



AUSTRALIAN
SEAFARERS'
WELFARE
COUNCIL

ASVWC

SEAFARER WELFARE



Seafarer Welfare is about ensuring a seafarer's well-being on board and ashore. Providing a positive living and working environment contributes to safe working practices, reduced injuries, better safety outcomes, employee satisfaction and ultimately, employee retention.



SEAFARER WELFARE IN AUSTRALIA

Australia implemented the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) in 2013. The MLC is an international convention developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in consultation with Governments, Ship owner and Seafarer representatives. The MLC sets the international employment and social rights for seafarers. Among the essential elements of the MLC is the right to decent working and living conditions on board, fair terms of employment and a safe and secure workplace.

While the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) has the legislative authority to ensure vessel owners and operators are fulfilling their obligations under the MLC, the Australian Seafarers' Welfare Council (ASWC) aims to actively promote seafarer welfare issues and the services available in Australian ports to support and protect seafarers.



HOW SEAFARER WELFARE IS ADDRESSED WITHIN MLC

The MLC provides the basic requirements for seafarers' welfare. These may be summarised as:

<p>Wages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seafarers are to be paid in full for their work at no longer than monthly intervals.• Seafarers are entitled to a monthly account showing their monthly wages (or wage slip).• Allotments of wages must be paid in accordance with a seafarer's instructions.• Charges for remittances/allotments must be reasonable.
<p>Hours of rest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The MLC recognises the fundamental principle that normal working hours in other workplaces are based on an eight-hour day, with one day of rest per week.• The MLC allows countries to determine maximum work or minimum rest criteria, but requires that in doing so they must take into account the danger posed by fatigue.• The MLC provides two options, the first being maximum hours of work of 14 hours per 24 hour period and 72 in a 7 day period. The alternative being a minimum 10 hours rest per 24 hour period and 77 in a 7 day period.• The ship must keep records of a seafarer's work and rest. <p><i>However, in the event of an emergency, or to assist other ships or persons in distress, the master can suspend the work schedule.</i></p>

<p>Accommodation & Recreational facilities</p>	<p>Seafarers' accommodation must be safe, decent and consistent with promoting seafarers' health and well-being. This includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - heating and ventilation - noise and vibration - recreational facilities - hospital accommodation - size of rooms - sanitary - lighting
<p>Food and water</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supply of food and drinking water must be appropriate for the seafarers on the ship. • The galley and other equipment used to prepare and serve meals must be hygienic.
<p>Medical care on board ships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafarers must have access to prompt and adequate medical treatment while working on board. • Seafarers must be allowed to visit a doctor / dentist without delay in ports of call. • Seafarers at work must be provided with appropriate health protection and care, at no cost.
<p>Health and safety protection and accident prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable accident prevention measures and precautions are to be taken on board. • Ships are to have an on board policy and/or programme for the prevention of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases. These are to be made available to seafarers. • Ships are to have a ship safety committee, with a seafarer safety representative and regular meetings.

<p>Repatriation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seafarers are entitled to be repatriated, at no cost to themselves, in the following circumstances; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » If the seafarer’s employment agreement expires while abroad; » When a seafarer’s employment agreement is terminated (by the shipowner, or by the seafarer for justified reasons); » When the seafarer is no longer able to carry out his/her duties under his/her employment agreement or cannot be expected to carry them out. » If having been working on board the ship for 12 months. • Shipowners are required to provide financial security to ensure that repatriation will occur.
<p>Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each seafarer must have a copy of his/her seafarer employment agreement (SEA). The SEA must be signed by the seafarer and the ship owner or their representative. • The SEA must contain contact information of the seafarer, the capacity in which they are employed, wages, annual leave, termination, health and social security protection, entitlement to repatriation and reference to collective bargaining agreement (if one is in place). • Seafarers must also be given a document containing a record of their employment on the ship. • Where a collective bargaining agreement forms all or part of the SEA, that agreement must be on board.

Full details on the MLC requirements may be found on the ILO or AMSA website.

COMPLAINTS

- The MLC requires all ships to have an “On-Board Complaints Procedure”, allowing seafarers the opportunity to make a complaint without recourse or concern.
- All seafarers must be provided a copy of the procedures, in the working language of the ship.
- Seafarers are able to complain directly to the ship’s master or an external authority without victimisation.
- Seafarers always retain the right to make complaints directly to AMSA or any other organisation directly involved in the welfare of seafarers.

AMSA’s online complaints website:

www.amsa.gov.au/international/mlc/complaints/index.asp

Australian Transport Safety Bureau, Confidential Reporting System:

www.atsb.gov.au/voluntary/repcon-marine.aspx

International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network Help Line:

www.seafarerswelfare.org

SERVICES WHEN ASHORE

A visit to a port is an opportunity to telephone or email family and friends, take a break from the routine at sea, see new places, meet new people and receive care, so it is essential that ports, ship operators and shipping agents provide, to the best of their ability, for the needs of seafaring men and women.

Welfare providers and services are available for seafarers in most Australian ports.

Visit the Australian Seafarers’ Welfare Council website to find seafarer welfare facilities:

www.amsa.gov.au/seafarers_welfare/index.asp

MORE INFORMATION:

Link to ASWC site:

www.amsa.gov.au/seafarers_welfare/index.asp

Link to AMSA's MLC site:

www.amsa.gov.au/international/mlc/



Australian Government

Australian Transport Safety Bureau



Caring for seafarers
around the world



Australian Government

Australian Maritime Safety Authority



Australian Shipowners Association

RioTinto

Ports Australia

