

# LOOKOUT

*Navigating the complex world of P&I insurance for Japanese Members*

**Improving risk awareness**

**The 'Lesson Learnt' project**

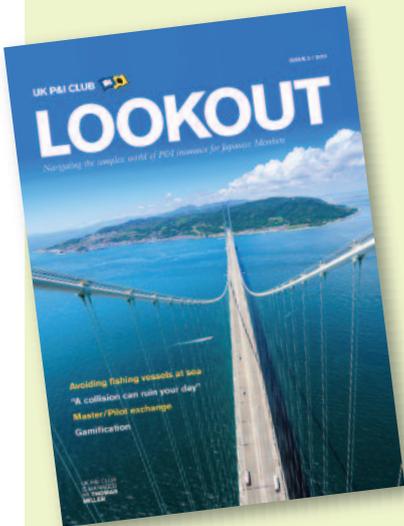
**Investing in crew**

**Bunker disputes**



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## LOOKOUT

Lookout is a bi-annual newsletter from the UK P&I Club that collates the most relevant and topical content from across the Club's global network and shares it with our Japanese Members. It covers subjects such as people claims, loss prevention, defence and industry specific items.

*The information in this newsletter is not legal advice and should not be relied upon as such.*

## THE AUTHORS

### Stuart Edmonston

Loss Prevention Director



Stuart, a Master Mariner, joined Thomas Miller's Loss Prevention department in 2014. Prior to this he worked as casualty investigator for a leading shipping law firm and was at sea on a variety of different ship types including crude oil tankers, freight ferries, passenger ships and offshore drilling units, where he sailed as Barge Master.

### Captain David Nichol

Senior Loss Prevention Executive



David is a Master Mariner joining Thomas Miller in 2014. After leaving the sea, he became a claims manager with a P&I correspondent before joining a marine surveying consultancy. In 1997, David established his own consultancy, with the majority of work being P&I related. From 2010 until joining Thomas Miller, he was a claims executive with another P&I Club, handling P&I and FD&D claims as well as being actively involved in their Loss Prevention initiatives.

### Sophia Bullard

Crew Health Programme Director



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 Crew Health Programme Director. Sophia has undertaken a large number of clinic audits, implemented the standard medical form and clinic guidelines. She has also led 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.

### Ansuman Ghosh

Risk Assessor



Ansuman, a Class 1 Motor Marine Engineer, joined UK Club's Loss Prevention department in 2018. Ansuman has sailed on Tankers, Bulk Carriers, Containers and Vehicle Carriers up to the rank of Chief Engineer. In 2006 he came ashore, working as Superintendent and Classification Society Principal Surveyor, rising to Lead Auditor for ABS in Singapore. Prior to joining Thomas Miller, Ansuman was Technical Head at a large shipowning company in UAE.

# ようこそ

First, we wish to remember those victims who suffered in disaster-stricken areas due to the severe flooding in Western Japan and also in the earthquake in Hokkaido this year. The UK Club, the Japan Branch and the Managers send heart-felt sympathies and condolences to families and friends in Japan who have been affected and wish for a speedy recovery for those affected communities.



In this edition, we start by introducing the UK Club's team of risk assessors. Every year the UK P&I Club handles thousands of claims. The insight gained over the past 30 years has enabled the Club to analyse the causes of shipping liability claims, develop a structured approach to risk analysis on ships and use the findings to raise awareness amongst the membership of what goes wrong and how to avoid such risks. It is the UK Club's team of risk assessors that make a significant contribution in this area of loss prevention in both gathering information and sharing the same directly with Members and their ship crews. Stuart Edmonston highlights just some of the recent findings and areas of concern that the risk assessors have observed.

This year, the UK Club has also brought to life the lessons learnt from its claims experience in the form of short animated reflective learning training videos. Captain David Nichol explains how the 'Lessons Learnt' project has evolved and how Members can access, by visiting the Club's website online, a comprehensive library of short-form Lessons Learnt reports covering all P&I type liabilities that can help shipowners and their crew understand how to avoid similar incidents.

