



The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin

Issue No. 18 September 2008

ISSN 1747-5015

Alert!



Look after your people ...and they will look after you

As most shipboard systems depend on some level of human involvement, the human link is a potential frailty that needs to be managed, monitored and nurtured. Healthy, happy, well trained and motivated mariners are essential to the safe running and commercial efficiency of any ship. (Alert! Issue No. 4)

We read so much about the plight of seafarers who's working and living conditions are well below the norm, and where health and safety are not high on the employing company's agenda. There may be instances where morale aboard the ship is high, due to the leadership of the master and his senior officers, but where there is little loyalty to the company because of their failure to promote a 'company' culture, or adequately provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of their seafarers.

Article IV of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 - which is featured on page 2 of this bulletin - emphasises the rights of every seafarer to a safe and secure workplace that complies with safety standards; to fair terms of employment; to decent working and living conditions on board ship; and to health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection. The shipowner or shipmanager has a duty, therefore, to provide a safe and secure working environment, decent working and living conditions and fair terms of employment for their seafarers.

It takes good management and direction from the top to create and maintain a safe and secure working and living environment, by encouraging a safety culture and greater security awareness through good ergonomics, safe working practices and the provision of protective equipment, together with proper physical security.

It also takes good management to provide for the seafarer in terms of adequate remuneration, benefits,

family support, healthcare and welfare facilities. Equally, it takes good management, and leadership from the top, to develop a company culture by building trust through a policy of openness, good communication and empowerment such that the seafarers and their families feel valued and involved as part of the Company. And, it takes good management to invest in the seafarers and not consider them as a cost.

It takes good management to provide adequate and comfortable accommodation, sufficient nutritional and healthy food, recreational facilities, and access to ship-to-shore telephone communications and email and internet facilities to enable crew members to keep in touch with their families.

It needs good management to support the work of National Seafarers' Welfare Boards and Port Welfare Committees. It will also take good management, and bold leadership, to support those who may be victims of circumstances that cause them to be jailed.

It will take good management to comply with the mandatory standards of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006; and it will take inspirational leadership to comply with the Convention's non-mandatory Guidelines.

There will, of course, always be those seafarers who are not happy with their lot, no matter how much they are offered by way of remuneration, benefits, family support, healthcare or welfare facilities. But, safe, healthy, happy and motivated seafarers will prove an asset to any company.

Indeed, if you look after your people, they will look after you...

Through the **Alert!** Project, we seek to represent the views of all sectors of the maritime industry - contributions for the Bulletin, letters to the editor and articles and papers for the website database are always welcome.

The Editor

Alert!

The International Maritime
Human Element Bulletin
The Nautical Institute
202 Lambeth Road
London SE1 7LQ
United Kingdom

editor@he-alert.org





A momentous milestone for the international shipping industry

Brian Orrell, Chairman, International Transport Workers' Federation Seafarers' Committee

It is no exaggeration to describe the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) - the so-called 'bill of rights for seafarers', which takes effect hopefully no later than 2012 - as a momentous milestone for the international shipping industry.

There can be few people in the industry who are not familiar with the statistics showing the importance of the human element in shipping safety; and with the litany of underlying problems that help to fuel the adverse impact on 'human factor' trends such as excessive workloads, fatigue, stress and communication problems.

Those of us who worked long and hard to secure the historic agreement on the MLC did so in the hope that this would finally introduce measures to bring realistic yet effective controls on what had become a fragmented and destructive labour market after more than two decades of a race to the lowest common denominator.

The MLC will introduce new and improved standards to govern working conditions

at sea; it needs to be ratified by at least 30 states representing 33% of world gross tonnage before it comes into effect.

The MLC addresses anything from minimum working age to maximum working hours, along with accommodation, food and catering, health protection, medical care, welfare and social security. It contains new subjects - particularly in the area of occupational safety and health to meet current health concerns, such as the effects of noise and vibration on seafarers - and is intended to be globally applicable, easily understandable, readily updatable and uniformly enforced.

Enforcement is very much the key. The International Labour Organisation has developed a more effective enforcement and compliance system - in which a certificate system will be introduced to serve as a tangible sign that standards are being met - that will help to eliminate the substandard ships that undermine decent operators by providing unfair competition based on the exploitation of vulnerable seafarers.

