has warned charterers and operators to ensure that so-called 'no crew change' clauses do not violate the rights of seafarers.

The Union has been made aware that some charterers are asking owners to agree to these clauses because their operations have been disrupted during the pandemic, with vessels being redirected to ensure that the seafarers be repatriated from a port that allows crew changes, adding to costs or delays for the charterer.


'Any company dealing with one of these clauses must make sure that it is not in contravention of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) requirements relating to maximum contract lengths for seafarers and right to leave,' professional and

technical officer David Appleton said.

An example of this clause seen by Nautilus says that crew changes should be agreed in advance with the charterer unless caused by an unforeseen circumstance such as injury. The charterer must be informed when the crew was most recently changed and the details of any changes to take place during the charter voyage.

Grant Hunter, head of contracts and clauses at BIMCO, the international association representing shipowners, said: 'We are very much against any charter party clause that deliberately creates further obstacles to tackling the crew change crisis. It is essential that owners and charterers engage in dialogue to find a solution to crew changes. Our

Crew Change Deviation Clause for Time Charter Parties was written with this in mind – we recognised that it would be an uphill struggle for owners to get charterers to accept the clause, but it would at least prompt a conversation on the subject out of which something constructive might come.

'Under a voyage or trip charter the owners will know in advance what ports the ship will call at and can plan their crew change accordingly when concluding the fixture. Under a period time charter the owners will not know in advance what ports the ship will trade to, which makes crew change planning more challenging. This is where we would like to encourage charterers to take a role and assist owners wherever possible and practical.' 

Warning raised over access to medical care in ports

Non-emergency medical care at ports is becoming more difficult to access during the pandemic, leaving sick seafarers to suffer in silence, sometimes for months at a time.

Access to medical care in port is enshrined in the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). The ship owner is also obliged to provide seafarers with free onboard medical care.

However, seafarers report a lack of non-emergency medical or dental services available to them around the world.

'It is no longer Physician heal thyself, but Seafarers heal thyself,' the commentator



▲ 'Seafarer heal thyself' Image: Getty


@SecretCapt said on Twitter.

'We must get medical facilities in ports open again for my crew. I want to get them to see a dentist

when they need one. We need to concentrate on the health and well-being of the seafarers. Am I being unreasonable?'

Seafarers also report that a lack of access to non-Covid related medical care has become a barrier to employment. One member described a sick colleague who has been off work for several months with non-Covid medical needs, unable to get an appointment to see a consultant or get.

Another member reported being on an NHS waiting list 'for months' with no idea when they would be seen.

In the UK, members can access the Dreadnought Medical Service, a priority service for seafarers (and, in some cases, partners and children) based at Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital in London. 



A JAB FOR A JOB?

They have been hailed as a game changer for the cruise industry, so could approved Covid-19 vaccines become mandatory for travel and visa requirements, and could non-compliance be a barrier to employment?

HELEN KELLY considers the future of biosecurity and work

In December 2020, a British grandmother became the first person in the world to be given the Pfizer Covid-19 jab as part of a mass vaccination programme. The historic moment, hailed as the beginning of the end to the global health crisis, has since led to questions over availability and who should be prioritised for the jab, and whether governments and private industry might mandate immunisation for access to benefits and services, and ultimately require vaccination for travel and employment purposes.

Many countries insist on proof

of vaccinations for diseases such as yellow fever or polio in the form of an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP) before entering their borders.

Some countries require citizens to be vaccinated for other non-Covid diseases in order to access government services. For example, Australia's prime minister Scott Morrison introduced a 'no jab no pay' policy in 2015 that requires children to be immunised for their parents to be eligible for family tax benefit payments and the federal childcare subsidy, according to LSJ. The move was enabled under Australia's

▲ A coalition of tech companies is working on a digital vaccine passport
Image: Getty

Biosecurity Act 2015, which also provides emergency powers to government in the Covid-19 pandemic – including a cruise line ban until April 2021, to be reviewed shortly.

Pre-pandemic, Australia's state government of Victoria passed legislation to compel healthcare workers to be vaccinated, with Covid expected to be added to the list of vaccines required for professionals working with vulnerable people.