The well-being of seafarers remains an industry concern, and mental health issues continue to capture news headlines. Seafaring is a strenuous



occupation; seafarers are exposed to an increased number of work related stress factors: fatigue, long hours, monotony, noise, vibration, temperature changes, a multinational environment, limited recreation, isolation and long periods away from home. Most seafarers suffer from some form of moderate to high stress that can easily lead to a vicious cycle of unhealthy behaviours, including sleep disturbance, unhealthy eating and weight gain. Recent research conducted by various international maritime organisations, including International Maritime Health Association, suggest that seafarers are more likely to experience mental health problems and associated physical health conditions than their counterpart on shore. Sophia Bullard explains the UK Club initiatives to deal with stress aboard ships.

Finally, the spate of incidents involving contaminated bunker fuel in the US Gulf Coast and more recently in South East Asia has highlighted just how vulnerable shipowners and charterers are to the inadequacy of quality controls in the fuel supply chain. Ansuman Ghosh focuses on the practical steps to minimise the potential risks and to safeguard the ship's interests.

As always, we would be interested to receive your comments and feedback, as well as suggested topics for future editions. ■

**Masaki Oiwa**  
*The Representative in Japan*

**Paul Sessions**  
*UK P&I Club Regional Director for Japan*

# Improving risk awareness

**Stuart Edmonston**, Director of Loss Prevention at UK P&I Club, explains the role of the Club's Risk Assessors and identifies some of the key issues they highlight on board ships

The UK P&I Club's Loss Prevention department comprises 14 internationally based members of staff, including eight Master Mariners and two Chief Engineers. Five Master Mariners and the three Chief Engineers in the Loss Prevention team are employed as "Risk Assessors" for the purposes of performing risk assessment surveys on board Members' ships, which aim to reduce Members' exposure to claims by raising awareness of risk.

The Loss Prevention Director supervises and co-ordinates the activities of the Risk Assessors and controls the condition surveys, which are usually carried out (by independent surveyors) under the Club's Rules.

The Club's Risk Assessors are based in the UK, Greece and Singapore and travel worldwide in order to carry out their tasks, with tours of duty based on our assessment of where target ships may be encountered. We maintain a permanent apartment for the Risk Assessors in Rotterdam. Assessors advise on a number of areas of risk aboard ships, and regularly issue notes on best practice for a variety of shipping activities. Some recent areas that they have advised on include the dangers of mooring snap-back zones, the issues associated with mis-declaration of the carriage of dangerous goods and the safe use of portable power tools.

## Mooring snap-back zones

In recent years it became common practice to mark snap-back zones on ships' decks in the vicinity of mooring machinery, rollers and fairleads. However, industry advice with respect to identifying and marking snap-back zones came under review last year, following an incident where a deck officer was seriously injured during a mooring operation when standing in a

location that had not been identified as being within a snap-back danger zone.

When a mooring line parts under load, the sudden release of stored energy in the rope will cause it to recover its original length almost instantaneously. The two ends of the line recoil, or snap-back, towards or past their secured ends with great velocity, and anyone standing within the snap-back zone risks serious injury or death. In effect, the whole mooring deck may be considered a danger zone since all mooring ropes will stretch to some degree under tension, and more so when constructed from synthetic fibre. It has therefore come to be recognised that, the painting of permanent snap-back zones on mooring decks, is unlikely to be appropriate for all mooring scenarios and may engender complacency in crew members.

Of course, mooring decks are working areas and it is not suggested that they become complete exclusion zones. However, the Club's Assessors have recommended that the following precautions be taken on board ships:

- Snap-back zones on ships' decks in the vicinity of mooring machinery,

rollers and fairleads should be marked clearly

- Risk assessments conducted to ensure potential snap-back zones are identified, taking into account various mooring configurations that may be employed
- Mooring plans should illustrate the identified snap-back hazardous zones
- Prior to each operation, mooring teams should carry out a pre-mooring tool box talk to ensure all participating crew members are aware of the hazards of snap-back

## Carriage of dangerous goods

It is imperative for the safety of the ship and crew that all necessary steps are taken to handle and stow dangerous goods in a way that reduces the risk of an emergency incident and that, in the event of fire, the crew have the information they need to respond quickly with the appropriate fire-fighting measures.