The aim is to ensure that we get rid of the conditions that do so much to drag our vital industry down, and damage its reputation in the eyes of the public and the politicians; and to ensure that we better protect the well-being, health and safety of seafarers and the safety of the ships on which they work.

How can seafarers feel like 'maritime professionals' when they live in constant fear of being replaced by cheaper crews? How can they feel motivated and proud of their work when they feel devalued, isolated and insecure? How can they perform to their best when they feel fatigued, stressed and overloaded with paperwork and bureaucratic requirements?

The MLC is a major step in valuing the world's 1.2 million seafarers properly, treating them with the respect and dignity they deserve.

For further information on MLC 2006 go to: www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/lang-en/index.htm

Alert!

The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin

Editor: David Squire, FNI

Published by the Nautical Institute, the world's leading international professional body for qualified mariners

www.nautinst.org
Membership info: sec@nautinst.org

The opinions expressed herein are those of the editor or contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of The Nautical Institute or Lloyd's Register.

The Nautical Institute and Lloyd's Register, their affiliates and subsidiaries and their respective officers, employees or agents are, individually and collectively, referred to as 'The Nautical Institute and Lloyd's Register'. The Nautical Institute and Lloyd's Register assume no responsibility and shall not be liable to any person for any loss, damage or expense caused by reliance on the information or advice in this Bulletin or howsoever provided, unless that person has signed a contract with an entity from The Nautical Institute and Lloyd's Register for the provision of this information or advice and in that case any responsibility or liability is exclusively on the terms and conditions set out in that contract.

Design & artwork production by:
Jacamar (UK) Ltd +44 (0)23 92410108

Printing by: Indigo Press +44 (0)23 8023 1196

Web site by & cartoons by: NewsLink Services
(India Office) +91-9811649064

What's new...

Seafarers' Health Information Programme (SHIP) - The second phase of this International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare (ICSW) project has been extended to allow the development and distribution of material on mental health, dental health and healthy skin to be completed. Training packages for use by nautical colleges and other agencies are also being developed. The ICSW is considering ways to sustain the programme, including the possibility of shipping companies commissioning health campaigns that can then be shared with the wider maritime community.

For further information go to: www.seafarershealth.org

International Sport for Seafarers (ISS) continues to provide global leagues for football, basketball, volleyball and table tennis, together with regional competitions and sports weeks in various ports. The ISS is actively considering adding fitness at sea to its range of shore based activities, thereby allowing a wider cross-section of seafarers to participate in activities. This initiative has been prompted by reduced turn around times, minimum manning, shore leave restrictions and injury concerns from employers. The aim is to allow seafarers to improve and maintain their fitness whilst at sea in preparation for participating in shore based team sport as and when they are in port offering these facilities.

For further information go to: www.seafarerswelfare.org/what-we-do/projects/training-on-board

Classification Society RINA has introduced a voluntary notation which will help shipowners meet the new international standards for crew accommodation. The notation, ILODESIGN, will ensure compliance with the ship construction and accommodation layout and outfitting requirements of the new ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006.

For further information go to: www.rina.org

Lloyd's Register has developed a voluntary assessment programme for ship owners, shipyards and operating companies, designed to support the practical implementation of the forthcoming ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006) on new and existing ships. Not yet mandatory, it is expected to come into force by 2012.

It will never happen to me

Rev Terje Bjerkholt
Chairman, Crisis Preparedness Committee
International Christian Maritime Association

I wonder how often we have had this reaction when we hear of a tragedy. Accidents happen to other people. We all comfort ourselves by thinking like this. If we didn't think like this we would never have had the courage to do anything!

When something does happen, we not only have to cope with what has happened, but we also have to struggle with the realization that it did and can happen to us. This can make each of us think "I am not invulnerable."

You can see some of these changes in perceptions when a ship has been involved in a collision, had a serious accident on board or been sunk. Following such incidents, seafarers have often said to me "I should have been on board that ship, but I had to change" or "I was on that ship on its last journey" or "I was due to join that ship at the next port." Many people - seafarers, shipowners or family members - will link such feelings to the news of the tragedy and many

will have to consider that "It could have been me"!

