



Amendments to Maritime Labour Convention coming into force

Changes to regulations covering recruitment services, repatriation, recreational facilities and food onboard will enter into force on 23 December 2024.

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At its 110th conference session, the International Labour Organization adopted a number of amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention with the aim to further strengthen the rights of seafarers and enhance obligations on employers and flag states to ensure a more safe, fair and secure work environment. The full text of the MLC including the amendments can be found [here](#). Below is a summary of the key updates.

Recruitment and Placement - Regulation 1.4

MLC Regulation 1.4 is intended to ensure that seafarers have an efficient and well-regulated recruitment and placement system for finding employment on board ship without charge to the seafarer. Recruitment fees charged to the seafarer are not allowed. In addition to the detailed standards for recruitment services, the MLC standard 1.4 requires a “system of protection, by way of insurance or an equivalent appropriate measure, to compensate seafarers for monetary loss that they may incur as a result of the failure of a recruitment and placement service or the relevant shipowner under the seafarers’ employment agreement to meet its obligations to them”. This provision has been strengthened by adding the requirement that seafarers are informed, prior to or in the process of engagement, of their rights to compensation for monetary loss due to failure of a recruitment service or employer to meet their obligations to them.

Repatriation – Regulation 2.5

A new paragraph 9 has been added under Standard A2.5.1 requiring Member States to facilitate the prompt repatriation of seafarers, including when they are deemed abandoned and providing that *“Port States, flag States and labour-supplying States shall cooperate to ensure that the seafarers engaged on a ship to replace seafarers who have been abandoned in their territory, or on a ship flying their flag, shall be accorded their rights and entitlement under the MLC 2006.”* The amendment is intended to ensure prompt repatriation and makes specific reference to the roles of Port States, flag states and labour supplying states in facilitating repatriations and securing the rights of replacement crew in the event of abandonment.

Seafarer welfare

Accommodation and recreational facilities – Regulation 3.1 The MLC requires appropriate seafarers’ recreational facilities, amenities and services. As amended, the standard now includes providing *“social connectivity”* meaning ship-to-shore communication and internet access. This amendment is further supported in Guideline B3.1.11 and B4.4.2.

Food and Catering Regulation 3.2 The current requirement to provide food consistent with the number of seafarers, duration of the voyage and religious requirements of those on board has been augmented by new language that food shall be suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality, and variety *“and shall be provided free of charge during the period of engagement.”*

New text addresses lessons learned during the pandemic

Standard A4.1 covers medical care. Based on the lessons learned during the COVID 19 pandemic, It now includes a new paragraph: *“Each Member State to ensure prompt disembarkation of seafarers in need of immediate medical care from ships in its territory and access to medical facilities are ashore for the provision of appropriate treatment.”* There is also an added paragraph to require Member States to facilitate the shipowners’ repatriation of seafarer remains following a death on board in accordance with the wishes of the seafarer or next of kin as appropriate.

Also related to the pandemic, is an addition to Standard A4.3 requiring supply of “*all necessary appropriately-sized personal protection equipment.*”

Administrative amendment

With respect to evidence of financial security under Regulation 2.5, Appendix 2.5 was amended to include the name of the shipowner “*or the registered owner if different from the shipowner.*”