

NAUTILUS
INTERNATIONAL



A Nautilus International survey of seafarers' living and working conditions

nautilusint.org







Mark Dickinson
general secretary

Seafarers are a special breed of workers. Life at sea creates unique demands, with the inherent dangers of working in frequently challenging conditions combining with considerable absences from home.

On top of this have come the dramatic changes that have transformed the shipping industry in recent decades. Radical advances in ship design, operation and equipment have had a huge impact on working practices and crewing levels.

To this mix is added the effects of the unparalleled globalisation of the maritime workforce. The huge exodus from traditional maritime nations to ship registries in the developing world since the late 1970s was accompanied by a widescale shift to the employment of low-cost seafaring labour and a massive reduction in the level of maritime recruitment and training in developed nations.

How have these changes impacted on seafarers today? Nautilus has conducted a major research project to update earlier work carried out over the past two decades. The results, which are based on returns from around 10% of the Union's UK based seagoing membership, show that there have been some welcome improvements since the time of our first research. However, considerable concerns remain – with the survey showing high levels of disquiet with the quality of life at sea – and there is absolutely no room for complacency at a time when the industry continues to face immense long-term recruitment and retention challenges.

In this, the international Year of the Seafarer, Nautilus believes this report should act as a catalyst for change by shipowners, managers, regulators and all those concerned with setting standards for the industry.





This is the third time that Nautilus has conducted research into members' views and experiences of conditions at sea. As a consequence, we are now able to track detailed perceptions of critical aspects of seafarer employment over a period of two decades – providing some very interesting insights into the issues that the industry needs to address.

Almost 1,200 survey forms were completed by members serving in a wide range of sectors, companies and flags. The breakdown by ship type was: bulk carriers 1%, chemical carriers 1%, containerships 6%, crude oil tankers 6%; cruiseships 8%, freight ferries 3%; large yacht/super yachts 2%; gas carriers 7%; general cargoships 1%, offshore support vessels 23%, passenger ferries 9%; RFA 5%; other 29%.

Key findings from the new survey include:

- *Overall, the results show members to be considerably more positive about conditions at sea than when the previous surveys were conducted in 1991 and 2001*
- *There has been a marked reduction in the proportion of members with MNOF membership*
- *Fewer than 50% of members say their employers contribute to their pension plans*
- *Two-thirds of members say they usually qualify for Seafarers Earnings Deduction income tax concessions*
- *56% of members have their conditions determined under a Nautilus CBA*
- *Three-quarters consider they have sufficient people onboard to safely operate their vessel*
- *Only 13% are sailing on ships crewed by a single nationality (24% in 2001)*
- *30% are sailing on ships crewed by six or more nationalities (13% in 2001)*
- *Satisfaction levels have increased from 2001 in the following areas: accommodation; job security; manning levels; general morale; onboard medical care; opportunities for promotion; pay; provision of training; onboard recreational facilities; shore leave; support/help with problems; time for sleep and rest; working hours; workloads*
- *Satisfaction levels have decreased from 2001 in the following areas: contact with home/family; food*
- *Significant improvements have been noted since 1991 in the following areas: accommodation; fatigue; health and safety; morale; onboard recreational facilities; tour lengths*
- *75% rate the overall safety condition of their vessel as good (80% in 2001)*
- *75% said conditions on their ship reflect their status as an experienced professional seafarer (67% in 2001, 36% in 1991)*
- *Factors rated as the most important in improving life at sea include: more pay and better communications with home*
- *84% rated onboard email as essential – 92% have it*
- *63% rated onboard internet access as essential – 61% have it*
- *72% said onboard telephone facilities are essential – 90% have it*
- *Most important shore facilities were rated as: transport to and from ship; international telephones; medical clinics; postal services*
- *Most important campaign issues were rated as: piracy; fatigue; skill shortages; criminalisation; under-manning*
- *Almost half the members taking part in the survey responded to an offer to give comments on other issues affecting their life at sea. The most common subjects were: poor standards of training/competence; poor onboard communications; declining social interaction onboard; poor standards of accommodation; smoking/alcohol restrictions; noise; shore leave; gyms (lack of)*

Seafaring has always been a distinctive and a demanding profession. Shipboard work is literally a different world from that ashore. Lengthy periods away from home and family, high levels of responsibility, testing conditions, inherent dangers and demanding workloads make exceptional demands upon those who serve at sea.

Yet despite those pressures and demands, the past three decades have witnessed radical changes in the international shipping industry that have had a highly negative impact on seafarers' lives and working conditions.

As the International Labour Organisation pointed out in *The Global Seafarer*, published in 2004, few, if any, aspects of the occupational structure of seafaring have been left unaffected by the flight to flags of convenience since the late 1970s. Career paths and employment patterns, nationality composition of crews, conditions of work and shipboard social life, education and training, participation in the political processes of occupational regulation have all been transformed and in most of these aspects, for the worse. Factors such as the remoteness of ports and terminals from towns and cities, the use of mixed nationality crews, the limited access to cheap and affordable communications with home, and reduced time in port have increased the inherent isolation of seafaring. It is perhaps no coincidence that some research studies have indicated higher-than-average suicide rates for seafarers.

Over the same period the average crew complement on most ship types has been almost halved, with technological changes such as the development of containerisation, the introduction of GMDSS, automated engine rooms and gearless dry cargo ships having a significant impact. Technology and ship

design have also revolutionised working patterns. Three decades ago, only 1% of ships spent less than 12 hours in port. Today, around one-third of ships complete their turn-rounds within this period and the average ship's turn-round is just 17.4 hours.

However, the huge reductions in officer training over the past two decades are now feeding through into a growing shortfall in the supply of skilled and experienced maritime professionals. The average age of British officers has risen from 34 years at the start of the 1980s to over 47 today, with more than 60% being aged over 40. A succession of research projects has demonstrated the scale of the deepening crisis, with insufficient numbers of new cadets being taken on to replace the increasingly aged senior officer workforce.

Despite more than two decades of reliable warnings about the serious implications of this shortage, there is still no coherent response to address the problem – either by shipowners or flag states. Factors such as the increased criminalisation of the maritime profession (highlighted by a series of well documented cases) have served to exacerbate the recruitment and retention problems.

The demographics of the existing officer workforce present a massive and increasing challenge to the industry. Even the significant downturn in seaborne trade during the past year has failed to stem the demand for suitably qualified and motivated personnel. When the upturn arrives, there will undoubtedly be further serious questions about the industry's ability to find sufficient high quality seafarers to serve on the increasing technically advanced tonnage and to meet the increasingly strict regulatory requirements imposed upon shipping. And, in the longer term, the demographics of the maritime workforce also present



a growing challenge not just for sustainable maritime transport but also for the many shore-based industries and services that require well-trained and experienced former seafarers.

If the industry and flag states are to respond to this crisis in a meaningful way, they must look beyond the basic need to provide suitable training facilities and cadet ships. Seafarers must be recruited properly, well trained throughout their career, given decent pay and working conditions and reasonable working hours, given access to good recreation and welfare facilities at sea and in port, and provided with a career path that encourages them to stay in the industry. They must be supported by a new and positive political and public perception that recognises their role and their contribution to economic and social wellbeing. Embracing the ILO principles of ‘decent work’, combating criminalisation by the adoption of ‘fair treatment’ guidelines, and tackling the prejudice demonstrated by the punitive restrictions on shore leave are all essential measures that governments need to push forward to create a change in the way that maritime professionals are treated.

Nautilus believes that shipowners need to treat their professional seafarers as the increasingly scarce resource that they undoubtedly are, and put an end to the destructive and short-term policies that have done so much damage to maritime employment conditions.

In his 1975 book, *The Human Element in Shipping*, Professor David Moreby reminded the industry of the importance of appreciating and understanding the attitudes of seafarers. Pointing out that seafaring is not just another job but rather a way of life, he argued – over a quarter of a century ago – that: ‘We may need to pay some attention to taking positive steps to upgrading the prestige of seafaring in the country at large.’

Shipping is one of the world’s most important industries. The world merchant fleet transports more than 90% of global trade and modern society has an increasing reliance upon the commodities — particularly hazardous and dangerous cargoes — that are carried by ships. It is therefore essential that international shipping is crewed by seafarers who are well-trained, highly skilled, adequately rewarded, and highly motivated. This research suggests that, in many key areas, the industry and those who regulate it, are presently failing to pursue policies that fulfil those goals.

Age

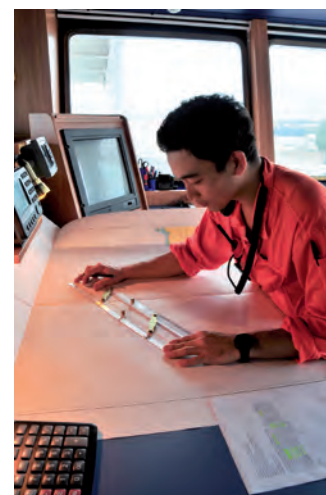
How old are you?

Age	% 2010	% 2001
16 – 20	1	2
21 – 30	16	11
31 – 40	14	14
41 – 50	23	38
51 – 60	37	32
60+	9	3

Not surprisingly, the age profile of the members participating in this Nautilus survey reflect the increasingly high average age of officers from traditional maritime nations such as the UK. More than two-thirds of those taking part in the research were aged over 40 and less than one-fifth were under 30. It is interesting to note that the proportion aged over 60 and still active at sea has risen from 3% in the 2001 survey to 9% in the new research. The slight increase in the percentage aged under 30 is hopefully a reflection of the increase in the UK officer trainee numbers since 2000.