To enable this, a ship's master must be provided with a correct, universally recognised description of the goods and the potential hazards they may present. Taking one current issue, calcium hypochlorite is unstable and undergoes





exothermic decomposition at elevated temperatures, which can result in serious fires and explosions. There have been instances where calcium hypochlorite has been mis-declared as calcium chloride and other names encountered have included BK Powder, bleaching powder, CCH, disinfectant, Hy-chlor, Chloride of lime or Chlorinated lime.

Along with the mis-declaration or non-declaration of cargo by shippers, the Club's Assessors have identified a number of key contributing factors, either individually or in combination, to the causing of incidents. These include:

- Quality and selection of packaging
- Provision and accuracy of documentation and labelling
- Professionalism of the container packing process
- Human factors – regional, cultural and company attitudes to good practice and compliance
- Unchecked irregularities in the product production process
- Mis-handling or dropping containers

In addition, Assessors must be aware of the requirement that all dangerous goods are to be carried in accordance with the provisions of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG)

Code, which is a set of globally accepted rules that enables packaged dangerous goods to be carried safely by sea. As around 10% of all container cargoes constitute dangerous goods, virtually all container ship services fall within the scope of the Code.

### Portable power tools

During routine Risk Assessments, the Club's Risk Assessors often find that the safe use of portable power tools is not adhered to on board. Most cases are seen in the Deck Department, but cases can also be found in the Engine Department.

Generally, the tools referred to are pneumatic scaling equipment such as needle scalers, cup wire brushes and angle grinders. Electrically powered angle grinders of various sizes are also in use on board.

Incorrect usage of power tools on ships has generated claims for eye, chest and hand injuries, some of which have been fatal, and all of which are avoidable if proper precautions are taken on board. Some particular faults include the removal of safety guards from other tools, the modification of the safety guard on tools that can make it ineffective, and general poor maintenance. In order to avoid injuries on board, Risk Assessors advise that:

1. All tools should be inspected and checked before use for safety reasons, and safety guards should never be modified or removed from any tool, nor the safety sleeve from needle scaling equipment.
2. Safety cut out devices should be checked and ensured operational prior to each use of the tool concerned, and wiring of electrical tools should also be tested and visually inspected to ensure safe integrity before any tool is used.
3. Users should be issued with, and wear, the appropriate face shields and eye protection, as well as safety gloves of the correct type, prior to using any tool on board.
4. Training of all personnel in the safe use of tools and pre-work risk assessment/safety meetings for all personnel are very important and should be undertaken daily, to ensure that controls are not by passed and the team are safe.
5. During use of tools, no person uninvolved should be allowed to enter the area of operations and, if there is more than one operator, then there should also be a wide margin of separation between workers to stop an overlap where one worker may injure another inadvertently during operations.

In an environment of rising insurance costs and ever more demanding legislation, the importance of the Club's Assessors should not be underestimated as they continue to maintain Members' confidence that they are sharing their risks and premiums with others of similar quality.

As outlined above, Assessors are responsible for highlighting and advising on a number of key issues aboard ships with a primary focus on improving risk awareness, encouraging risk management practices, as well as the collation and sharing of good practices observed from ships across the world. ■

*For more information on the Club's Loss Prevention team and/or Risk Assessors, please contact: [lossprevention.ukclub@thomasmiller.com](mailto:lossprevention.ukclub@thomasmiller.com)*

# Expertise and experience

The UK P&I Club's Risk Assessors, including ex Masters and Chief Engineers, collectively have over 200 years' experience at sea in all commercial hull types, and have a worldwide presence, with bases in Rotterdam, Piraeus, Singapore, China and the United States.

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### Captain Chris Roberts

Senior Risk Assessor



Chris joined Thomas Miller in 2001, after a long seagoing career in all types of tankers. He joined Shell Tankers in 1969 as a cadet and sailed with them

until 1977, rising to Second Officer. He then joined Silver Line (V.Ships UK) and sailed in Chemical Tankers and LPG vessels. From 1983 until December 2000, he served as Master for V.Ships in LPG, Chemical and Product Carriers, including 1 special OBO. Chris is a Fellow of the Nautical Institute and a qualified Lead Auditor for ISM.