Trent Hancock, employment lawyer and principal of Jewell Hancock Employment Lawyers, told LSJ that it would be reasonable



Employers have an obligation to provide a safe working environment, and employees have an obligation to assist their employer to provide that safe working environment

Under Australia's Biosecurity Act to require employees to be vaccinated to ensure the safety for all workers. 'Employers have an obligation to provide a safe working environment, and employees have an obligation to assist their employer to provide that safe working environment.'

Alan Joyce, chief executive of Qantas Airways, an Australian airline, told Bloomberg News in November that proof of Covid-19 vaccination would be a condition for travellers entering or leaving Australia on the carrier's planes.

To date, no country has made Covid-19 inoculation compulsory or said it would be required for people crossing borders.

However, on 4 January 2021, Israel's coronavirus commissioner, Professor Nachman Ash, demonstrated the proposed design for a 'green passport' app that will allow people who have received the vaccine to travel abroad without having to quarantine and give access to cultural and sports events, the Jerusalem Post reported.

An approved vaccination could become mandatory for Schengen Visa applications in the European Union, SchengenVisaInfo reported in April 2020. An unnamed EU official confirmed that once vaccines were approved, and available for all, visa applicants would also be required to be vaccinated in future.

The EU is expected to debate the issue in mid-January after Greece pressed for an agreement. Cyprus, Denmark, and Hungary are all reported to be in favour.

Travel insurance providers have since indicated that, if the EU mandates vaccinations for entering its borders, they may refuse to cover people without it. AXA, a French multinational insurance firm headquartered in Paris, said it would refuse coverage to those who have not taken the vaccine, if the EU member states make it obligatory for travellers.

A coalition of global technology firms, including Microsoft and Oracle, are reportedly working on a digital Covid 'vaccination passport', which they reckon can help people return to travel, work and education, the Financial Times reported on 15 January.

The return of cruise?

For cruise operators, which have been some of the worst-hit in the maritime industry by the pandemic, Covid-19 vaccinations inspire confidence in customers and regulators alike and signal the possibility of a return to business as usual in 2021.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said vaccines could help mitigate the spread of Covid-19 on cruise ships, which have been banned from sailing in US waters since March 2019.

COVID-19 VACCINE FAQs

Will I be prioritised for a Covid-19 vaccine?

Nautilus is campaigning globally to get seafarers vaccinated along with other key workers. In all countries with the vaccine, decisions around prioritising seafarers outside of the clinical priority groups have not been finalised, but we believe that the benefits of offering the vaccine to seafarers include protecting supply lines and putting an end to the crew change crisis. In the UK, Nautilus has written to the Secretary of State for Health Matthew Hancock setting out the case for seafarers to be prioritised. The Netherlands and Switzerland branches continue to monitor the situation there.

When could I get a vaccine?

Seafarers who are prioritised due to clinical need (i.e. age) will be offered the vaccine as part of government programmes.

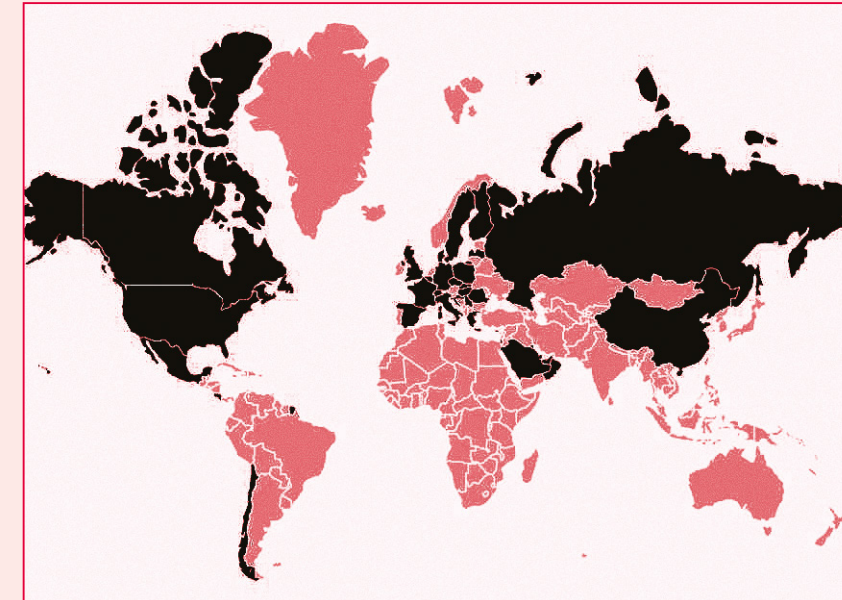
Should my employer pay for a vaccination?