Nationality

The survey was based on the UK membership of Nautilus, and did not extend to the Dutch membership. However, the participation included a diverse range of 29 different nationalities. Just over 90% of those taking part were British (including Scottish and Welsh) and 3.4% Irish. Other significant nationalities taking part, in order of numbers submitting survey forms, included: Canadian, South African, Spanish, Australian, Indian, New Zealanders, Polish, Italian, French, Dutch, Norwegian, Mauritian.



Rank

Participation in the survey was highly consistent with the age, experience and certification profile of the Nautilus membership. Almost 85% of those taking part were masters, chief engineers and deck or engineer officers. A significant proportion were high ranking: 26% were masters; 19% chief engineer officers and 13% were chief officers/mates.

More than 30 other ranks or job descriptions were recorded, including: electrotechnical officers/radio officers and systems engineers; electrical officers; onboard services/pursers/hotel/logistics and supply officers; electrical officers; safety and environmental officers; security officers; DP officers; cadets/trainees; cargo engineers; marine pilots; medical officers; bosuns; ABs; computer/IT systems officers; offshore installation managers; mooring masters; superintendents; and cargo engineers.

Certificates

Participants in the survey held certificates issued by a total of 25 different national authorities. The overwhelming majority (almost 93%) possessed certificates issued in the UK, with the second largest proportion issued in Ireland. A significant number had certificates issued by the authorities in Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Poland, Italy, India and the Bahamas.

Length of service

Not surprisingly, given the age profile of those surveyed, the results show extensive sea service. Some 83% of respondents have been a seafarer for over a decade (compared with 87% in the 2001 survey) and 7% have five years' or less seagoing experience (compared with 8% in 2001).

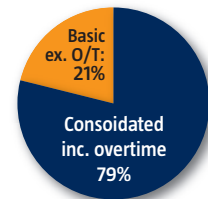
How long have you been a seafarer/served at sea?	% 2010
Less than 6 months	0
6 – 12 months	1
1 – 5 years	6
5 – 10 years	10
More than 10 years	83

Pay

Almost 80% of those in the survey receive consolidated payments, including overtime – slightly less than the proportion recorded in the 2001 survey.

In line with the 2001 research, this survey has also uncovered wide fluctuations in pay rates. The best paid masters and officers received salaries three times above the median for their rank, while the worst paid received as little as one-fifth of the salaries of the highest paid.

How are you paid?



The highest monthly salaries uncovered in the survey were £12,872, US\$13,250 and €14,800, while the lowest was £480 (while at sea) for a first-year cadet.

High levels of dissatisfaction with pay were evident in the survey, and the wide disparities in rates for various ranks (cadets in particular) were cited as a frequent cause for concern.

Almost 80% of those in the survey were paid in Sterling (down by around 10% since the last report), 14% were paid in US\$ (up from 9% in 2001), and the remainder (in descending order) in Euros (5%) Danish Kr, Nor Kr, Aus \$, Can \$, UAE Dirh and Omani Rials.

Some 38% received additional payments (down from 40% in 2001), most commonly including performance-related payments, annual bonuses, profit shares, pilotage payments, certificate payments, anchor handling and towing bonuses, DP bonuses, RFA bonuses, safety-related bonuses, loyalty bonuses, location bonuses, over-tour bonuses, share options, uniform allowances. Some of these were worth as much as £10,000pa.

Shipping is, of course, a highly competitive globalised industry and one in which labour costs have faced unrelenting pressures for several decades now. However, it is clear from many of the comments that members provided in the complex relationships between the perceptions of maritime professionals comparing their work and responsibilities with similar occupational groups means that such pressures are in danger of creating deep and damaging disillusionment.



Pensions

Some 75% of those taking part in this survey said they had pension plans, down sharply from 89% in 2001. Of these, 20% were MNOFP members (down from 39%), 5% MNOFP (no change) and 2% in the Maritime Stakeholder Plan (4.8% in the NUMAST PPP in 2001). Almost 31% were members of private pension plans (34% in 2001) and 19% had other arrangements (17% in 2001).

Almost 46% said their employers contributed to their pension plans (49% in 2001). The average level of employers' contributions was in the region of 7% of gross salary. There was a significant number of members with no provision, other than stating that they were dependent on their own savings or investment in property. Some of these were victims of pension fund collapses.

Two-thirds of those taking part in the survey qualified for the UK Seafarers' Earnings Deduction, underlining the critical importance of this measure in helping to keep UK employment costs at an internationally competitive level and in helping to secure the scheme's original aim of encouraging the retention of a strong pool of qualified UK seafarers.

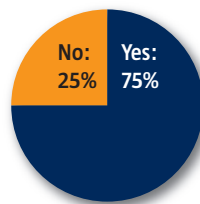
Employment

The survey has shown a continued decline in the traditional employment pattern of seafarers working directly for shipping companies. A total of 58% said they were employed directly by the owner/operator (down from 68% in 2001). Some 32% were employed via third party ship managers, up from 26% in 2001. And the proportion working through crewing agencies has increased from 5% to 8% over the same period.

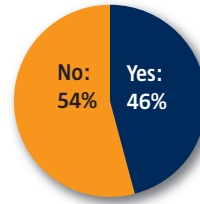
Just over 56% have their conditions determined by Nautilus collective bargaining agreements (up from 54% in 2001), 4% by ITF agreements (no change) and 30% through individual contract terms (up from 28.5%).

Many of the comments made by members in association with this question highlighted the way in which company loyalty and job satisfaction are continuing to be eroded by the drift to offshore terms and conditions or employment through remotely located employers. It is clear that the growth in the casualised nature of agency work is creating fundamental shifts in attitude among masters and officers. Many stated their disenchantment with such employment relationships and the way it adversely affects meaningful dialogue on their pay and conditions. Responses noted the frequent imposition of pay rises (or freezes) and the way in which reviews are often made on a 'take it or leave it' basis.

Do you have a pension plan?



Does your employer contribute to your pension plan?



Which pension plan do you belong to?

	% 2010
Not applicable	22
MNOFP	20
MNOFP	5
The Maritime Stakeholder	2
Private Pension	31
Other	19

How are you employed?

	% 2010
Directly by the ship owner or ship operator	58
Via a third party shipmanager or crew	32
Via a crewing agency	8
Other	2



- *Company decides what we have; no input from seafarers*
- *There is no negotiating facility in place and it's basically take it or leave it*
- *Decided my ship owner on an annual basis with no consultation with staff*
- *Dictated us by the company – no negotiating*
- *Nautilus dealt with our wage agreement last year. In this economic crisis... we were lucky to get a 5 per cent raise. Thank you Nautilus!*



Crewing

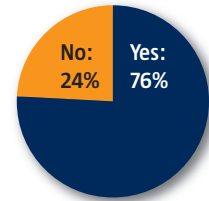
How many seafarers are onboard your ship?	% 2010
1 – 15	28
16 – 25	27
26 – 40	18
More than 40	27

How many extra persons do you think are needed?	% 2010
Not applicable	72
1	7
2	9
3	6
4 or more	6

The survey results suggest there has been continued decline in overall crewing complements since the last questionnaire. Some 28% of respondents were serving on ships with between 1-15 crew (down from 34% in 2001), 27% with 16-25 crew (down from 29%), 18% with 26-40 crew (16% in 2001) and 27% with more than 40 (21% in 2001).

Just over three-quarters of those surveyed said they considered there were sufficient seafarers onboard to safely operate their vessel – 77% in this survey, compared with 79% in 2001. However, many added comments to indicate that this was only in normal operating conditions and not in the event of an

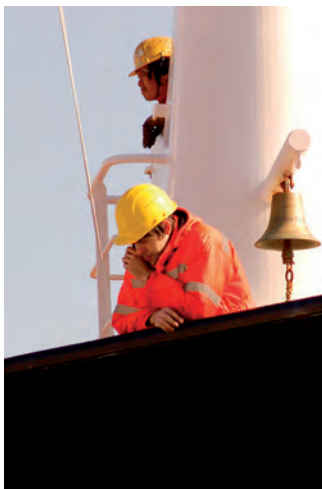
Do you feel you have sufficient persons onboard to safely operate a vessel?



emergency or sufficient to maintain the vessel to the desired standards.

Of those who stated that extra crew members were needed, 25% indicated the need for one additional seafarer, 32% two, 21% three, and the remainder four or more. The department most frequently cited as needing additional manning was the deck department (in 2001, it was the engine room).

Comments made by members included references to problems caused by rapid turnover of crew, ‘grossly inexperienced’ officers being put into higher ranks because of skill shortages, and fatigue resulting from minimum manning levels (for example, working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for a six-week tour).