The International Christian Maritime Association has produced a handbook on Crisis Preparedness for people working in the maritime ministry. The handbook can be used as a tool when an accident or a maritime disaster occurs; but, it can also be used in preparation for something that might happen in the future. It can help us to consider, now, what can happen here in 'my port', on 'my ship'. Such preparation can help us to be able to respond to the human needs created by such an incident and to cope in the aftermath.

Crisis Preparedness makes us think the thoughts we never want to think, to talk about something nobody wants to hear about and sometimes to do things which to others seem stupid.

In the macho world of the maritime industry we often hear men say, after a fatal accident or an accident where people



3

Crisis Preparedness

Emergency Planning &
Major Incident Response



have been injured: "let's go back to work as soon as possible." In this way they hope to build up a wall around all the anxiety with a form of denial. Denial to such thoughts as: "I'm vulnerable. It could happen to me as well. It should have been me."

To talk about these types of thoughts is not to make people feel that they are weak and not able to cope, but to make the whole group feel stronger and better prepared for the next incident they will have to cope with.

Yes, "it could happen to me - and I should be prepared!"

For further information go to: <http://icma.org/index.php/icma-education-and-training/chaplains-resources/icma-crisis-preparedness/>

Regional Seafarers' Welfare Development Programmes

Andrew Elliott, Operations Manager, International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare



Photo: ICSW

The International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare (ICSW) Regional Seafarers' Welfare Development Programme emphasises the establishment of National Seafarers' Welfare Boards (NSWB) and Port Welfare Committees (PWC). The NSWB and PWC structure, detailed in ILO Convention 163 and Recommendation 173, have been proven to be the best means of ensuring the long term sustainability of facilities and services developed under regional programmes. The seafarers' welfare provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 will continue to emphasise the NSWB and PWC structure.

The Programme has recently targeted seven South East Asian countries, which will work together as part of an ITF Seafarers' Trust funded initiative to address specific issues in order to achieve a minimum benchmark level of seafarers' welfare throughout the region. South East Asia will then link with the five other already established regions - Commonwealth of Independent and Baltic States, Indian Ocean and South East Africa, West Africa, North and Central Latin America and South Asia - to achieve a global minimum standard of seafarers' welfare.

Successes achieved under the Regional Programmes include:

Commonwealth of Independent and Baltic States - 12 new and seven refurbished centres; 22 ports receiving transport facilities; 19 centres receiving IT equipment; 30 individuals receiving language training, 40 receiving IT training; and 15 centre directors receiving management training. Georgia and Russia ratified ILO Convention 163, with the convention being promoted throughout the region. National Seafarers' Welfare Boards have been established in Georgia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine. The regional structure has been maintained beyond the programme to oversee completion of existing projects and guide future development.

North and Central Latin America - 7 national welfare committees and 12 port welfare committees established; 13 international seafarers' centres are in operation, with two more to be opened before the end of the programme. Many centres have been refurbished and/or have received new equipment. Training for welfare workers has been conducted throughout the region.

West Africa - New centres have been opened in San Pedro (Ivory Coast) and

Pointe Noire (Congo). National Seafarers' Welfare Boards are operating in Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Benin, Nigeria and Congo. Ivory Coast have ratified ILO Convention 163 and set up a port levy system to fund seafarers' welfare facilities and services. New vehicles have been provided to Senegal, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria. Internet facilities for seafarers are now available in Sierra Leone and Ghana. English language, ship visitor, centre management and computer training have been provided to welfare workers throughout the region. Further development has taken place at Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Cotonou (Benin), Accra and Takoradi (Ghana) and Dakar (Senegal) seafarers' centres; ship visiting has been initiated in Guinea Bissau and a new seafarers' centre is being planned for Monrovia (Liberia).

www.seafarerswelfare.org/tag/seafarers-welfare

ILO Convention 163 can be downloaded from: www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312308

ILO Recommendation 173 can be downloaded from: www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:12100:0::NO:12100:P12100_INSTRUMENT_ID:312511

The good guide to seafarer health, safety and

Accident prevention

Create and maintain a safe working environment and promote safe behaviour through a programme of proactive accident prevention by identify hazards, assessing risks and implementing necessary preventative measures, before accidents and ill-health arise.

Benefits

Provide advice to seafarers and their families on the benefits that are available to them particularly with regard to medical care, sickness benefits, unemployment benefits, old-age benefits, employment injury benefits, family benefits, maternity benefits, invalidity benefits and survivors' benefits.