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### Captain Markus Westphal

Risk Assessor



Markus Westphal joined Thomas Miller in 2014 as a Risk Assessor. He previously worked on general cargo vessels, bulk carriers and

container vessels, rising to the rank of Master in 2000. As a junior officer, Markus served on salvage tugs off the South African coast as well as the development of the Moss gas project off Mosselbay. During his time at Safmarine, Markus was involved with the introduction of the ISM code as well as the ISPS code, his vessels being audited externally and internally.

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### Ansuman Ghosh

Risk Assessor – Singapore



Ansuman, a Class 1 Motor Marine Engineer, joined UK Club's Loss Prevention dept in 2018. Ansuman has sailed on Tankers, Bulk Carriers,

Containers and Vehicle Carriers up to the rank of Chief Engineer. In 2006, he came ashore, working as Superintendent and Classification Society Principal Surveyor, rising to Lead Auditor for ABS in Singapore. Prior to joining Thomas Miller, Ansuman was Technical Head at a large shipowning company in UAE.

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### Tony Watson

Risk Assessor



Tony joined Thomas Miller as a Ship Inspector. After passing a degree in Marine Engineering and becoming a Chief Engineer, he came ashore as

a Superintendent and then as a Marine Surveyor/Consultant.

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### Jason Fernandes

Risk Assessor



Jason started working with the UK P&I Club in November 2012, providing Risk Assessment and Condition Survey services to the

Club's Members in the US. Jason is a Chief Engineer with years of experience in the marine industry.

# The 'Lessons Learnt' project

**Captain David Nichol**, Senior Loss Prevention Executive introduces the 'Lessons Learnt' project that aims to share the Club's claims experience by examining real case studies and identifying the lessons learnt.

Learning from our experiences and mistakes is an essential part of human development. We all strive to avoid making mistakes, particularly those which may have a seriously negative impact on our personal and professional lives. However, as most accidents in practically all walks of life can be attributable to human error, it is important that when they do occur, any lessons learnt from the experience are harnessed in an attempt to prevent them from happening again.

The modern maritime industry is, in reality, the beneficiary of the hard won experience of those that have gone before us, ever since mankind first took to the sea in ships. The process still continues and it is an unfortunate fact that many of the rules, procedures and practices that have been adopted to

improve safety at sea and for the protection of the environment are often a response to past failures. Although it is now almost universally accepted that the shipping industry requires a more proactive attitude to safety, it is also recognised that better use should be made of the lessons that can be learnt from when things do go wrong. This principle forms an important pillar of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code in that any deficiencies, accidents or 'near misses' relating to the safety of the ship, personnel or pollution of the marine environment are to be formally recorded, investigated and reported to the shore management. An essential element of this process is identifying the root cause of the incident and implementing necessary corrective action aimed at preventing a recurrence.

Ship managers were not slow to recognise the potential benefits of sharing the lessons that could be learnt from incidents, not only as between the individual ship concerned and the manager's office, but also throughout the whole fleet. We individually learn from our mistakes, but how much better it is for many of us to learn from the mistakes of others. The advent of the internet age fortuitously coincided with the introduction of the ISM Code, and among its many great advantages is the ease and rapidity with which important information can be promulgated throughout the shipping community. With ever increasing improvements in internet access on board ships, this information is now much more readily accessible to the people who really matter; our seafarers.



# SAFETY AT SEA

There is a huge amount of available web based information relating to matters of shipboard operational safety. However, in the context of marine accidents and casualties, the investigative reports produced by maritime state administrations released freely into the public domain are often an invaluable resource, containing not just detailed descriptions of an incident, but also examining causation and recommended preventative measures. Other industry bodies, including the P&I clubs, have also played their part in raising awareness to issues affecting shipboard safety based upon their own particular experience.

Every year, the UK P&I Club handles thousands of claims which are managed by a team of claims professionals and supported by a dedicated loss prevention department. Many members of the team come from a wide variety of commercial and legal backgrounds, and include a significant number of ex-seafarers. The Club is able to utilise these resources to provide our Members and the wider shipping community with a formidable body of published material on maritime risk related matters.