“

- *Operating is one thing. Maintaining it is something else completely different. We do not have close to the number of people required or the opportunities to do the works required. We paper over cracks continuously to keep operational 24/7/365*
- *In no way do I see a ship’s crew being able to contain control and extinguish a major fire with modern present manning levels. Engine department in my opinion should be CEO, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, plus Electrician*
- *Extra deck and engine officers are always needed to ease the workload & allow for more time to be dedicated on specific responsibilities in the vessel (ie. safety management lifesaving & FF equipment, training of the crew etc.)*
- *Company recently removed 4/Eng to minimum manning level for Eng dept. This made working levels intolerable for Eng dept.*
- *Bridge only has Capt, C/O and 2/O. Capt doesn’t take watch, so with 12 hours bridge watch keeping a day general safety duties are compromised due to lack of manpower*
- *Vessel is constantly being supplied with trainees from Standby part of the company to quickly fill posts and grossly inexperienced officers sailing in rank*

”

Crew nationality

How many different nationalities are there onboard your ship?		% 2010	% 2001
1		13	24
2		10	26
3		22	19
4		16	11
5		10	7
6 or more		30	13

There has been a marked increase in the scale of multinational crewing since the 2001 survey. Only 13% of respondents in the latest research said they were serving on single nationality crewed ships – compared with 24% in 2001. 10% were on ships with two nationalities, compared with 26% in 2001. 22% were on ships with three nationalities (19% in 2001) and 16% with four (11%, 2001), and 10% with five (7% in 2001). The proportion on ships six or more nationalities has increased significantly – from 13% to 30% in the same period.

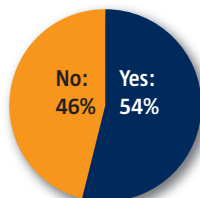
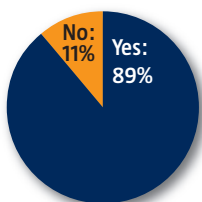
Tour lengths

How long is your normal tour of duty?		% 2010
Less than 2 months		56
2 – 6 months		41
6 – 12 months		2
More than 12 months		1

The survey shows a reduction in average tour lengths since 2001. 56% of respondents in the latest survey had a normal tour of duty of up to two months, against 49% in 2001; 41% two to six months (45% in 2001), 2% six to 12 months (4%, 2001) and 1% over 12 months (2%, 2001).

Are you on a continuous contract?

Are you serving on an 'offshore' contract?



The proportion serving on continuous contracts has increased from 86% in 2001 to 89% now. Of those who were not on continuous contracts, 8% said their current contract was for up to two months (22% in 2001), 28% for two to six months (51%, 2001), 10% for six to 12 months (15%, 2001), 8% for 12 to 24 months and 20% over 24 months (5% in 2001).

The proportion serving on 'offshore' contracts has fallen slightly, from 59% in the 2001 survey to 54% now.

Leave

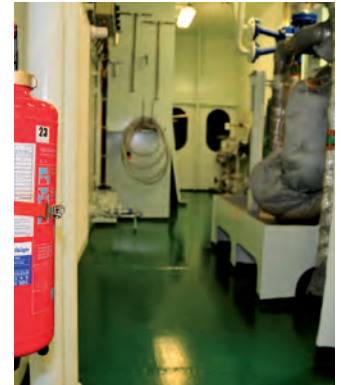
The most common leave-work ratio is one-for-one, or 28-30 days leave per month served – worked by 63% of respondents. The most generous leave ratio was 42 days per month served, whilst the least generous was 1.5 (shore staff) and 4.7 (seagoing).

Satisfaction with shipboard conditions

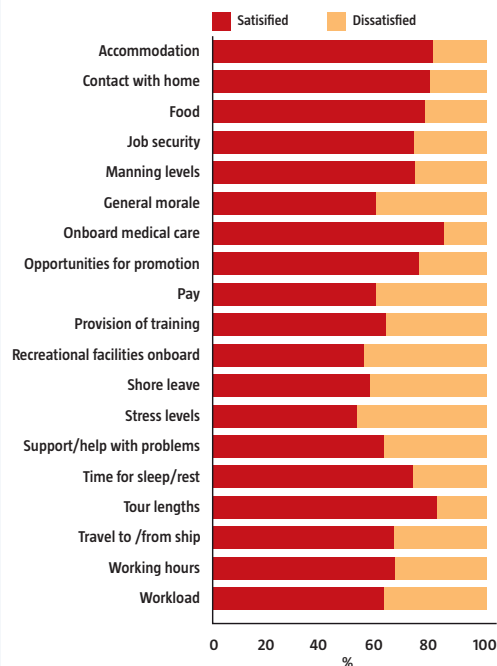
The survey results suggest that officers are generally satisfied with the majority of their conditions, and that satisfaction levels have increased on a consistent basis since the first NUMAST survey in 1991.

The highest levels of satisfaction (over 80%) were reported for: onboard medical care; tour lengths, accommodation, and contact with home and family. The highest levels of dissatisfaction (30-40%) were recorded on recreational facilities onboard, shore leave, stress levels, general morale, workload, and pay. There is little change from 2001 in the factors that rate highest in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

However, once again while the survey results indicate that, overall, officers are generally satisfied with shipboard conditions; many of the accompanying comments demonstrate an underlying dissatisfaction with key aspects of their profession.



How satisfied are you with these aspects onboard your ship?





Changes over the past decade

As with the overall satisfaction levels, the latest survey also indicates that the perceptions of many seafarers with regards to key elements of their working conditions have become more positive – with marked differences over the past 20 years.

However, it must be borne in mind that in most of these categories, the perceptions were at extremely low levels in 1991. Indeed, in certain areas they remain at very low levels despite improvements over that time.

The most significant area in which respondents consider improvements have been made in the past decade is contact with home and family – 65% indicating favourable advances, compared with 47% in 2001. Health and safety is the only other area where a majority consider things have improved in the past decade – 56% in the current survey, against 52% in 2001 and just 30% in 1991.

There continue to be a substantial number of areas where a large proportion of seafarers consider

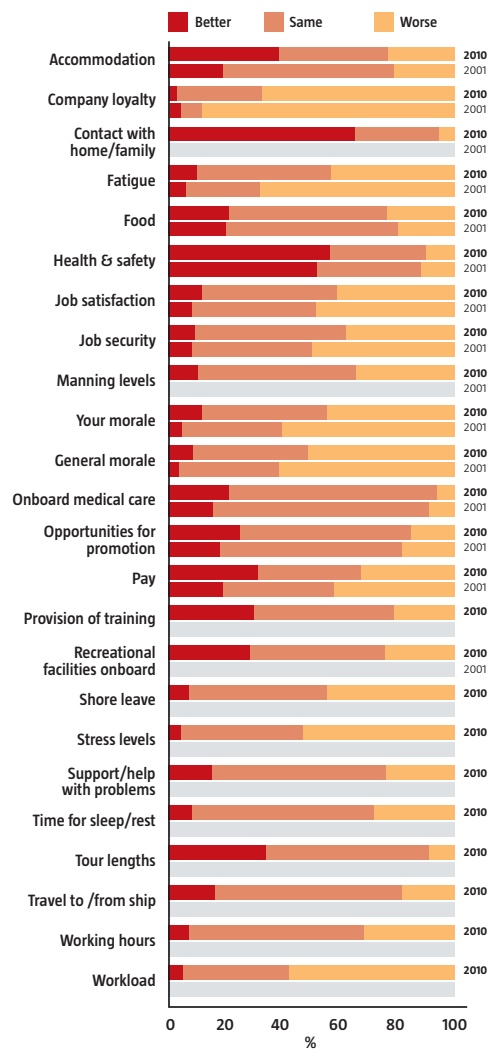
that conditions have continued to deteriorate. Not surprisingly, given the findings reported under section 7 (employment arrangements) the most marked area is company loyalty – where 68% consider things have got worse in the past decade (77% in 2001 and 88% in 1991).

Shipboard morale is another area where a majority consider things have got worse: 52%, compared with 62% in 2001. And stress levels continue to be a problem, with 53% considering these have deteriorated in the past decade (against 72% in 2001 and 84% in 1991). Perhaps linked to this, workloads were said by 58% to have got worse in the past decade, against 78% in 2001.

Significant numbers also consider there has been a deterioration in the areas of shore leave (45%), personal morale (44%), job satisfaction (42%) and fatigue (43%).

There are clear patterns between this survey, and the results obtained in 2001 and 1991 – with little variation in the factors that are perceived as improving and deteriorating. Although the general picture is one of improvement, it is clear from the study and comments made in survey reports that elements of these trends have an adverse impact on the seafarers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities, and on their attitudes towards their profession.

How do you think things have changed in the last 10 years?



Onboard incidents

Have any of the following incidents occurred on your ship?

	% 2010	% 2001
Collapse of equipment/structure	11	32
Crew member slipping/falling	35	73
Fire	12	42
Incident during loading/off loading in port	14	35
Pirate/armed attack	2	–
Rope accident	9	29

Perhaps in line with the previous findings showing a perception of improved safety over the past decade, **the frequency of accidents and incidents is also markedly reduced from the 2001 survey.** There are significant reductions in particular in the proportion reporting incidents of fire and crew members slipping or falling, although such incidents continue to be the most common. It was interesting to note that 2% had experienced a pirate attack on their vessel (this question was not asked in previous surveys).

Safety

Seafaring has always been a dangerous occupation, and the survey results underline the scale of shipboard accidents – even though a large majority rate their vessels as safe. **Whilst it is good to note that the proportion stating that there had been no accidents onboard their ship within the previous month has increased from 6% in 2001 to 10% in the latest survey, a large number of members reported a remarkably wide range of accidents and potentially catastrophic incidents on their ships.** Some of the following comments from members about onboard incidents illustrate the serious nature of problems in this area:

How long ago did the most recent accident onboard on your ship occur?