At present, supplies of vaccines have been ordered by governments and will be offered to populations on a priority basis. In future, once the rollout to high priority groups has been completed, we would expect that where a seafarer who did not have a clinical need to have the vaccine but required it for work purposes – e.g. it was a requirement for travel to a certain country – then the employer would pay for a private vaccine in the same way as they would with yellow fever.

How will I provide proof of vaccination?

As of the end of January 2021, no country requires proof of Covid-19 vaccination, however many countries insist on proof of vaccinations for diseases such as yellow fever or polio, which is in the form of an International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis (ICVP). Apps or other solutions may be developed to replace the paper certificate.

Which countries have rolled out the Covid-19 vaccine?



Adam Goldstein, global chair of Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), an industry lobby group, told USA Today that he believes vaccines, alongside preventative measures such as pre- and post-cruise testing, mask wearing and hand washing, will help as cruise lines look to head back to sea.

According to CLIA, global cruise activity supports over 1.17 million jobs in a wide cross-section of industries and sectors, from ground and air transportation to food and beverage, lodging, manufacturing, hotels, professional services and a broad range of suppliers and service providers, with up to 2,500 jobs lost each day that cruises are not operating.

No cruise line has yet mandated inoculation for passengers.

Digital health 'passport'
In December 2021, Singapore

started piloting the use of so-called 'digital health passports' to verify travellers' coronavirus test results, Channel News Asia reported.

Digital health passports use blockchain technology to share data securely. Several technology firms have developed apps using the system and are working with the government, with funding by Temasek, a state-owned investment company, to trial their use for inbound travellers to Singapore.

Prospective travellers to Singapore take a Covid-19 test at an approved healthcare provider. The results are issued via a QR code, which travellers receive via an app and show to border force. Immigration officers can see details such as whether the test laboratory is on an approved list, what type of test was taken, and whether it was done within the required time frame.

Global vaccine roll-out could take some time
Source: Local media reports / information as at 28 December 2020, 1500 UTC

Don't forget...

Members with concerns about Coronavirus should contact their union. Stay abreast of Covid-19 news and updates at: bit.ly/NautilusFAQs

Whilst the initial pilot is for Covid test results, verification of approved vaccinations would follow the same process on the digital health passports.

The technology could find significant uptake by employers and crew managers in the maritime industry, which must move seafarers across multiple borders in millions of crew changes every year, and saving hundreds of hours of administration time, according to Kristina Lynge from technology services provider Riverr.

Riverr's solution, what it calls a digital health wallet, or eWallet, gives the user (ie seafarer) full control over who has access to the data, which can easily be shared with relevant third parties with their consent.

It is integrated with Singapore border control. When a seafarer goes through immigration in Singapore, officials scan the QR code to verify their health status.

Riverr is piloting the system with Zeaborn Ship Management, where it is helping to facilitate safe and transparent crew changes.

Another pilot is under way with Maersk Drilling to assist its crew change process, Ms Lynge says.

The Indian Coast Guard vessel ICGS Shoor fighting the fire aboard Maersk Honam
Images: Indian Coast Guard



THE DANGER OF DECOMPOSITION

A fatal blaze aboard the 153,153gt Maersk Honam has revealed problems with emergency response, concerns over the adequacy of fire-fighting capabilities on containerhips, and shortcomings in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code. **Andrew Linington** reports

On 6 March 2018, five crew members aboard the Maersk Honam died when a fire swept through the 15,262TEU vessel as it traversed the Arabian Sea. Now an investigation report from the flag state, Singapore, has concluded that the most likely cause was the decomposition of a dangerous cargo being carried in a block of 54 containers in the forepart of the vessel.

In a statement on the findings,

Maersk said it was vital that the lessons of the accident are acted upon. 'The magnitude and intensity of this fire made it impossible for any crew to successfully contain, making it key that we as an industry take steps to address the root cause to ensure seafarers never find themselves in a similar situation,' said chief technical officer Palle Laursen.

'We hope this investigation will initiate a more holistic, industry-

wide approach where we address the concerns regarding containerised dangerous goods across the entire supply chain – starting at the manufacturing level and following through until the box has been safely delivered at destination to the customer,' he added.