Company Culture

Develop a company culture by building trust through a policy of openness, good communication and empowerment such that the employee and his/her family feel valued and involved as part of the Company.

Discipline

Encourage self discipline and the adoption of a code of good conduct and effective complaints procedures.

Employment Conditions

Provide a safe and secure working environment, decent working and living conditions and satisfactory terms of employment.

Fair Treatment

Take all necessary measures to ensure that seafarers are treated fairly following a maritime accident and during any investigation and detention by public authorities and ensure that any detention is for no longer than necessary.

Good Housekeeping

Ensure that the workplace and living accommodation is kept clean and tidy and free from slip, trip and fall hazards and from the inappropriate storage of harmful substances and fire sources.

Habitability

Provide adequate and comfortable accommodation, galleys, messrooms and recreational spaces, having due regard for the variations in the size, shape and gender of the seafarer, and for the various environmental stressors such as noise, heat and vibration.

Information Exchange

Employ the use of company newsletters and noticeboard bulletins to inform the crew of important issues that have an effect on their professional lives, health, safety and welfare.

Job Satisfaction

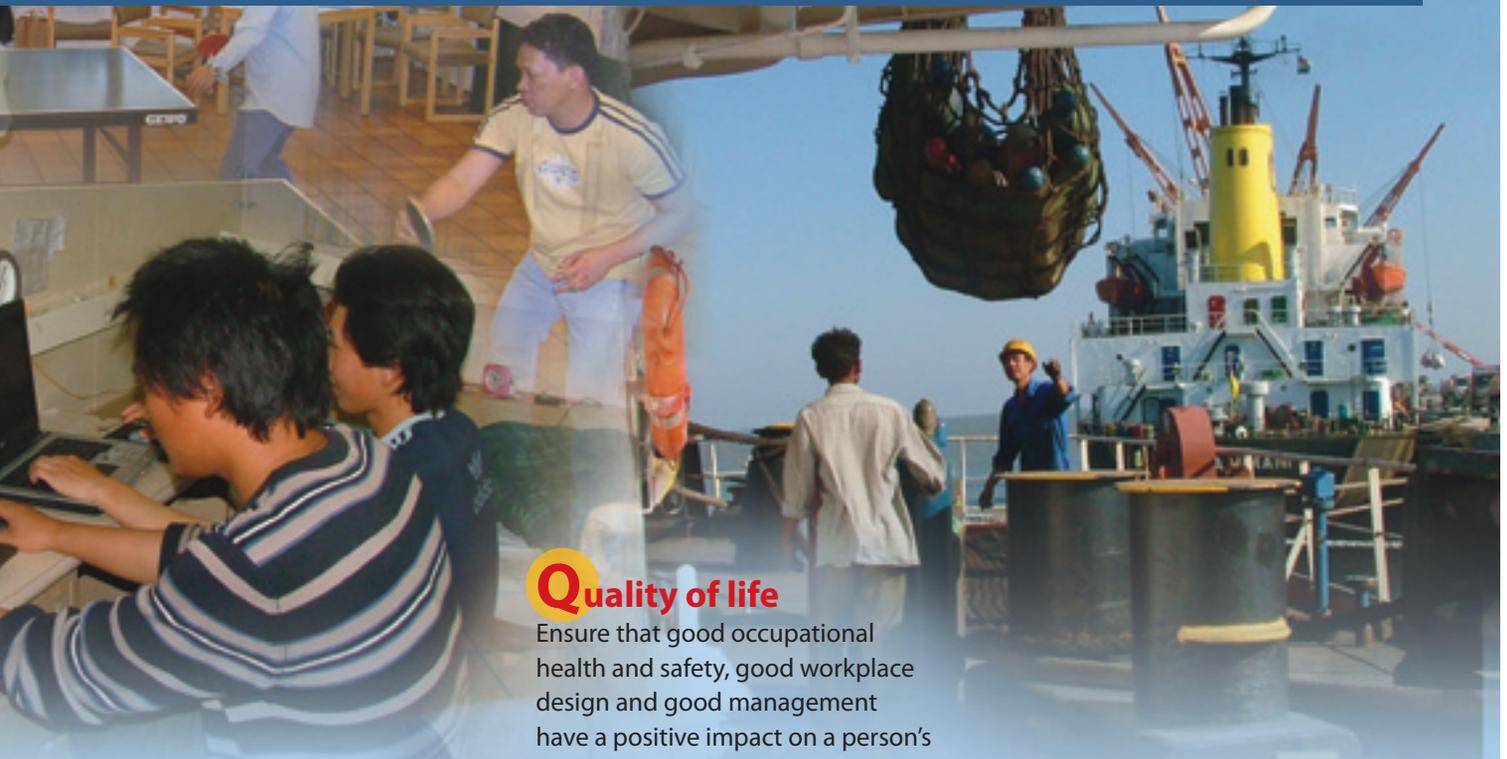
Instil a sense of fulfilment and pride in the job, through good work practices, adequate remuneration, encouraging good working relationships, status, security, recognition, responsibility and advancement.