	% 2010	% 2001
In the last month	15	12
2 – 6 months	33	39
6 – 12 months ago	17	17
1 – 2 years ago	10	10
More than 2 years ago	8	8
No accidents	10	6
I don't know	7	5



- *Officer killed in WT door incident*
- *Confined space entry – not flushing an inert gas out of the Dive Bell before entering*
- *Blackout caused near-miss with Rig*
- *Obviously false tickets leading to very dangerous practices*
- *Continual vibration leading to fatigue cracking in hull structure which no one seems to want to investigate fully*
- *Due to tripping hazards/carelessness. One incident with Hydrogen gas when opening up ballast tank (person collapsed and passed out)*
- *C/O fell through plates in engine room into gear box, even though roped off*
- *Container gantry failure resulting in release of container back into hold. Cargo hold/cell guide and tank damage*
- *Fatality due to rogue wave*
- *Complete loss of power due to bridge window coming in during bad weather*
- *Moving container on deck at sea causing injury to crewman when vessel anchor handling*
- *Problems due to bad communications between multi-national crew. The company continually employs personnel whose English is very poor*
- *The incidence of heat fatigue appears to be increasing....this is a worrying trend. Many accidents noted to occur with a heat fatigue related element. Some form of time-exposed-to-heat graph should be established. Trainees have been noted to suffer greatly with regards to temperature/humidity effects*
- *Crew member trapped hand in door (repatriated) – cracking and structural deterioration on vessels prevalent (ageing fleet)*
- *Shore side crane collapsed whilst loading the ship*
- *Mooring rope came tight, trapping crew member between it and rail*
- *Computer system failed on leaving port – by sheer luck did not hit anything or cause major damage*
- *Vessel and crew member taken hostage by five violent stowaways. Master and three crew threatened with being killed*
- *Taken hostage for 57 days*
- *Boarded by thieves 3 times in Indonesia*





Accident reporting

Was the accident properly recorded in an official book?

	% 2010	% 2001
Yes	80	87
No	5	4
I don't know	15	9

The proportion of accidents being properly recorded in an official logbook has fallen from 87% in 2001 to 80% in the current survey – and significantly higher than the numbers reported to ITF/MORI conditions survey of 1995 – although the number stating ‘don't know’ has increased from 8% to 15% in the same period.

Safety training

When were you last given safety training?

	% 2010
In the last month	47
2 – 6 months	25
6 – 12 months ago	8
1 – 2 years ago	6
More than 2 years ago	11
Never	2

A positive finding: numbers reporting that they had been given some form of safety training in the past month rose from 36% in 2001 to 47% in the new survey. There has also been a marked increase in the proportions reporting other kinds of training in recent periods.

When were you last given any other training?

	% 2010	% 2001
In the last month	35	29
2 – 6 months	27	23
6 – 12 months ago	13	14
1 – 2 years ago	12	13
More than 2 years ago	11	16
Never	2	

Safety perceptions

How do you rate the overall safety condition on your vessel?

	% 2010	% 2001
Good	75	82
Average	24	18
Poor	2	1

Do you believe the conditions on your ship reflect your status as an experienced professional seafarer?

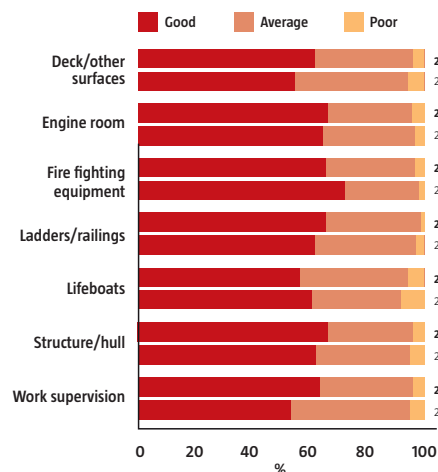
	% 2010	% 2010	% 1991
Yes	74	67	36
No	26	33	62

In contrast to the general findings indicating improvements in health and safety, there were some mixed signals sent by the results in this area when measured against previous surveys.

The proportion describing the state of safety onboard their ship as ‘good’ has decreased since 2001 in the categories of fire-fighting equipment and lifeboats – two of the most important forms of safety equipment – and a finding that is supported by the results of port-state control inspections.

The proportion rating the overall safety condition of their vessel as good or excellent has fallen from 82% in the 2001 survey to 75% in the new one. Those describing it as poor rose from 1% to 2% over the same period.

Thinking about safety onboard your ship, how do you rate each aspect?



On a positive note, there were marked improvements in the perceptions of 'good' safety in the areas of deck/ other surfaces (up from 55% to 61%), the engine room (from 64% to 66%), ladders and railings (62% to 65%, structure/hull (54% to 63%) and work supervision – up from 54% in 2001 to 61% in the new survey.

There has also been a marked increase in the proportion who consider that the conditions on their ship reflect their status as experienced professional seafarers – up from 67% in 2001 to 74% now. Even more significant is the scale of the shift since the 1991 survey, in which only 36% of those participating answered in the affirmative.

Responsibilities and resources

62% of respondents said they were given the resources they require to meet the responsibilities expected of them as skilled professionals – exactly the same figure as in 2001, but up significantly from just 36% in 1991.

However, there has been a slight decrease between 2001 and 2010 in the proportion who consider they are given the necessary authority – from 71% to 69%, although it still remains well ahead of the 59% in the 1991 survey.

Do you consider you are given the resources to meet the responsibilities expected of you as a skilled professional?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	62	62	39
No	38	38	60

Do you consider you are given the authority to meet the responsibilities expected of you as a skilled professional?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	68	71	59
No	31	29	40

It remains clear that many seafarers continue to feel seriously divorced from the management and direction of their companies' fleet policies. Two-thirds said they do not have sufficient opportunity to influence such policies, and whilst this is an improvement from 76% in 1991 and 72% in 2001, the survey shows that members' expectations have increased over the same period – with 95% now believing that they should be given such an opportunity.

Perhaps surprisingly, there has been no change since 2001 in the proportion who consider that their employer regards them as an integral part of the company's management structure – just 50%, up from 38% in 1991.

Do you believe you are provided with sufficient opportunity to influence fleet company policy as it affects your employment?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	34	28	23
No	66	72	77

Do you believe you should be given this opportunity?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	95	82	78
No	5	18	18

Do you consider you should be given the opportunity to influence other company policies?

	% 2010
Yes	82
No	18

Do you believe you should be given this opportunity?

	% 2010
Yes	84
No	16

Are you regarded by you employer as an integral member of the company's management structure?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	50	50	38
No	50	50	60

Do you believe you should be given this opportunity?

	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	89	88	78
No	11	12	14



Only 42% said they were involved in finance and policy-making decisions on matters related to their ship (the same as in 2001 and down from 48% in 1991), even though 92% considered that they should be. Similarly high expectations of involvement in fleet and company finance and policy matters are also not being met, and the numbers who consider they are included in this way have changed little over the past two decades.

Are you involved in finance and policymaking decisions relating to...?

Your ship	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	42	42	48
No	58	58	52
Your fleet	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	8	7	7
No	92	93	90
The company	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	6	5	6
No	94	95	92

Do you believe you should be involved with the decisions relating to...?

Your ship	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	94	90	91
No	6	10	7
Your fleet	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	63	54	58
No	37	46	38
The company	% 2010	% 2001	% 1991
Yes	48	37	38
No	52	63	58

Flag

The survey shows the diverse range of registries under which members' ships operate – a total of 47 different flags were recorded. The overwhelming majority (40%) were UK (red or blue ensign), followed by 12% Bahamas, 7.5% Isle of Man, 5.1% Singapore, 5% Liberia, 4.5% Bermuda, 4.4% Panama, 2.8% Marshall Islands and 1.8% Dutch. A total of 35% were serving on ships registered with flags of convenience, as defined by the ITF.

Vessel type

The results again demonstrate the diversity and flexibility of members, with a remarkably broad range of vessel types reported. There have also been some significant changes in this section since the last survey.

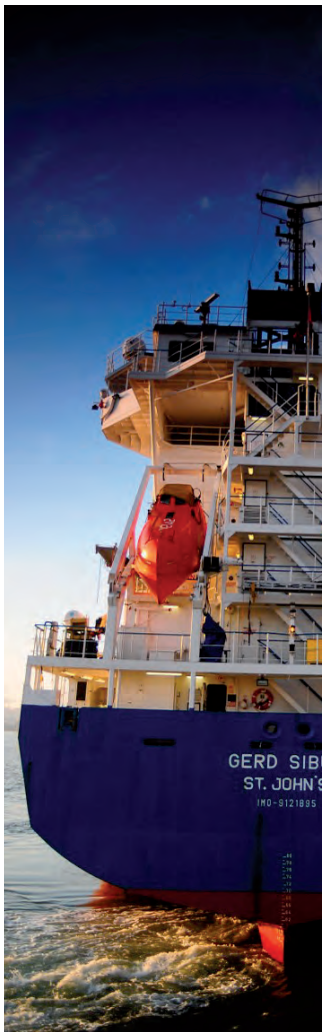
The most common vessel type is offshore support – 23% in this survey, compared with 17% in 2001. Passenger ferries, cruiseships, gas carriers, containerships and crude oil tankers – in descending order – are the next most common ship types. For the first time, superyachts feature in the top 12 list of vessel types, accounting for 2% of the total.

Since 2001 there has been a significant decline in the proportion working on containerships, freight ferries, general cargoships and reefers – suggesting that members' skills are more valued on high-value ships or vessels with safety-sensitive cargoes and passengers.

