



STEAMSHIP MUTUAL

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## Crew Change Crisis – Green Shoots?

July 2020

### UK Government led International Summit – 9 July 2020

#### Global Economy

The world's reliance on shipping and its seafarers has been brought into sharp focus by the Coronavirus ("COVID-19") pandemic. Never has it been more apparent that shipping is the heartbeat of our global economy, with seafarers its lifeblood.

Within parts of the UK some lockdown restrictions eased further this month, so we can now visit the pub, or a restaurant, and even go on holiday with no quarantine restrictions applicable when returning from 73 countries, a situation which will be similar in other countries too, yet seafarers around the globe appear to have been largely overlooked by many governments that are so reliant upon them.

#### IMO Protocols

This is despite the 12-step travel safety protocols issued by the International Maritime Organisation ("IMO") on 5 May, to their 174 Member States and endorsed within a subsequent [IMO Briefing](#) released on 7 May.

The protocols reflect proposals from a broad cross-section of global industry associations representing various sectors of the maritime transport industry, taking account of input from the International Air Transport Association ("IATA"), aimed at restarting crew changes so seafarers, some of whom have now been working for several months beyond their contracted period, can disembark and return home, whilst permitting their replacements to be deployed.

Maritime industry bodies have been working hard to ensure seafarers' voices and those of their concerned employers are heard, so it is very encouraging that a UK Government led [International Crew Change Summit](#) will take place during Seafarer Awareness Week (6 - 12 July 2020) on 9 July, to discuss this significant humanitarian issue. This will include an address by the Secretary General of the IMO, Kitack Lim, which is expected to highlight "States' duties to repatriate workers swiftly".

#### Positive News

There are other positive moves towards a sustainable solution too, with the largest seafaring nation, the Philippines, issuing a Joint Circular on 2 July outlining [Guidelines](#) for the establishment of "Green Lanes" to facilitate the speedy and safe travel of seafarers, including their safe and swift disembarkation, and crew change during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is also reported to coincide with the resumption of international flights on 8 July. However, the lack of public transport and limited domestic flights remains a concern given the ongoing General Community Quarantine ("GCQ") status in place for Luzon, which includes Metro Manila, that which has been extended to 15 July. Similarly, the reported spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in Cebu, with Cebu City remaining under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) status, is of concern too.

Steamship Mutual's dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) has a country list with information about crew changes in many jurisdictions, including recent updates in [Egypt](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Singapore](#) and [South America](#).

#### Mental Health & Wellbeing

There has been an increased awareness on mental health and wellbeing in recent years, which has been a focus within shipping too. Whilst it may be true that seafarers have heightened levels of mental resilience given their working environment, often thousands of miles from loved ones at home, for months at a time, it rightly remains a focus of concern which is being explored across our industry, as is true of many other industries too.

In these unprecedented times, many seafarers have been working on board for up to 4 months longer than originally contracted for, with little or no shore leave. As a consequence, fatigue is a significant concern, given the well-established link to safety.

Added to the impact COVID-19 has had on seafarers' liberty, is the reality they will be acutely aware of the effect impact this global pandemic is likely to have had on their loved ones at home.

Steamship Mutual supports the work undertaken by the International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network ("ISWAN") and below are some helpful links to information they produce, which can be found on our dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#), including a video and FAQ:

- » ISWAN with International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) [advice for shipping companies](#) on Coronavirus
- » ISWAN video for seafarers focusing on [Mental health and COVID-19](#)
- » ISWAN [guides on mental health](#) sponsored by Steamship Mutual
- » ISWAN [Seafarers Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Steamship Mutual has also released a series of four COVID-19 films, produced by Marine Media Enterprises:

- » [Stay Safe On Board](#), issued with the support of Columbia Ship Management and ISWAN. Subtitled language versions are available in [Chinese](#), [Korean](#), [Brazilian-Portuguese](#) and [Tagalog](#)
- » [Mental Resilience On Board](#), issue with the support of Columbia Ship Management, Petronav Ship Management and ISWAN. Subtitled language versions are available in [Brazilian-Portuguese](#), [Chinese](#), [Korean](#) and [Tagalog](#).
- » [Protection on Board](#), issued with the support of Columbia Ship Management, Petronav Ship Management, The International Chamber of Shipping, MCTC Marine Ltd, and Seaworld Management.

**NEW RELEASE** - [Crew Change](#), released this week. This film examines the procedures that need to be followed during both embarkation and



disembarkation in order to ensure that these operations are undertaken safely and the risk of infections appropriately controlled. It's been issued with the support of Columbia Ship Management, Cyprus Port Authority, Cyprus Shipping Chamber, Anglo Eastern Ship Management, Lavar Shipping, Singapore Shipping Association, Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, Petronav Ship Management, The International Chamber of Shipping, The Nautical Institute, MCTC Marine Ltd and Seaworld Management.

### Green Shoots?

Having marked the International Day of the Seafarer with the announcement the UK Government will host the first International Summit on the impact of COVID-19 on crew changes during Seafarer Awareness Week, we all wait for positive news that the Summit results in more IMO Member States swiftly adopting the Protocols issued by the IMO on 5 May, to ensure that seafarers, the lifeblood of our global economy, are granted the rest and time with loved ones their hard work deserves.



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