Keeping in touch

Provide access to ship-to-shore telephone communications, and email and internet facilities onboard ship to enable crew to keep in touch with their families.

Lifestyle

Ensure the seafarer has the energy, physical fitness, physical strength, stamina and a sense of wellbeing to enable him/her to do the job – through a balanced diet, good hygiene, exercise, rest and recreation, together with acceptable standards of habitability and regular medical screening, including drug and alcohol testing.



Quality of life

Ensure that good occupational health and safety, good workplace design and good management have a positive impact on a person's physical and psychological fitness to work at sea such that he/she will want to return to remain with the same Company or return to the same ship after leave.

Motivation

Give the seafarer a sense of leadership, interoperability and adaptability through good communication, direction, teamwork, empowerment and character building.

Nutrition

Encourage proper nutrition, adequate rest and sleep, regular exercise and good hygiene to help to prevent diseases and improve health overall.

Occupational Health

Ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all onboard through good and effective health and safety policies.

Port Welfare

Continue to pursue the establishment of National Seafarers' Welfare Boards and Port Welfare Committees on a world-wide basis, in order to achieve a global minimum standard of seafarers' welfare.

Recreational facilities

Provide adequate recreational facilities aboard ship, including: recreational spaces, gymnasiums, recreational computers, libraries, televisions, radios and DVD players.

Sport

Create international understanding and cooperation between seafarers of all nations through peaceful competitions in healthy sport activities.

Training & Education

Provide appropriate training in safety and security, and education in fatigue management.

Understanding other cultures

Recognise, interpret and correctly react to people, incidences or situations that are open to misunderstanding due to cultural differences.

Vim and Vigour

Maintain strength and stamina through appropriate diet, rest periods, exercise, periodical medical review etc.

Working practices

Encourage a safety culture and greater security awareness through good ergonomics, safe working practices and the provision of protective equipment, together with proper physical security.

Xtra Mile

Go the extra mile to ensure a safe, healthy, happy and motivated workforce.

Yardstick

Benchmark employee benefits or satisfaction against other operators.

Zeal

Look after the health safety and wellbeing of the seafarer and he/she will approach the job with zeal (enthusiasm and eagerness)!

If we are going to look after the needs of the seafarer; we should start by considering him/her a human being! Every human being has the basic needs of food, shelter and security. Most of these may be possible by having an adequate amount of money. For seafarers, it may not be so easy - due to the unavailability of resources they may suffer some deprivations.

Food and vital living matters are things that usually would be taken care of in a modest way, and the organizations like the ILO and Port/Flag State Control check the flaws in the system and try to keep up the standards. But, we know that there are companies who do not provide enough food to their people, or the right type of food according to their religion or tradition. The right to reasonable medical treatment, to adequate insurance and legal protection are also considered as primary requirements of a standard employment.

Every human being is in need of decent quarters to live and rest in; but unfortunately the levels of defined decency can be quite vague. The design of living quarters may have a detrimental effect on a crew member's state of mind because, for example, of its colour, shape or size. We should bear in mind that

keeping the minimum is not sufficient and it is high time that the naval architects started considering other factors. For example, it is nearly impossible to find an office ashore

*We should remember
that the human being
is a social creature
and is surely not
destined to live at sea
at all times*

seven storeys high without an elevator - but there are many ships as high which are not provided with a lift.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of seafaring and absolute dependency on the world economy, a seafarer has always a fear of losing his job. If companies can create an atmosphere to be considerate of conditions

for the welfare of their staff, this would not only be humane but also it would be a very productive investment for the future. Once, there were a few companies who trained and kept their own staff but latterly some have stopped this system to reduce costs. Others have now realized the value of dedicated 'company' personnel.

