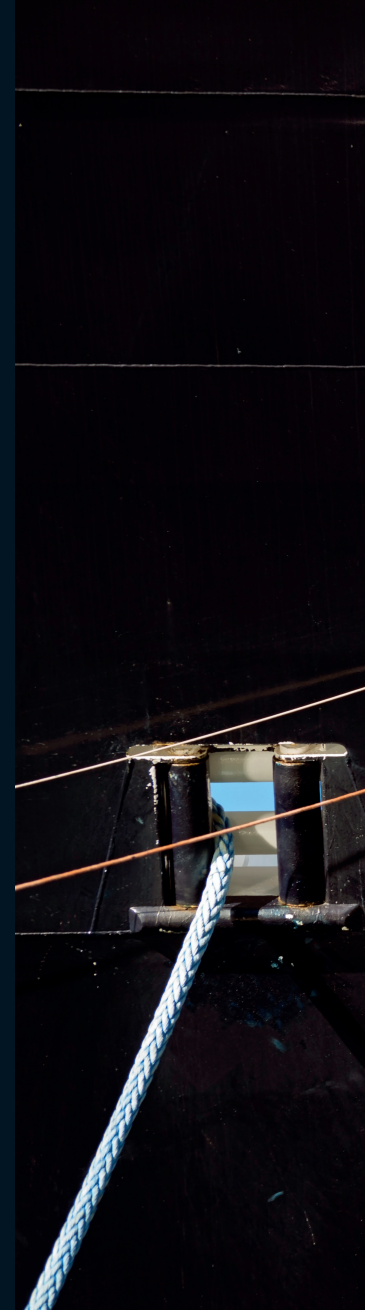


MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION (MLC) 2006: 2025 UPDATES

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THE LATEST AMENDMENTS TO THE MLC, 2006, WERE APPROVED BY THE 113TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE (ILC) ON 6 JUNE 2025. THESE AMENDMENTS ARE EXPECTED TO ENTER INTO FORCE ON 23 DECEMBER 2027. THE AMENDMENTS PROVIDE CLARIFICATION AND NEW GUIDANCE ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS, WITH HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDING:



SEAFARERS AS KEY WORKERS

All signatory countries should designate and recognise seafarers as key workers and take measures to ensure their safe movement for joining ships, shore leave, repatriation, crew changes, and medical care ashore.

REPATRIATION

When repatriating a seafarer, the shipowner must bear the minimum costs up to the destination. These include travel expenses, food and accommodation, up to 30 kg of personal luggage, and medical treatment costs until the seafarer is declared medically fit. If national laws, regulations, or collective agreements mandate it, then the seafarer should receive wages and allowances until reaching the destination.

Signatory countries must allow the repatriation of seafarers without any form of discrimination.

SHORE LEAVE

All signatory countries shall facilitate shore leave without any form of discrimination, once the ship's arrival formalities are completed, unless there are serious reasons related to public health, public safety and security,

or public order. Seafarers should not be required to obtain a visa or permit for shore leave. For the sake of seafarers' health and wellbeing, shipowners must allow shore leave when seafarers are off duty, provided that it does not compromise the safety or operation of the ship. Signatory countries should establish procedures, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, to facilitate shore leave and provide training to personnel on seafarers' rights, including their right to shore leave.

FAIR TREATMENT OF SEAFARERS DETAINED OR WHEN CONDUCTING CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS

All signatory countries should handle cases involving detained seafarers promptly and ensure consular access. When conducting investigations into marine casualties, States should take into account the principles outlined in the Casualty Investigation Code. In both cases, the IMO/ILO guidelines on fair treatment of seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes¹ and on marine accidents² must be duly considered.

ONBOARD COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

The standard onboard complaint procedures are amended



to include "appropriate shore-side personnel" as an additional authority to whom onboard complaints can be raised. The definition of "victimisation" related to complaints has also been expanded to cover adverse actions taken by any person against complainants, victims, witnesses, and whistle-blowers, including in cases where a complaint is vexatious or made with malicious intent.

MEDICAL TRAINING, MEDICAL CHEST CONTENTS AND EQUIPMENT

The latest edition of the International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers³ has been included among the recommended references for Flag States when deciding both the medical training required for seafarers and the contents of a ship's medical chest and equipment.

MEASURES TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT, BULLYING, AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Flag States must define, prevent, eliminate, and prohibit by law any onboard violence and harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and sexual assault in accordance with the Violence and Harassment Convention,

2019 (No. 190)⁴. They should require shipowners to establish appropriate policies and measures in this regard and ensure that all relevant personnel comply with them. In addition, reporting mechanisms should be established to allow for the safe and effective reporting of any such cases. Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206)⁵, and the latest version of the guidance on eliminating shipboard harassment and bullying jointly published by the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers' Federation⁶ should also be considered. Flag States, Port States and Labour-Supplying States should cooperate during investigations into incidents of this nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE INCLUSIVITY FOR ALL SEAFARERS

The amendments clarify that the supply of correctly sized personal protective equipment should be part of national guidelines. Another guideline has also been added noting that shipowners should ensure that appropriate and sufficient menstrual hygiene products are available on board, along with means for their disposal.

The complete list of the 2025 MLC amendments can be found here: <https://ow.ly/Mh0n50WZIFb>

REFERENCES:

- ¹IMO.ORG: GUIDELINES ON FAIR TREATMENT OF SEAFARERS IN THE EVENT OF A MARITIME ACCIDENT
- ²ILO.ORG: GUIDELINES ON FAIR TREATMENT OF SEAFARERS DETAINED IN CONNECTION WITH ALLEGED CRIMES
- ³ICS-SHIPPING.ORG: INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GUIDE FOR SEAFARERS AND FISHERS
- ⁴NORMLEX.ILO.ORG: VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT CONVENTION, 2019 (NO. 190)
- ⁵ILO.ORG: VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT RECOMMENDATION, 2019 (NO. 206)
- ⁶ICS-SHIPPING.ORG: GUIDANCE ON ELIMINATING SHIPBOARD HARASSMENT AND BULLYING