

Implementation and vaccination for seafarers under the MLC, 2006 during COVID-19

The Special Tripartite Committee (STC) has adopted two Resolutions concerning on Maritime Labour Convention

Notice to: Flag Administrations | Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors/Inspectors

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The Special Tripartite Committee (STC) was established by the 318th Session (June 2013) of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO). At its 340th Session (October–November 2020), the Governing Body decided that the fourth meeting of the STC would be held in two parts: Part I in a virtual format (online) from 19 to 23 April 2021. Part II will be held from 25 to 29 April 2022 (subject to formal approval by the Governing Body) at the headquarters of the ILO in Geneva.

The Committee considered the two resolutions submitted and adopted as described below.

Resolution concerning the implementation and practical application of the MLC, 2006 during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020 and the resulting control measures introduced are still applicable in many countries. This resulted into the increased importance of the MLC, 2006 during the pandemic and that the MLC, 2006 is intended to set the minimum standards to be observed by ratifying States, and that non observance of fundamental rights during such a time may render the Convention **meaningless**,

The Committee requests the ILO to renew its call on Members to designate and treat seafarers as key workers and also to call on Members to take all necessary steps to ensure that seafarers:

- i. can travel to and from their country or place of residence and their place of work;
- ii. can transit between regions and States and within countries for the purposes of taking up employment, being repatriated, or for medical care including dental care ashore;
- iii. are exempted from quarantine requirements, if any, upon arrival in the jurisdictions in which they join or leave their vessel, except where they test positive for COVID-19;
- iv. can obtain medical care including dental care ashore when required;
- v. can obtain shore leave and access to shore-based welfare services;

- vi. are permitted to access training necessary for their employment, where it is available;
- vii. are not required to stay on board a vessel longer than the period specified in their seafarer's employment agreement without their consent, and under no circumstances for longer than the maximum period of service stipulated by the MLC, 2006;

and to co-operate with each other to promote the well-being of seafarers and respect their fundamental rights and principles under the MLC, 2006.

The Committee calls on Members and shipowners' and seafarers' organizations to work jointly to ensure the promotion and respect for seafarers' rights under the MLC, 2006.

Covid-19 vaccination of seafarers

Mindful of difficulties with the rolling out of vaccination programmes, particularly in the countries of origin, residence or transit of seafarers and recognizing the challenges relating to transport restrictions, availability of approved or authorized vaccines, the current two-stage vaccination process, which means that seafarers may be at different locations when they receive each dose and the uncertainty as to when they may be considered adequately protected, the Committee:

- Calls upon Members, in consultation and cooperation with shipowners' and seafarers' organizations, to carry out a mapping exercise, in order to assist with the procurement of adequate supplies of vaccines for the inoculation of seafarers in their country of residence or other appropriate location;
- Calls upon all relevant UN bodies to recognize the need for a collective approach to secure the number of vaccines identified as being required by the mapping exercise;
- Calls upon governments, in accordance with their national vaccination programmes, to make supplies of WHO Emergency Use List (WHO-EUL) vaccines available for seafarers on ships visiting ports in their territories, in order to facilitate necessary crew changes and minimise disruption to global supply chains;
- Calls upon governments to consider establishing vaccination hubs for seafarers in ports where there is sufficient capacity, where significant numbers of ships call and where sufficient supplies of WHO-EUL vaccines can be made available;
- Encourages States to accept vaccines given to seafarers by other States, particularly if a national, regional or other form of vaccine certification is required to permit movement of individuals;
- Encourages governments, in consultation with shipowners' and seafarers' organizations and in coordination with the WHO and IMO, to consider the possibility of establishing an international programme for seafarers that will facilitate access to vaccination ashore, including where seafarers are joining or leaving a ship or taking shore leave; and
- Calls upon Members to ensure that seafarers are provided with access to COVID-19 vaccination at the earliest opportunity.

The final report of the STC Committee can be found [here](#).

Act now

Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators should note the above Resolutions and ensure proper implementation of MLC, 2006 on board their fleet and to ensure respect for seafarers' rights under the Convention.