Last year, the UK Club loss prevention team launched the 'Lessons Learnt' project with the aim of sharing some of our claims experience by examining real case studies and identifying lessons learnt to assist our Members in avoiding similar incidents. The Lessons Learnt reports are regularly published on the Club website and deal with a broad spectrum of P&I related incidents. For ease of access, the reports are categorised under the headings: Personal Injury, Cargo, Navigation and Pollution.

Whatever the nature of the incident, the reports are always produced in the same format comprising an incident description, analysis and lessons to be learnt. They are written in concise and plain language so as to be easily accessible to ship and shore staff. A distinctive feature of the UK Club project is that the reports are sourced from the Club's own claims database and not from incidents already published by other industry bodies. For this reason, great care is taken to ensure

that the reports retain anonymity, with ship names, geographical locations or other potentially identifying features being omitted.

This initiative has received excellent feedback from UK Club Members as well as from further afield, with the reports frequently being referred to, or reused, by a large number of high profile shipping publications, thus transporting their safety message far and wide.

The project has recently been developed further by the launch of a series of Lessons Learnt training videos, which complement the written Lessons Learnt reports posted on the Club website. The videos are being produced in cooperation with Maritime Training Services Inc, of Seattle who specialise in the development of maritime training products. The videos are aimed at providing an inter-active learning experience for seafarers of all ranks by examining thought provoking incidents, as well as suggesting actions which may

have prevented them from happening or to mitigate their consequences. At the end of each video, the seafarer is invited to reflect upon lessons learnt arising from the incident and how they could apply to their own shipboard working practices or systems. The videos are designed to be short and to the point, leaving sufficient scope for both seafarer and trainer to consider the underlying root causes of the incident.

The first video release entitled 'Death of a Bosun' relates the tragic story of a seafarer who died during a routine lifeboat drill, occurring due to a combination of inadequate working practices, poor supervision and maintenance issues. Additional training videos in the series will progressively appear on the TMTV section of the UK Club website in the near future.

The UK Club are excited at the potential for this Lessons Learnt project to deliver a valuable contribution to our Members crew training programmes. ■



# Investing in crew – the best asset aboard ship

**Sophia Bullard**, Crew Health Programme Director at UK P&I Club, discusses mental health and recent UK Club initiatives to deal with stress aboard ships.



Mental health is a topic which receives ongoing interest in the maritime press and, sadly, not always for the best reasons. Independent initiatives such as Mental Health Week work positively to raise awareness but the reality is often quite different. Poor mental health can affect us all, whether our lives are land based or seagoing. It is therefore not surprising to learn almost two thirds of people have or will experience episodes of poor mental health at some point in their life.

We are aware, not only in the shipping world, but also within other industries, that the number of suicides related to poor mental health are reported to be on the increase.

In the UK P&I Club Crew Health team, we have also noticed a growth in mental health enquiries from Club Members, and in addition, a marked increase in cases related to mental health. Cases vary in severity, and in the worst case scenario, result in tragic suicide.

All parties, including Members, ship operators and managers are keen to learn practical steps they can implement to help prevent mental health issues arising aboard for their crew.

In the ten year period from 20th February 2006, 355 crew mental health or suicide cases were reported to the

Club. This averages out to approximately three cases per month for just one of the 13 International Group P&I Clubs.

The UK Club Crew Health team believe understanding the underlying problem causing poor mental health is the first step in trying to stem these unfortunate incidents, and cut down on the number of tragic losses.

In addition, if employers have the ability to identify cases of mental illness quickly and provide the necessary assistance or treatment, where appropriate, the human cost associated with the worst consequences of mental illness; namely suicide, or potentially

the injury or death of colleagues aboard, may be avoided. The human cost impacts not only on the individual concerned, but on family, friends and colleagues too.

Unlike physical conditions, poor mental health can be difficult to detect or screen pre-employment. The value of a psychological examination or psychometrical screening tools, particularly when away from the day-to-day stresses of working at sea, may offer minimal instances of a meaningful diagnosis.

Looking at the causes of poor mental health and stress at sea, we know seafarers are often exposed to a multitude of stressful situations as part of their daily life. The following have all previously been reported as contributory factors:

## Separation from family

A recent UK P&I Club survey of crew showed distance from family was noted as the top cause for stress. This was particularly true with the 16–29 year old age group, and appeared to affect junior officers more than ratings and senior officers. Approximately 42% of junior officers considered this to be the most stressful part of sea life.