More than 50 vessel types were reported in total, including anchor-handlers, emergency response and rescue vessels, dredgers, barges, bunker barges, cablesips, car carriers, chemical and product tankers, tugs, flotels, dive support vessels, pipelayers/construction vessels, drill ships, heavylift ships, fishery protection vessels, high speed craft, jack-ups and semi-submersibles, livestock carriers, sail training ships, lighthouse authority vessels, MoD ships (including two warships), shuttle tankers, scientific research vessels, seismic survey vessels, and a wind installation vessel.

Type of vessel?

	% 2010	% 2001
Bulk carrier	1	3.5
Chemical carrier	1	3
Container ship	6	10
Crude oil tanker	6	8.5
Cruiseship	8	6
Freight ferry	3	6
Large yacht/superyacht	2	–
Gas carrier	7	5
General cargoship	1	3
Offshore support vessel	23	17
Passenger ferry	9	10
Reefer (refrigerated cargo)	0	1.5
RFA	5	5
Other	29	18



Improving conditions

The survey shows very clearly the factors considered to be most important in improving life at sea: **more pay (32%), better communications with home (27%), and better training and improved shipboard facilities (both 20%)**. Compared with the results of the surveys in 1991 and 2001, the figures show that leave, accommodation and working hours have become significantly less important as issues to improve.

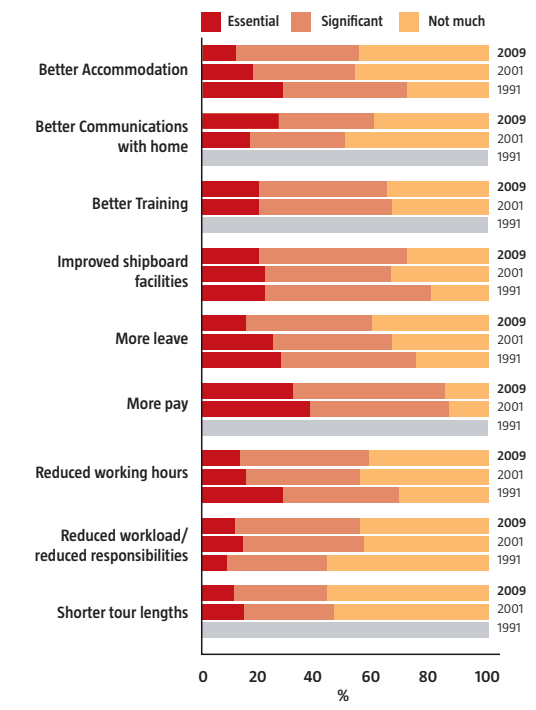
The most common complaint highlighted in members' comments is the deterioration in social life onboard, followed by food, competence of fellow crew, lack of shore leave, and criminalisation. There were also a significant number of calls for onboard gym equipment and recreational facilities, the return of access to alcohol onboard, and satellite TV.



Other issues highlighted included:

- *Poor standards of training*
- *Inexperienced junior officers and crew*
- *Poor management/lack of proper consultation and negotiation*
- *High turnover of crew*
- *Language problems among multinational crews*
- *Poor standards of build quality*
- *Poor onboard social life*
- *No opportunities to go ashore*
- *Fraudulent certificates or apparent lack of adequate checks on certificates (including CECs)*
- *Insecurity of employment*
- *Noise/vibration in cabin*

How would the following improve your life at sea?



Here is a selection of the additional comments made by members in this section:



- *I work 12-hour days minimum. 7 days a week for 6 weeks. At the end of my tour I'm physically and emotionally exhausted*
- *Working 12-14 hours daily for 28 days plus call outs this takes me about 3-4 days once home to recover. By then I have at best 3 weeks leave before travelling to rejoin the vessel*
- *Continuity of (particularly) deck crew, as good teamwork is essential on our type of vessel (anchor handling)*
- *More competent staff – CECs seem to be given out without any testing of the applicants*
- *Extra deck officer: would mean officers would remain 4-on 8-off in port and not 6hrs-on 6hrs-off. Would mean officers will stick around for training purposes, and have plenty time to complete other work without becoming fatigued*



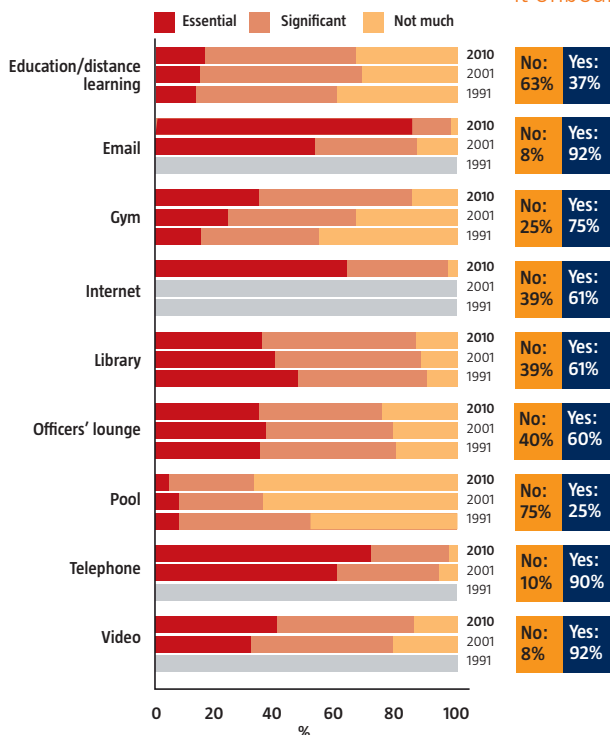


- *Access to the internet would make a MASSIVE difference*
- *We need full Broadband internet access to give us the same rights as other professionals*
- *Some form of social life would be nice. At the moment I just work, eat and sleep. No one ever goes in the bar any more*
- *The internet is a big part of my generation. All ships, especially deepsea, should have internet access*
- *Get rid of the D&A policy and bring back beer onboard to make being on board sociable again*
- *need quiet accommodation/insulation to allow sleep*
- *Chance of Shore Leave. \Decriminalisation\ of the job*
- *The introduction of the ISM Code has significantly increased the workload of those who already had those practises but there are too many playing lip service to this (completing the paperwork without undertaking the associated tasks) and therefore the required improvements in safety have not materialised*
- *Better opportunities for shore leave; more recreational facilities in ports*
- *A crew that has at least some basic training and can communicate in the company's language – English*
- *Decent food – not a bag of rice or frozen chips with cold veg and some poor animal's corpse*
- *Stop the bullying*
- *Accommodation on my vessel is very poor – bulkheads are paper thin and it is impossible to receive a proper rest period in the cabin. Poor crap quality Chinese fittings. Toilets continually blocked. Crew comfort not taken into consideration, which is terrible seeing as this is a new vessel*



How important is the following to you?

Do you have it onboard?



Important issues

These questions demonstrate changing priorities among members on the additional factors that improve their life at sea. Email, internet and telephone access have become increasingly important over the last decade and are seen as essential by at least two-thirds of members. Interestingly, more than 90% now have email onboard, 61% access to the internet, and 90% to telephones. However, many members said service levels were frequently poor, with intermittent connections, high costs and frequently insufficient terminals for the size of the crew onboard.

Gym equipment has become increasingly important to members over the past 20 years, whilst pools and onboard libraries have declined in the 'essential' category. Support for the provision of an officers' lounge has remained constant at around one-third over this period, and there has been a slight increase in the proportion who regard access to education/distance learning as essential.

Worryingly, many comments made by members expressed serious concern about the quality of the provision of internet/email and telephone services, and of gym facilities. There were also many telling comments about key elements, on the opposite page:

“

- *Telephone is bloody expensive*
- *A lot of the above are available – however there is a fee attached. Things like telephone calls should be cheaper and for other crew members internet access should be available either free or reduced in price (this doesn't affect me personally)*
- *Yes we have phone – but often unreliable or poor reception*
- *Crew e-mail system can only send very short messages and if we send a message to home on company email system it is read by all office*
- *Internet should be in place, especially if the industry hopes to employ more young people*
- *E-mail is available but the system is prone to systemic collapse and not fully supported. Periods in excess of 14 days have been experienced without any recourse to e-mail facilities due entirely to lack of support*
- *Internet/e-mail/telephone are often unreliable and take a long time to be restored*
- *Phone and internet are provided but the connection cannot be relied upon*
- *Better quality of internet connection so video calls are possible*
- *Internet quality is poor and intermittent. Cheap phone calls home would be the biggest improvement to life at sea but poor internet means Skype is unavailable*
- *Not all ranks have access to internet/comms. They should do to keep crews*
- *We do have e-mail, internet and telephones onboard but we have to pay a high fee to the company for using them (Crew used as revenue!)*
- *Re: Gym. Basic facilities are provided but are often poorly maintained, low quality and gym spaces used as EES/dirty laundry store*
- *My company refuses to give its crew and officers internet access*
- *Library/videos/gym – all paid for by crew*
- *Ship's gym has very limited equipment and space*
- *A gym is essential as many seafarers use this at sea while that may not on shore. With regard to the ENG1 requirements, this is a must*
- *The demise of the bar/smokerroom and the introduction of TV/DVD/Laptop in each cabin has killed any social contact onboard*
- *Accommodation standards for ships crew are deteriorating. On Offshore vessels, they are non-compliant with the accommodation regs. Whilst conditions for non-marine crew see an improvement, on new builds some get day rooms whilst Chief Officers and Chief Engineers do not – although entitled to it. Marine crew stuck in cabins with no natural light to placate non-marine project crew*
- *A more relaxed alcohol policy that treats us adults*
- *The removal of alcohol on many vessels in my opinion has led to generally poorer morale and problems with cabin drinkers*
- *Drinking rules have rendered ship's bars and lounges almost redundant spaces. We now need high volume entertainment (TV/DVD etc.) at cabin level for all staff*

