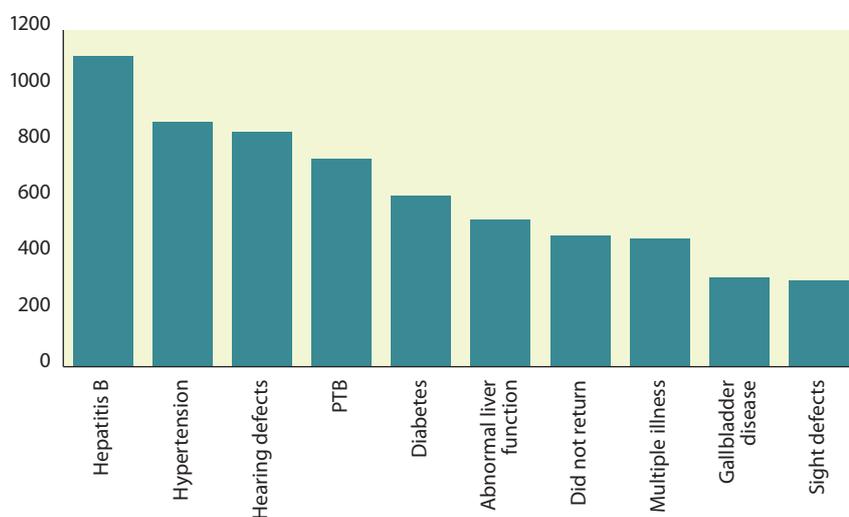


PEME ADVICE

Limiting noise induced hearing loss in crew

PEME worldwide unfitness statistics



The UK P&I Club PEME Programme provides an enhanced medical screening service for all crew. As part of the PEME examination, crew are screened on all the major body organs and functions. Data collected from the medical examinations is regularly analysed and the results used for identifying trends in crew health.

Over the last ten years, the incidence of hearing defects as the main reason for failure has increased by 40%. Hearing defects are now the third main cause of PEME failure. Previously, they did not even make the top ten. The Club has noted the largest group of seafarers who are affected by abnormal audiometry results work in engine rooms.

Typically, crew with poor audiometry results also display signs of mild to moderate high frequency hearing loss. Seafarers working in engine rooms have a higher tendency to experience hearing disabilities. This is especially true for crew who do not use precautionary measures.

High levels of ambient noise, typically above 85 dBA cause noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). The negative effects of such levels of noise and higher, depend upon individual physiology and the duration of exposure.

Identification and limitation of hearing damage

Audiometric testing is included as part of the UK Club PEME examination. It is the only diagnostic evaluation relevant to indicate noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). The screening is performed by an audiometric testing machine within a sound proof booth, which provides an accurate measure of any damage. The following features are essential for a robust hearing conservation program:

1. A baseline audiometry test to be performed within six months of exposure for all seafarers. The test should ideally be performed when the seafarer has not been exposed to hazardous noise for at least 14 hours.

2. Seafarers exposed to higher noise levels may be required to attend training on the effects of loud noises on hearing, the purpose of audiometric testing and protective devices available to mitigate the effects of noise damage.

3. As exposure to loud noises, such as in engine rooms, is unavoidable on ship, hearing protection within these areas is mandatory. Devices for hearing protection including earplugs or earmuffs can be easily sourced and used onboard. The most effective ear protection is the ear protector.

4. Allow breaks for seafarers between each episode of exposure to loud noise (more than 85 dB) especially when sound levels are higher and prolonged.



Conclusion

The UK P&I Club PEME Programme believes if the above recommendations are implemented they will help protect seafarers from hearing loss and thus safeguard shipowners/operators from facing claims resulting from hearing damage incurred whilst onboard.

If you require more information, please contact the UK Club's PEME team.

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PEME (PRE-EMPLOYMENT MEDICAL)

The Club was the first to launch a PEME scheme in 1996 due to increasing crew illness claims and a lack of accountability of clinics. Since 1996, the PEME programme has become one of the Club's leading loss prevention initiatives. The aim of the programme is to reduce the volume and value of crew illness claims which are caused by a pre-existing illnesses or disease. These underlying conditions often impact on the crew member's fitness for service and can endanger not only the health of the seafarer but also the onboard safety of other crew.

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Sophia joined Thomas Miller in 1992 and from 1994 worked as a claims handler dealing mainly with French and Spanish Members. In 2004, Sophia became the PEME Programme Director. Sophia has undertaken a large number of clinic audits, implemented the standard medical form and clinic guidelines. She has also lead the scheme through the largest period of growth and development with a doubling of approved clinic facilities and a four fold member increase. Sophia is a Director of Thomas Miller & Co. Ltd.

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Saidul Alom joined PEME from the European Region Service Team in 2004. Saidul provides administrative support to the PEME programme and is responsible for liaison with the approved clinics on financial billing matters and ensuring prompt payment of all clinic fees

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Stuart joined Thomas Miller in 1998 as a claims trainee for UK P&I Club's Greek Members. In April 2005 Stuart joined PEME as the Team Administrator. Stuart is responsible for co-ordination of Member entries and administration for the clinic approval process.