## Financial issues

Financial issues tend to affect more crew towards the end of their contracts. This may be caused by the potential threat of no regular income and instability of future work opportunities.

## Social isolation

Social isolation is a state of complete or near complete lack of contact between an individual and society. Loneliness reflects a temporary lack of contact with other human beings.

## Long working hours

Reduced manning levels can lead to longer working hours and more paperwork for the crew to complete all tasks aboard.

## Working to tight deadlines

A decline in crew numbers may mean crew are expected to undertake more duties and work to tighter deadlines.

## Cultural diversity

Living with cultural diversity (multinational crew, language and religious differences).

## Technology

Technology brings positive and negative implications for crew. Work tasks conducted using technology often depletes the need for social interaction between crew members.

Personal technology (mobile phones, ipads, laptops etc.) can also create social isolation and the withdrawal of crew from social environments aboard.

Technology has also been found recently to be the top requirement for crew who are seeking positions aboard with new employers.

The heavy use of personal technology has caused some members to implement social media and technology policies within their workforce.

## Heat and vibrations from the working environment

Crew, both working on the upper deck or the engine room, are subject to extremes of weather and temperatures.

## Port migrations

More often ports are now located outside city centres. Due to a lack of time in port many crew find they are unable to get off board or unable to travel into the city for recreational activities during off duty hours.

Over time it is natural that these factors, which can result in stress, could adversely affect the mental wellbeing of seafarers.

One of the key contributing factors attributed to poor mental health, and often found at sea, is social isolation. Progressively short manned vessels can mean there are less seafarers working together with whom to interact. At the same time, the development of improving facilities such as readily available use of Wi-Fi can mean seafarers tend to spend more of their available free time sitting alone in cabins on the computer or their mobile device, rather than spending time in communal areas interacting personally with their fellow seafarers.

By shutting themselves away in their cabins alone, vulnerable seafarers, who are prone to mental health issues, often do not obtain the necessary support or contact from their colleagues. This means symptoms of stress can go unchecked, develop and can even get to the stage where they become unmanageable before someone else notices.

## Spotting the signs

Recognising mental health issues is the first step in accessing the support needed to recover. Mental health can affect anyone. Mental illness can feel just as bad, or worse, as physical illness – only you cannot see it.

Many of the remedies for minor problems are often in the hands of those who create the working conditions under which seafarers work and live. Colleagues and friends are often able to form an impression of a person's mental state much more easily than a doctor. Seafarers can therefore help each other.

## Physical symptoms

- Suffering from frequent minor illnesses, headaches or stomach upsets
- Difficulty sleeping or constant tiredness or feeling of fatigue
- Feeling run down
- Lack of care over appearance
- Sudden weight loss or gain
- Minor physical ailments

## Emotional and behavioural symptoms

- Irritability, aggression or tearfulness
- Loss of humour
- Indecision, inability to concentrate on tasks, increased errors, missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes and/or sedatives
- Loss of confidence
- Difficulty remembering things
- Becoming withdrawn, not participating in conversations or social

# CREW HEALTH

activities, and spending increasing amounts of time alone in cabins

- Disruptive behaviour
- Poor job performance
- An employee who is normally punctual frequently arriving late

Fortunately, there is much that can be done to improve the mental health of all crew aboard. Some suggestions to improve crew mental health and working environment are detailed below:

## **Control on internet access**

Whilst not the most popular idea when discussed with crew, it has been suggested a control of internet usage may be helpful. Crew can also be encouraged to use the internet in communal areas.

## **Adequate periods of shore leave**

Crew should be encouraged to take

shore leave and spend time away from their duties aboard.

## **Encouragement of aboard social life**

Team or group activities may be helpful, e.g. quizzes, film showings, card games, cooking and recipe competitions, inter-ship challenges.

## **Consideration of cultural factors in crewing**

Management and crew are encouraged to learn and respect the differences which can exist in the often varied cultures found aboard, to avoid problems in communications and the working environment.

## **Provision of adequate communal space and activities**

Consideration of supply of fitness equipment. A treadmill or exercise bike does not take up much room but provides much needed opportunity for exercise.