”

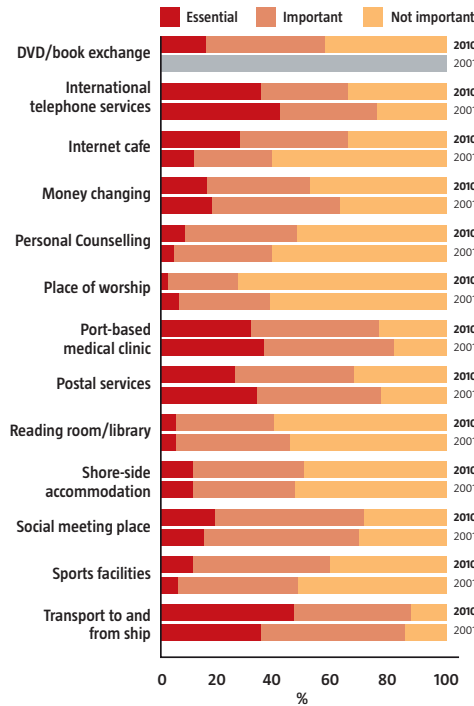


Port-based welfare

In recent years, there have been sweeping changes to the nature of port-based welfare provision for seafarers, often reflecting the dramatic reductions in the time that ships spend in port and the ability of seafarers to get ashore.

Perhaps as a consequence, a number of the traditional shore-based services – such as phones and postal facilities – have declined in importance. Nevertheless, medical facilities, telephone services, and social meeting places are seen of value by many members and transport top and from the ship is now seen as essential by nearly half, compared with 37% in 2001.

How important are each of these port-based welfare services



Campaigns

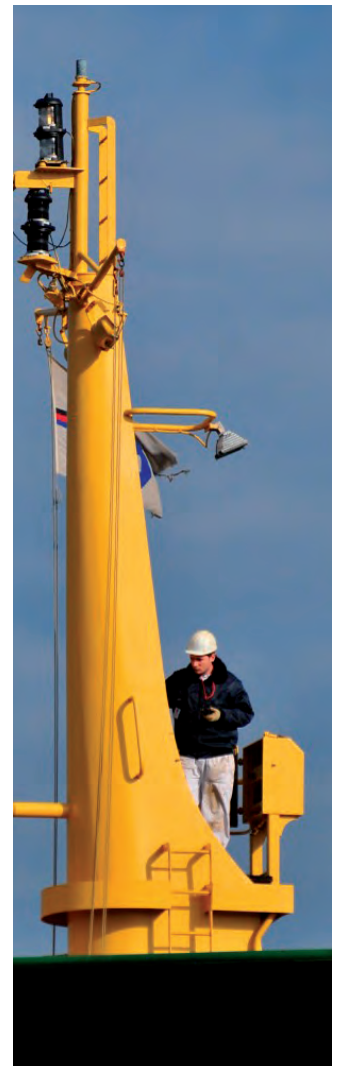
The survey results provide clear focus to Nautilus on the campaign issues that are seen as most important by members. Piracy tops the list (79%), closely followed by fatigue (78%), skill shortages (75%) and criminalisation (74%). In other comments, a significant number of members said Nautilus should campaign for the retention/extension of the SED income tax rules, increased recruitment and training, to cut excessive paperwork and administration, and address the reduced opportunities for shore leave.

How important do you think it is to campaign on these issues?



The following comments are typical of those made in this section:

- “
- *All of the above are essential. Skills shortage has increased workload & stress levels due to having to cover for less trained/educated junior staff currently being employed by my company*
 - *Competency. Too many seafarers with paper qualifications but no hands-on experience and knowledge of systems or materials (eg. how to drill a hole or machine aluminium, copper, brass or steel etc)*
 - *Filling the shortage of manning with personnel with an acceptable certificate does not relieve the tension and stress on those that have to train them whilst already overworked. This leads to resentment and poor training*
 - *It's not under manning that is often the issue but the quality of the manning. The ships have lots of third world seafarers these days and the quality has plummeted as a result*
 - *Campaigning for the majority of these will do little good due too poor companies and a poor standard of seafarer from some countries. Decent seafarers are left with more too do due to incompetence of other officers and company cuts in budget*
 - *Vessel constructional safety. Many new ships coming out of Asian yards supposedly classified are seriously sub-standard*
 - *Unable to leave ship during tour periods, so on board facilities are very important*
 - *Language issues in emergencies with multi national crews*
 - *During my last 4 month trip I got ashore for a total of approx. 12 hours*
 - *Shore leave: held prisoner on the ship*
 - *We have to improve the conditions onboard in such a way that the younger generation will see seafaring as a good opportunity rather than a prison for however long the tour of duty is*
 - *Administration tasks are excessive. This reduces the effectiveness of well trained and experienced professional seafarers who should be leading by example*
 - *I feel its important to get relieved on time as once you are over your time you are not at your best and it causes a lot of stress at home*
 - *Fatigue at sea is still a problem with much written but little done. We have all sorts of requirements to restrict excess time but little is done to ensure it happens. It only leads to more audit findings for breaking the hours requirements*
 - *UK tonnage tax should support UK jobs at sea in all ranks – essential*
 - *Contracts for seafarers working in the yachting industry who at the moment are unrepresented and unfairly treated with regards to unfair dismissal, demotion, pay reduction, lack of information (health insurance benefits), no telephone facility, travel & expenses, training etc*
 - *Cadet drop-out rates because of negligent agencies sending them to disreputable companies*
- ”





Any other business?

The survey form concluded with an open-ended invitation for officers to make any additional comments about shipboard social conditions that they wished. Almost half the respondents took this opportunity, and many of their comments are included in this report. **The overwhelming majority of these related to concerns about the decline in the quality of life onboard – in particular, the adverse effects of alcohol bans and communication problems among multinational crews. Other common problems included excessive workloads, increased paperwork, reduced crewing, diminishing onboard health and hygiene standards, and bullying.**

Here is a selection of some of the comments made:

“

- *Seafarers are treated with contempt by the companies they work for. They are not seen as an important tool of the trade and in most cases seem to be deemed an inconvenience of running a shipping company. More and more workload and company policy is pushed onto the seafarer without thought as to when he is meant to carry this work out along with all his other duties – to the point that ships' conditions are declining but it's okay because all the paperwork is in order. On top of this, the fact that people are being asked to work at sea for up to six months at a time deepsea without being provided internet and personal email access in the modern era is disgusting. With restrictions on shore leave due to security issues or increased workload when in port, the seafarer is increasingly treated as a second class citizen during his tours of duty*
- *In the offshore industry ships have over the last ten years become joyless places of work. The provision of DVD players in every cabin and the like does not compensate for the impoverished social culture onboard. Shore leave is a thing of the past. Even if available it is discouraged – some managers ashore seem to regard members wishing to go ashore almost as absconders from a closed institution. In the industry there seems to be a desire for increasing puritanical social control over crew members extending beyond pure work-related matters. The only thing that makes life at all acceptable is high pay and short voyages. Crew members will put up with management nonsense if they are sufficiently well paid. If not officers just walk off the ship as if they were leaving a bus*
- *Being the only person onboard from a different country to the majority of crew isolates that person and adds to stress and loneliness*
- *There is a profound sense of cultural and workplace isolation onboard when it's only a handful of European officers and all the rest are Indian/Nigerian, for example. It can lead to depression and a desire to quit the sea and work in a job where workplace standards are high*
- *We have eight different nationalities onboard. This breaks down our social life and ultimately ends in segregation*

”

“

- *It is like solitary confinement*
- *Interaction between people can mean the difference between being on a good ship or bad ship*
- *Stress and workloads have increased due to increases in audits, legislation and paperwork. Most work is to complete audit requirements not the job*
- *As Master I am now a glorified clerk and a 'name to blame'*
- *The main problem nowadays is increased pressure to do our job without any incident whatsoever. The drive for good safety statistics is making companies go to extremes. This places huge strain on senior management. There is no problem with reporting or recording, however there is a lean towards criminalisation of individuals after even minor incidents coming from within companies. They want people to blame to show their system is OK – it's only the people. All other parts of being at sea have stayed similar or got better recently with the internet making home seem a little nearer*
- *In this day and age where technology has advanced to high levels it should be standard to have the likes of internet onboard. I also feel that the reduction in the limit of alcohol onboard within my company (although made for understandable reasons) has had a negative effect on the social life onboard ship. The majority of personnel do not abuse the system and seem to have been punished for the mistakes of a very small minority*
- *The main things to keep people happy are pay, tour length and food quality (the food budget for crew keeps being cut)*
- *We have STCW, which is not worth the paper it is written on as far as international quality of training and CoCs are concerned. There are far too many junior officers that have a CoC for 'attendance only' at school. I personally orally examine my Junior Officers and more than 95% fail within the first five minutes of starting the oral examination. This is a very sad reflection on the standard of CoC issued by that country. This of course is 'politically' motivated and the initial cause of this is the shipowner's demand on governments for 'cheap labour' which started in the early 70s, if not before*
- *Why does the MCA give any Tom, Dick or Harry from abroad an STCW95 'British' ticket when their qualifications and engineering knowledge can only be described as dubious? This has made a total mockery of the British ticket and led to totally unqualified individuals being let loose at sea, which is detrimental to the running and safety of any vessel that they serve onboard*
- *It is apparent that over the past 15 years there has been a drastic decline in crew morale, job stress levels and workloads have increased. Pay and other benefits have in no way kept up with these changes*
- *Professional standing of masters & officers should be returned to 1970s-80s standards. Stop criminalisation of masters – pay should reflect responsibility and be equivalent to GPs & overpaid public sector employees who do not have anywhere near the same amount of responsibility. We need to catch up!*