There are other seafarer needs such as going ashore or having some means to contact people or call home. The various seafarer centres carry some of these burdens but we may need to reconsider access to ship-to-shore telephone communications, and email and internet facilities onboard ship. However, the ISPS Code is the largest hindrance to shore leave - a situation which urgently needs resolving.

We should remember that the human being is a social creature and is surely not destined to live at sea at all times. We must therefore take heed of the needs of those who work and live at sea.

*Captain Khodayari's very frank and informative booklet **A Mariner's guide on Human Element Issues** can be downloaded from: www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_article_pdfs_0605-/he00730.pdf*

The essentials of a good working atmosphere



Laura Watson, Trainee Deck Officer, Holland America Line

Having just completed my cadetship with Holland America Line (HAL) - in association with Viking Recruitment - I have experienced several different aspects of life both onboard their vessels and whilst at college - from being a brand new cadet away from home for the first time, to recently qualifying as a deck officer.

An understanding of the industry and the company itself is very important to a new employee, and the interview process with this company is informative and accessible. New cadets are taken for a familiarisation tour of a vessel a few weeks before sailing to give them an essential opportunity to understand the environment into which they will be entering; basic training onboard is of a high standard.

HAL seem to understand that relaxation is important to the wellbeing of their

personnel, and the social life onboard is well catered for with a crew bar, gym and games facilities, as well as opportunities to enjoy some shore excursions. Communication with home is of course essential to the welfare of the seafarer, who has to spend extended periods of time away. HAL offers internet and telephone facilities, which have been significantly improved over the past few years, though they can prove rather expensive to use.

There is an excellent level of health care both at sea and at home, with extensive medical examinations. I have found the level of accommodation and food varies quite a bit from ship to ship, but it has been at least satisfactory in all cases and with a choice of menu selections.

Support from the company is very forthcoming, with representatives visiting the college and the ships, and office staff being happy to address ship concerns from a human resources and planning point of view. However, it would be useful if young cadets and office staff could have occasional access to people who have been through the system and who understand the pressures of sea life.

Ships' staff have been nothing but supportive towards my training, and the good feeling of teamwork onboard runs throughout the different ranks and departments. HAL continue to support a good atmosphere onboard by assigning a buddy to each new crewmember and sending personnel on team building exercises. Safety is of a high standard; everyone is trained properly ashore, but it is also down to the ongoing training and teamwork on the ships.

HAL listens to the requests of its employees; they have changed the way that they pay people and they have introduced a pension scheme. Perhaps one improvement that could be made to increase the comfort of employees would be to change the leave ratio, which is a common concern. Nonetheless, the policy for friends and partners to sail onboard has been extended, which is a positive step for increased welfare of the crew.

To conclude - the wellbeing of the seafarer is of importance to HAL and their crews are well provided for; but, constant improvement is essential to maintain a good working atmosphere.

Fitness to work at sea and the best ways to assess it are continuing concerns of the maritime industry, seafarers and maritime regulators. The International Maritime Health Association (IMHA) has two linked areas of project work that can make a major contribution to the delivery of fair and cost-effective fitness assessment, that is: evidence based medical fitness standards for seafarers, and quality assurance (QA) and accreditation for maritime health providers.

Both initiatives are timely because of the perceived limitations in the current arrangements for seafarer fitness internationally, which led to an ILO resolution in 2006, to the effect that previous guidelines produced by the ILO and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1997 need to be revised. Shortcomings in the current arrangements include:

- The lack of international recognition of fitness certificates, leading to repeat medicals when moving to work for a ship from a different flag state.
- Limitations on freedom of movement of seafarers because some national certificates are only available to nationals of that country.
- Different fitness criteria in different countries and their inconsistent application even within the same jurisdiction.
- Variable levels of competence and ethical standards among those who issue certificates, both individually as practitioners and collectively as national maritime authorities.
- The growth in discriminatory systems of medical selection used by the 'better' employers in the industry and supported by their insurers. As a consequence the rejected seafarers, if they remain at sea, end up working for those employers who are likely to be least well organised in terms of responding to the safety consequences of ill-health or handling any medical emergency at sea.
- Failure to look for harm to health from work at sea and to remedy it.
- Lack of concern for the long term health of seafarers to help ensure that they have a full career free from illness.