Unidentified instability

The Singapore Transport Safety Investigation Bureau (TSIB) report, which runs to 102 pages, notes

that the fire probably started in a block stow of 1,000 tonnes of sodium dichloroisocyanurate dihydrate (SDID). This is a chlorinating agent commonly used for disinfecting water, and in the food industry.

Investigators noted that the secondary hazards of chemical decomposition and instability of the substance had not been identified in the IMDG4 Code because SDID is classified under Class 9 of the Code rather than the more stringent Class 5.1 (oxidising substances). However, it has similar chemical properties to Class 5.1 substances, such as calcium hypochlorite – including the potential for self-decomposition when stowed in bulk.

The crew's response

The TSIB report also points to several problems with the onboard response to the fire. 'Despite the good efforts demonstrated by the crew in taking care of each other and saving lives during the emergency, it was noted that the fire alarm was not raised at the onset of the event, causing a delay in the closure of the magnetic fire doors of the accommodation, and non-closure of exterior ventilation vents,' it states. 'These had resulted in toxic smoke entering and spreading within the accommodation areas.'

Investigations also revealed that the muster list did not clearly identify the roles of everyone onboard, which resulted in some of the crew waiting to be given instructions. In addition, fire-fighting flow charts within the ship emergency response plan did not ensure that all the ventilator flaps/dampers were closed as one

Fire and evacuation drills should be carried out after dark, when safe and practical, in recognition of the need for a higher level of preparedness at night-time

of the primary fire-fighting actions, regardless of the location of fire.

Crew members – including a British third officer – abandoned ship two-and-a-half hours after the blaze began. Although the report praises their 'courage and endurance' in trying to tackle the fire, it notes that 'chaos' set in after a series of explosions. Smoke engulfed the accommodation block, toxic gases entered the bridge and the crew split into four separate and dispersed groups.

Investigators warned that the incident highlighted how the 'relatively favourable conditions of carrying out pre-planned drills during daylight hours can set a false sense of accomplishment or illusion among the crew that emergencies could be managed effectively'. The report argues that drills should also be carried out during the hours of darkness, when safe and practical, in recognition of the need for a higher level of preparedness in fire-fighting response and evacuation procedures at night-time.

IMDG Code

The report points out that the IMDG Code requirements for SDID failed to recognise its potential thermal instability and permitted it to be stowed under-deck 'where the main fixed fire-fighting system was CO₂, which is ineffective to tackle fires associated with such materials'.

It also notes that an effective firefighting response for SDID

would have required the use of abundant water, 'which could not have been achieved promptly, given the existing statutory requirements for firefighting measures for container fires under-deck.

'Regardless of amendments to the statutory requirements, dangerous goods with oxidising properties such as SDID should be considered for stowage on-deck, away from direct sunlight, where water could be used more effectively,' it adds.

The TSIB wrote that Maersk has taken several steps to prevent a similar accident, and it recommends that the company works with other industry organisations to develop new guidelines for the safe carriage and stowage of SDID.

The report also calls for the flag state to secure a review of the IMDG classification of SDID and to remind operators of the need to load dangerous goods with oxidising properties or self-decomposition risks on deck, away from sunlight. The goods should be stowed in a location where water can be used more effectively.

It suggests that emergency drills could be required during the interim audit to identify potential risks at the early stages of a vessel being put into service.

Classification societies could develop guidance and additional notations to improve container ship fire safety until new goal-based SOLAS Convention standards are agreed. **f**



Read the full report at bit.ly/36qfAhc

A GREEN DEAL FOR INLAND WATERWAYS

A report by the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) highlights the carbon-cutting potential of inland waterways – and how vulnerable they are to climate change. Could green investment help to preserve our environment and create new employment opportunities for members into the bargain? **ROB COSTON** investigates

The climate crisis is full of unpleasant surprises. The things that we take for granted can suddenly turn out to be extremely fragile – including Europe's waterways, which are now at risk.

After all, the vessels that use our 37,000 kilometres of navigable waterways require a stable climate to operate. If the glaciers that supply our rivers disappear, or the weather patterns that fill them with rain shift, what happens to the volume of water downstream?