”





“

- *Paper trail and stress from fear of prosecution for various infringements. Also the difficulties that the seamen's families have to put up with when visiting one on the vessels in various ports is rather strenuous and annoying to say the least*
- *Conditions worse than previously. Ships of lower standard, social and gym facilities etc. are usually an afterthought and it shows. Lack of alcohol onboard diminishes sociability and affects morale onboard*
- *All fun and love for the job has been beaten out of us due to the ever increasing mountain of paperwork and the number of non-productive people in offices around the world whose very existence seems to depend on receiving regular reports of essential (for that read useless) information. The assumption now is that people are idiots and need a procedure to even go to the toilet. If you get one that you can actually converse to in a common language you look on it as a bonus*
- *Plenty of terminals have a blanket ban on seafarers going ashore – unless medical emergency or repatriation – with no thoughts for shore leave or any provision – eg. minibus to the gate. Joining and leaving ships is a nightmare in the States as well – why are they allowed to get away with it?*
- *Apart from videos/DVDs etc., I personally have no social life whatsoever onboard and none ashore. Shore leave is impossible in my position*
- *The magnitude of drills that are required each and every voyage is becoming ludicrous. We on multi-role oil support vessels have double, if not more, training and drills to undertake than other vessels. Paperwork for these and to comply with ISM and other legislation is becoming a burden*
- *After being ashore for three years and retuning back to sea I have seen changes as to communication on the vessel with regards to e-mails/internet which is all good, but this vessel only has internet access whilst alongside. Also satellite TV is not provided on these vessels and this would be beneficial as the vessel is alongside for a number of months at a time*
- *Since the knee-jerk policy of total drink removal was implemented social life has declined and is now basically solo cabin related (ie. personal entertainment in cabins)*
- *I think the zero tolerance policies on alcohol are irresponsible. Not only does it massively reduce the quality of social life onboard, it pushes it into an underground culture that means those who are dependent are unable to seek the help they need. I believe any form of censorship is patronising to the people involved. We are responsible seafarers who should be allowed to decide how much we drink. Anybody who digresses can always be dealt with onboard. We should not be denied our liberties*
- *Life on the ship has become all about work-high expectations from the managers, charterers and owners, inspections and audits with nil deficiencies and many more... However little is done to reduce the crew stress level and understand their problems. Sometimes I feel we are no longer treated as human beings but machines who do not sleep or rest, but have to perform only. That is also one of the reasons that today's college students do not prefer to sail but to work ashore*
- *I can expect to go away for 6-week trips and not have any time to go ashore. Work takes up all of every day – there is always more to do than time available*

”



- *There are NO shipboard social conditions any longer – they have been gradually eroded away by alcohol legislation, introduction of domestic electronics and a general social malaise*
- *A company that can't trust its employees to have a sociable drink onboard is being extremely hypocritical by giving them the responsibility of the vessel*
- *Security duties on a ship continue to be a burden. Often people have to be over-stressed to meet the security measures*
- *The security measures implemented by most ports in the world where in seafarers are refused permission to walk inside the ports is a bit irritating. We have seen instances where the gate is probably a 5 mins walk and people have had to wait for hours before their 'ride to the gate' can arrive. There was one port I remember where the guard refused to come out of his cabin to open the gate (to let us in) because he is allowed to do it only if we 'Phone/Fax' him – the nearest phone booth was about 10 mins walk from the gate and none of us had small change on us*
- *Like everything, the bottom line is cost. There appears to be no connection made at company management level between welfare/facilities and well being and output of crew. Since legislation, eg. STCW, works at minimum standards level employers have taken that as the go-ahead to reduce all standards onboard to minimum levels – particularly relative to western European expectations. Regardless of the perceived shortage of trained crew, employers are happy to engage third world staff as even the minimum standards of training to STCW are not consistent – as there are less people available in one country they move onto the next one down the ladder. Cost is not the bottom line in an industry employing people*
- *Shipboard facilities have been continually removed from my ships, with the new class having no outside space or any comfortable inside recreational space. New accommodation is a distinct step backwards in comfort and relaxation*
- *During my last voyage it was a continual battle to remind shipboard personnel to use English as the working language as per company ISM policy. This was not adhered to as vessel had FOUR different nationalities onboard*
- *STCW is a sham. There are many forged and sub standard CoCs around still and standards vary widely worldwide*
- *The difficulty obtaining visas for crews (particularly Filipinos) to join and leave ships is extending tour lengths and adversely affecting crew morale*
- *Commercial pressure is always on for the master to move vessel numerous times during a short port call, deal with numerous audits and surveys, fuel and store. Attend project meetings, sail without pilots and finally argument when it is pointed out that it is rest time when asked to move or sail vessel*
- *We work 12 hour shifts so have very little time for relaxing or socialising. Most people finish shift and watch TV in their own cabin. We have a good sat. TV service*
- *Although I have been 'loyal' to the company, the present manning with 'cheapest' crew leads to a lowering of standards in all areas. As these crew move around, constant training is required. This leads to an increase in stress and a decrease in safety and morale. As CEO you have to be vigilant at all times*
- *Due to ever-tightening of alcohol restrictions there is little opportunity to relax, socialise and have fun as we used to. In port, turn-rounds become ever shorter and temptation is there to go ashore and have good time. This can have repercussions when returning onboard*
- *End result now is that most folk now lock themselves away in their cabins with their DVDs and laptops at night and hence social life is dead. This adds to the stresses of being away*





Not all the comments made were negative, and there was a significant minority of members who reported positive aspects to their conditions. Some of these comments illustrate that owners, managers and employers do not have to do a great deal to make life better:

“

- *Conditions on my vessel are very good – there would be no areas of complaint. Morale is generally high*
- *I am extremely happy with shipboard living conditions in my company. The cabins are clean and looked after we have a gym, library, officers' lounge on every ship. We also have TVs in all cabins and all ships have satellite TV. I do not believe that there is much more the company can do to improve accommodation*
- *None: I am lucky to be on a state of the art vessel that has good accommodation and social facilities. We have an active welfare committee which improves the recreational side of the ship. The company also is proactive in improving conditions*
- *The fitting of wireless internet throughout accommodation has been a huge bonus to all onboard*
- *I work on an old dive support vessel and conditions are fairly good. The food good and plentiful, which reduces complaints about the lack of other facilities. No library or DVD library. Gym is home-made and very basic*
- *I have now been on FPSOs for the last 8 years after 31 years deep sea. Conditions and welfare are far superior offshore to what I experienced deep sea. The hours are 12on/12off and far less than worked deep sea and there is no stress at all! There is no off-time offshore, ie. weekends/holidays, but the tours are only 4 weeks. But you are more of just a number/commodity offshore and there is no interaction with shore based management who are only concerned with getting a 'body' onboard regardless of nationality or experience*
- *My current employer supplies very good social conditions for officers and crew. Both smokersrooms and senior officer cabins have satellite television with premium subscription channels to suit nationality needs*
- *I now sail on a ship with internet and free phonecalls home. If I was to sail on a ship without these facilities I would change company because these two facilities are crucial*
- *I am one of the few seafarers that work with excellent people on a well equipped MODU. All the facilities and measures for good quality work and rest is provided*

”

Conclusions

This is the third survey that this Union has carried out in the past two decades to assess members' views on the issues that matter most to them: their conditions of employment. As such, it should offer important signals to ship owners, managers and employers about the actions they need to take to encourage the recruitment and retention of the maritime professionals required by our essential industry.

Nautilus is encouraged to note that there have been sustained and significant improvements in members' perceptions of many critical elements of their working life. It is clear that there have been some positive trends at play for such fundamental factors as pay, morale, training, workloads, and opportunities for promotion.

Interestingly, given that the survey was conducted at a time when the industry was experiencing the impact of the global economic downturn and resulting slump in seaborne trade during 2009, perceptions of job security have improved. It is also interesting to note that there have been only a small number of factors where satisfaction levels have decreased in the past decade.

That said, however, it must be noted that the survey results have started from the very low levels revealed in the original research undertaken by NUMAST in 1990.

Nautilus therefore believes that the findings from this survey underline the Union's long-standing conviction that there are still deep-rooted and far-reaching issues that need to be properly addressed by the industry and those who regulate it. It is clear, despite the improvements noted above, that many maritime professionals are deeply unhappy with some of the core elements of their working lives. Comments given in response to the survey questions demonstrate how increased globalisation of the shipping industry and the

trend to use multinational crews, largely selected on the basis of low cost, has created huge problems for seafarers – many of whom have been effectively disenfranchised in terms of the social and welfare protection that is extended to workers ashore. Even in countries such as the UK, seafarers are routinely excluded from domestic legislation covering employment, safety and welfare issues, and this position has been exacerbated by flagging out to countries that lack either the political will or the resources to enforce international regulations and codes.