The results of these deficiencies are that some seafarers are discriminated against for no good reason. Seafarers may go to sea with health problems which put themselves, their shipmates and the vessel at avoidable excess risk. Harm to health caused by work at sea may go unnoticed,

and many seafarers have avoidable ill-health or premature death as the end point to their working lives.

Improvements in the criteria for fitness to work at sea and their application by quality assured maritime health providers have the potential to reduce these risks

*Seafarers may go to sea
with health problems
which put themselves,
their shipmates and the
vessel at avoidable
excess risk*

and improve health at sea. If adopted internationally they should ensure wider acceptance of certificates issued anywhere in the world and reduce the need for supplementary assessment procedures being adopted by employers.

The incremental costs of such measures will be small as a proportion of the sums currently spent on fitness assessment, and could be expected to reduce the costs of ill-health at sea in a way which, unlike current employer and insurer based approaches, is genuinely acting in the interests of the seafarer and of the whole maritime sector rather than of a small subset which is in a position to reduce their health related costs at the expense of others.

The new ILO Maritime Labour Convention and its predecessors lay down the international legal basis for fitness and certification. Apart from IMO standards for eyesight, hearing and recommendations on physical capability, the detailed international guidance is given in the 1997 ILO/WHO Guidelines on Medical Examinations. Many national maritime authorities have more detailed condition-specific standards in place that are compatible with the ILO/WHO guidelines.

IMHA is well placed to be the leading partner in the revision and development of the ILO/WHO guidelines.

The two existing IMHA groups would work together. That on QA would produce a replacement for the first part of the guidelines, but in terms which were compatible with current requirements for accreditation. The medical standards group would focus on specifying the over-arching criteria for determining whether a

person was fit to work at sea and if so in what capacity.

These over-arching criteria would then form the basis for developing approaches to the way in which each of the commoner forms of disease found in seafarers should be assessed. This would be likely to include some situations where a functional assessment was needed, others where the length of time since a recurrence was relevant and others where evaluation of risk factors was appropriate. These standards would need to be expressed in clear and concise terms which were easily understood by seafarers and their employers as well as by health professionals.

Standards relating to particular medical conditions would need to be defensible in terms of the likelihood of a risk at sea. A more detailed supporting set of documentation derived from a wide range of sources would be needed to present this evidence base, which would be derived from the limited information available on illness at sea and the outcomes of the current assessment arrangements. This would be supplemented by the information on disease incidence and recurrence rates that is available from population studies and from investigations of risk undertaken for other occupational or insurance purposes.

The end products from the work of both groups would need to be in a form that was accepted by ILO and social partners and provided a sound basis to enable national maritime authorities, as the issuers of statutory seafarer fitness certificates, to progressively align their practices.

Some authorities might choose to develop an accreditation and audit procedure themselves but for others the existence of an international accreditation process would enable them to specify that maritime health providers, in order to remain approved, should participate in such a system. It is important that any international guidelines on QA and fitness standards would be such that employers could avoid the need to set their own additional fitness criteria. They would also have to reassure seafarers that they were being fairly assessed.

Improvements of the sort outlined could be readily introduced by the better organised maritime health providers, both large clinics and individual doctors. It would probably lead to a desirable reduction in those who now assess seafarer fitness but lack the competency or interest to do it effectively.

Enclosed space accident

This UK MAIB investigation report on 3 enclosed space fatalities aboard a North Sea Emergency Response Rescue Vessel highlights a number of safety concerns relating to enclosed/confined space entry.

Two seamen had gone forward to secure a rattling anchor chain in the chain locker. One of them entered the locker and collapsed; the second entered in an attempt to help his companion and also collapsed. During the consequent rescue efforts, the first rescuer found he was unable to enter the chain locker wearing a Breathing Apparatus, so donned an Emergency Escape Breathing Device (EEBD). At some point the hood of the EEBD was removed, or became dislodged and he too collapsed. All three seamen died as a result of an oxygen deficient atmosphere within the chain locker.