Fortunately, inland waterways can also play a big part in solving

the climate problem – the energy consumption for goods transported on this mode is approximately 17% compared with road transport, and 50% compared with rail – and some organisations with deep pockets have begun to take notice.

The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) has issued a new position paper, 'Navigating Our Way to a Sustainable Future', which spells out the dangers posed by climate change but also the economic opportunities for workers and businesses that green investment could bring to a troubled sector.

▲ An inland cargo ship in a Dutch canal
Image: Getty Images

Cash strapped

The inland waterways sector is heading into the climate crisis with one serious problem: money.

The sector, which largely consists of small owner-operator firms, was hit hard by the 2008 recession; next, essential safety initiatives (such as the switch to double-hulled tanker vessels) required significant investment; now Covid-19 is killing freight volumes – down 30% in a year.

Covid is particularly brutal for river cruise companies. Nearly 350 vessels now provide this leisure service, twice as many as in 2004, and yet the whole business has

been paused; an absolute disaster for thousands of employees.

Put simply, the money for green investment won't come from within when companies are already struggling to survive. The paper makes this very clear: 'The sectors' current financial capacity to innovate and retrofit is very thin to non-existent, making additional external investment essential if the sector is to reach its green transport potential.

'The only way forward is massive investment.'

A green recovery

The question is, where will the cash come from?

Many of the industries that have been hit hard by Covid are pinning their hopes for economic recovery on green investment – with money supplied by governments and transnational bodies such as the European Union.

The European Green Deal, for example, was created by the EU Commission to achieve a target of net zero emissions by 2050 through regulation and, crucially, investment.

Fortunately for Nautilus members, the Commission is calling for a change in transport as part of this initiative: 'The potential for increasing the modal share of inland waterway transport is significant. [It] is characterised by its reliability, energy efficiency and major capacity for increased exploitation. The European Commission aims to promote and strengthen the competitive position of inland waterways in the transport system, and to facilitate its integration into the intermodal logistics chain.'

The future of inland waterways now hangs in the balance – the European Commission will present the third part of its NAIADES programme for inland navigation in the first quarter of 2021, with a roadmap that explains how it intends to achieve its two key aims: increasing uptake of inland waterway transport, and gradually shifting to zero-emissions vessels.

It is indeed lucky that the Commission is aware of the potential for inland waterways transport since, as the ETF spells out, 'to realise these ambitious

visions, inland waterway transport needs – more than ever before – significant investments in and financial support for research, development and innovation'.

New jobs, better conditions

While the sector awaits NAIADES III, the ETF has some ideas of its own about where any additional money should flow. According to the paper, Green Deal investment aimed at retrofitting the existing fleet and increasing capacity would certainly create extra employment: 'Currently, over 45,000 people work in the sector as mobile workers on barges and river cruise vessels. Many more work in infrastructure, inland ports and administration. Recognising the potential role of inland navigation in a sustainable future would spur the

Yet the ETF warns that innovation should not be at the expense of workers. Revamped and new vessels will require crews who have the right training and expertise, while greener automated systems should not be allowed to damage social sustainability.

'Investment in new skills is critical to ensure that workers are prepared and protected ... These [investments] should be aimed at re- and upskilling and training. We advocate the elaboration of a compulsory periodic training scheme for all crewmembers to ensure the optimization of human potential.'

Finally, the ETF takes the position that retaining and building upon the expertise of the existing workforce will be essential if the sector is to reach its full potential:

'Especially in the transition period that



▲ Amsterdam's famous inland waterways Image: Getty Images

creation of additional green jobs in the sector.'

The paper suggests that investment could be channelled into engine research and changing vessels over to liquefied natural gas (LNG). Further automation will probably also be needed if inland waterways are to handle a bigger share of transport. All of this will create career opportunities for skilled professionals.

will create additional uncertainties, the sector's stability and attractiveness have to be the top priority. Training, retraining and re-skilling programmes will contribute largely to this attractiveness, together with quality living and working conditions both onboard as onshore. If crewmembers have a long-term attractive prospect, they will continue to work in the sector and shape its sustainable future.'

the global
seafarer



NAUTILUS
FEDERATION

A Federation of Maritime Professionals

1 & 2 The Shrubberies | George Lane | South Woodford | London | E18 1BD | UK

T: +44 (0)20 8989 6677
www.nautilusfederation.org