Whilst the survey shows that there have been some welcome improvements in some key areas of seafarers' working conditions, the results also demonstrate continuing and profound difficulties in many areas that create extensive demoralisation and demotivation among seafarers. The findings serve to illustrate the gap between the acknowledgement of the importance of human factors at the highest level, and the way the issues continue to be ignored 'at the sharp end'. It demonstrates how significant numbers of highly skilled and widely experienced maritime professionals, with high levels of responsibility and safety-critical duties, feel under-valued, over-worked and demoralised.

At a time when the shipping industry is facing ever-increasing demands for safe and efficient operations, the evidence that so many of those with immediate responsibility for discharging those duties are so dissatisfied is of immense concern.





Similarly, at a time when the industry has been facing a growing skills crisis, the levels of dissatisfaction with key elements of work and conditions at sea are also of concern. Research conducted into national and international supply and demand shows serious and growing shortfalls – which have been ameliorated only slightly by the economic downturn. Cadet recruitment in many key labour-supplying countries struggles to attain even half the level acknowledged as necessary to meet future needs. And the shortages could escalate further if seaborne trade recovers at a faster rate than expected and as large numbers of ageing masters and officers from traditional maritime nations are due to retire in the next decade, with no clear and defined numbers to succeed them. In addition, the shipping industry continues to struggle with a negative public image, and the first-hand perceptions of senior staff reflected in this survey further fuel a poor perception of conditions that presents a serious obstacle to the recruitment and retention of properly skilled and qualified staff – as illustrated by the following comments:

“

- *There just aren't any opportunities really for me to socialise during my days onboard and it has made me decide to look for another career. I started this job full of enthusiasm, but I just feel tired and miserable all the time now*
- *Generally many UK seafarers are very gloomy about the long term employment prospects for Europeans at sea. Too many companies are driven purely on cost and will do almost anything to reduce costs by employing cheap crews with dubious training and experience. A gradual reduction in salary compared to all shore professions with which we used to be compared is very depressing*
- *I have been involved recently in promoting the Merchant Navy as a career for school leavers and young people. To be honest, I have a hard time looking them in the eye and telling them that it's a great lifestyle because on the whole I don't really think it is. More and more I have come to realise that I simply work for the money and I get very little satisfaction from my work at all. For this reason I recently left my old job in favour of a new position in the yachting sector. I now have a semi shore-based position where I just attend the vessel during the day, going home on an evening. I have to say my lifestyle has improved dramatically!*
- *I would not recommend going to sea as a career to anybody due to the criminalisation of seafarers and the stress involved in the job*
- *I find it very difficult to believe any young person looking at a career in the Merchant Navy would be won over by these harsh social living conditions*
- *The truth is that it is not simply the physical stuff that affects social life onboard ship – it's the people too. Young people are not willing to put up with bigotry or discrimination in the modern work place and thankfully they don't have to anymore either as the law protects them ashore. Does the law protect the British seafarer against discrimination? No it does not. This is the problem – the Merchant Navy is still years and years behind the modern world and let's face it, that's the way that ship owners want to keep it. Until there is root and branch reform of training and legislation of employment law for British ships, the Merchant Navy will not be an attractive career prospect for any sane young person with a reasonable education behind them*

”

There is an urgent and increasing need for regulatory measures and changes in shipping company policies to end the continued downward spiral in the nature of the seafaring profession. The decline of terms and conditions and the casualisation of the working environment have fostered fundamental problems affecting the recruitment and retention of skilled professional staff, creating a serious long-term problem that exacerbates the international industry's growing labour crisis.

Nautilus remains hopeful that the MLC will address many of the worst problems, port state control policies that are required to improve the policing of 'human factors' and the enforcement of decent social, working and living conditions for the crew, including elements such as wages, working hours, communications, personal safety and welfare.

More work is also required to ensure that flag states effectively monitor the operation of ships on their registries – including the social and welfare conditions of seafarers. It is clear, as has been noted by the ILO, that many seafarers are now essentially 'migrant' workers, with little or no relationship between the flag of the ships on which they serve and their own nationality. In such circumstances, it is vital that ship registries and maritime administrations have the necessary commitment and resources to ensure that they can comply with their responsibilities for the enforcement of international labour standards.

In its report on seafarers' working conditions published in 2001, the ILO concluded: 'The industry has a powerful need for a self-confident, proud and highly-skilled workforce; however more coherence and quality in training will not in itself be sufficient. There are also the pressing social and human rights issues associated with crew composition and size, wage levels, continuity of employment, health and safety, the quality of shipboard life, and, above all and quite fundamentally, an unfailing recognition of the seafarer's need for dignity and respect.'

At present, it appears that the industry is unwilling or unable to respond in a sophisticated way to the sometimes conflicting demands and requirements arising from its 'human element'. There appears to be little effort expended to assess and respond to the drastic changes of the nature of shipping and seafaring employment and to formulate constructive policies to address such challenges as the social impact of reduced crew levels, less time in port and multinational crew complements. Similarly, there often seems to be no thought given to the practical effects of the introduction of increasingly complex technological aids to ship operation and navigation. There have been a large number of documented accidents which demonstrate shortfalls in training, support and familiarisation for such things as electronic charts and electronic and computerised engine control systems. There are profound psychological and social issues to be

considered here, but the shipping industry's constant quest for economies seems to preclude a rational approach to these.

Nautilus presents this report to the industry and to those who regulate and control it, in the hope that it will provide an insight into the ways in which that dignity and respect is often currently being denied to those at the sharp end. It is essential, for the future of safe and efficient shipping operations, that these issues are dealt with and that maritime professionals are treated in a way that fosters confidence and pride, and encourages recruitment, retention and progression of the skilled and experienced personnel that the industry so desperately needs.

As Juan Somavia, director-general of the International Labour Office, concluded in his introduction to the MLC... 'in today's maritime sector, quality work and quality shipping go hand in hand'.





NAUTILUS INTERNATIONAL

Recommendations

Nautilus believes it is of critical importance for the future of shipping that the international Year of the Seafarer delivers on its objectives. We are publishing this report to contribute the necessary debate on the measures that are required to safeguard the supply of a skilled and experienced pool of maritime professionals.

Our principal recommendations include:

- *Shipowners, flag states and other parties should demonstrate by regulations and policies that seafarers are considered as valued professionals, afforded suitable employment security and continuous training and professional development*
- *Early ratification and enforcement of the international Maritime Labour Convention 2006*
- *Governments to devote the necessary resources to enable concentrated programmes of PSC inspections to enforce the MLC provisions and to address on 'human element' issues within STCW and ILO requirements*
- *Global adoption of the IMO/ILO guidelines for the fair treatment of seafarers following maritime incidents and the newly adopted Code for the Investigation of Maritime Accidents to give improved protection from unnecessary and/or prolonged detention in wider disputes over liability or damages*
- *A revised STCW Convention that includes more effective controls against fatigue and inadequate manning. Revision of the principles used to assess the safe manning of ships must be accompanied by concerted efforts to enforce adequate crew complements and to prevent unfair competition through relaxed interpretation of international standards*
- *Worldwide ratification and application of the international convention on seafarers' identity documents*
- *Better protection against the threat of piracy and armed attacks on merchant ships*
- *Codes of practice should be developed by the industry to prevent unfair and damaging competition caused by inadequate manning levels, unfair or substandard employment policies, and the avoidance of training by shipowners/operators*
- *Shipping companies should commit themselves to partnership with Nautilus for improved dialogue and consultation with their employees*
- *Shipmasters and officers must be given greater protection against victimisation and/or commercial pressures in the exercise of their professional judgement on safety issues*
- *The industry and the authorities must compile and disseminate detailed international records on seafarer health and safety statistics*
- *Flag states must fully investigate all casualties, incidents and complaints and publish their findings as soon as practicable and accident investigations must make a full and systematic assessment of the role of the human element in accident causation. Action must be taken against flag states that consistently fail to investigate, or publish the results of investigations into accidents involving ships using their registers*
- *Governments must act without delay to implement the IMO/ILO proposals to create a 'safety net' of insurance provision to provide financial security for abandoned seafarers. This should create a system of financial security to which seafarers can have ready and easy access to guarantee payment of wages which are due and owing and to guarantee the payment of compensation where seafarers are injured or killed in work related incidents*
- *The industry and flag states must develop new mechanisms to promote maritime training and to curtail wastage rates*

Only if we see proper progress on the core issues of job security, training, onboard conditions, criminalisation, fatigue, shore leave and piracy will Year of the Seafarer leave a lasting legacy that is something more than a nice slogan



Head Office

Oceanair House, 750-760 High Road
Leytonstone, London E11 3BB
T: +44 (0)20 8989 6677
F: +44 (0)20 8530 1015
E: enquiries@nautilusint.org

Netherlands Office

Schorpioenstraat 266
3067 KW Rotterdam

Nautilus International
Postbus 8575
3009 AN Rotterdam
Tel: +31 (0)10 477 1188
Fax: +31 (0)10 477 3846

Mark Dickinson MSc (Econ), General Secretary

Mission Statement:

The Nautilus International mission is to be an independent financially viable international trade union and professional organisation, committed to equal opportunities, providing a high quality, cost-effective service to members, and welfare to needy seafarers and their dependents.

Nautilus International also administers the NUMAST Welfare Funds and the J W Slater Fund which are registered charities



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

nautilusint.org