The vessel's crew failed to recognise that the chain locker was a potentially dangerous enclosed/confined space, or the likelihood that the atmosphere within the space could become oxygen deficient over time. Permit to work measures were not considered before the space was entered, and training in the use of EEBDs

had not been sufficient to ensure that the limitations of the equipment were recognised in an emergency.

The ship manager's company policy on entry into enclosed spaces was not clear and did not take into account scenarios that could require crews to enter confined spaces while at sea. The gas monitoring equipment was unsuitable for ensuring safe entry into enclosed spaces, and the audit regime employed by the ship's managers failed to detect deficiencies in training, equipment and safety culture on board.

The report notes that, since 1997, 15 deaths and 31 reportable injuries, as a result of accidents in circumstances similar to this accident, have occurred on UK registered vessels, or in UK waters; and that the Marine Accident Investigators International Forum (MAIIF) had collated data showing 63 separate confined space incidents, resulting in 44 deaths and 63 injuries on board vessels of 15 different flag states, since 1993.

Subsequently, the MAIB issued a Safety Flyer advising owners/operators of vessels to ensure that company policy regarding the requirement to enter dangerous

enclosed/confined spaces is clear, and that the equipment provided on board is adequate for safe entry; that crew training and drills for entering dangerous enclosed/confined spaces are as realistic as possible; and that EEBD training is sufficiently realistic to ensure that the full extent of the limitations of this type of equipment is revealed to all potential users.

It also advises seafarers to ensure that they are able to recognise a dangerous enclosed/confined space, and are aware that in such spaces, the atmosphere could become lethal during routine shipboard operations; that in order to enter such spaces, the Code of Safe Working Practices and company Safety Management System must be consulted, and all due precautions taken; and that they are fully aware of the purpose and limitations of the EEBDs carried on board their ship, and when it is necessary and appropriate to use these devices.

Those who are involved in the management and operation of ships are strongly advised to read the whole report which can be downloaded from:

<https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/547c701aed915d4c0d000077/VikingIslayReport.pdf>

Reports & Studies

WORKING AT SEA AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

International Maritime Health Association

This report from an International Maritime Health Association workshop in 2004, reviews information on the psychosocial load on board ship and the consequences for both the seafarer and the operation of the vessel and possible remedies for them. It assesses the contribution made to the management of psychosocial problems by health promotion and related interventions in seafarers, and makes recommendations on next steps needed to investigate and resolve any risks identified.

Downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_article_pdfs_0605/-he00735.pdf

THE HUMAN ELEMENT: AN INTRODUCTION

Lloyd's Register

The human element is increasingly accepted as the greatest source of risk to safe and effective shipping. Lloyd's Register has developed this booklet to give an overview of the issues that the human element brings. It introduces many of the issues of which ship owners, ship managers, designers, naval architects, and other stakeholders in marine safety need to be aware. Perhaps most importantly, it also introduces the types of activities that can be carried out to address the human element. Much of the information in this booklet has been drawn from **Alert!** - The International Maritime Human Element Bulletin.

Downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_article_pdfs_0605/-he00740.pdf

DRUG ABUSE AT SEA

The Shipowners' Protection Ltd

The symptoms and effects of alcohol are widely known throughout the marine

industry. The signs of drug abuse are not so well known, nor is there a widespread appreciation of the effects of various drugs on work performance, attitude and behaviour. The purpose of this booklet is to help owners, operators and employers of seafarers to become aware of the risks, to educate them in the effects of drugs and help eradicate this menace from the industry.

Downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_article_pdfs_0605/-he00745.pdf

HIGH SPEED CRAFT HUMAN FACTORS ENGINEERING DESIGN GUIDE

UK MOD Defence Equipment & Support Agency/ ABCD Working Group

A Human Factors Guide for the Naval Architects, academia, procurement agencies, regulatory bodies and human factors subject matter experts on the HSC design process.

Downloadable from: www.he-alert.org/filemanager/root/site_assets/standalone_article_pdfs_0605/-he00750.pdf

w: www.he-alert.org
e: editor@he-alert.org

This bulletin is distributed and promoted with the kind support of: Global Maritime Education & Training Association (GlobalMET); International Federation of Shipmasters' Associations (IFSA); International Institute of Marine Surveying (IIMS); Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST); International Maritime Pilots' Association (IMPA); NewsLink; Royal Institute of Navigation (RIN); Royal Institution of Naval Architects (RINA)