## **Continuity of employment**

Shorter contracts and a return to the same vessel, if possible, are encouraged for continuity and familiarity of surroundings. No need to re-train or learn new systems aboard. Make considerations regarding an all year round salary to promote job security.

## **Pastoral and spiritual care**

Access to pastoral and spiritual care is important for a large number of crew.

## **Daily news and sports bulletins**

Newspapers, company bulletins, access to news channels on television and/or media via the internet

## **Flexibility in length of contracts**

Shorter pre-scheduled contracts with regular leave periods are recommended. Extending existing contracts should be avoided where possible.

## **Fostering a mentoring system aboard**

Mentoring can be very helpful at sea. A more knowledgeable and experienced colleague can act as a guide for a less experienced junior crew member. A positive and helpful attitude from the mentor towards guidance can assist the junior crew member to develop his own solutions to career and role issues aboard, thus increasing his confidence.

## **Develop a mental health policy**

A mental health policy aims to promote mental wellbeing of all staff through providing information and raising awareness of mental health. Not least, it also provides opportunities for all staff to look after their own mental wellbeing and supports them through the process.

It is also important to ensure a company-wide mental health policy really does mean from the top down. A policy to include all ranks, land and sea based does work to promote a positive working environment.

Provision of a safety officer role to be allocated aboard is one suggestion worth exploring. This does not have to be a senior officer; in fact, it is often more advantageous to assign this role to a junior rating.



# CREW HEALTH



The main criteria for the role of safety officer would be an individual who has the enthusiasm and interest in developing the role. A more junior crew member may feel empowered and gain confidence merely in being given the appointment and responsibility of the safety officer role.

Understanding and addressing the factors which affect mental wellbeing at work can really benefit everyone.

## S.A.V.E.

In summary, the Club Crew Health team promote practical steps through S.A.V.E.

**Support** – Consider implementation of workplace improvements and a mental health policy to apply to all staff on all levels.

**Awareness** – Expand your own knowledge, as an individual and as a company, on the triggers which can cause poor mental health and the symptoms. Notice a mental health condition early on to provide prompt

access to treatment and ultimately improve chances of a full recovery.

**Value** – Value the contribution of your crew. Enhance their diet aboard, allow access to aboard exercise equipment and create opportunities for the crew to bond together socially.

**Educate** – Educate on the options available to assist the crew deal with mental health problems. There are a lot of support options available, e.g. ISWAN, Seafarer Help – multi lingual, multi- platform (text, phone, whatsapp, webchat, email etc.)

With a topic so close to home for all of us, the UK Club decided to do something proactive to encourage better mental health for our Members' crew.

The UK Club have focussed attention to this issue in a number of ways.

In 2015, the Crew Health team met the Sailors' Society and learnt about their Wellness at Sea programme. Wellness at Sea aims, through coaching and

training, to promote healthy wellbeing for crew. Sailors' Society trainers work with crew and encourage them to engage in practical and theoretical exercises with opportunities for self-reflection. Tackling five major areas of health, including mental wellbeing, the course equips attendees with the tools to identify stresses in themselves and others, and, very importantly, where they can turn for more support.

A supported and trained crew become better equipped to identify and manage the challenges of life at sea, and this can help prevent deterioration of their health whilst aboard. The programme could lead to a decline in incidents and potentially could save a life.

The UK Club Crew Health team continues to support the Sailors' Society through continuing sponsorship of the Emotional Wellness module of the initiative for the last two years.

The Club is also active in dialogues with seafarer charities and wellness focussed organisations. Meetings with Apostleship of the Sea, Mission to Seafarers, the Seafarer Hospital and ISWAN assists us to research and develop our understanding of the issues which affect seafarers worldwide. Working together and supporting these organisations, we can build strong strategies to assist our Members to lower their crew management risks through reduction of crew health claims.

Mental health awareness features heavily in the bulletins, booklets and advice posters created by the Crew Health team. Exploring such subjects as sleep deprivation, managing stress on board, identifying the triggers and symptoms of stress and seasonal affective disorder ensures an up-to-date resource of health information for seafarers and proactive employers.

Physical health topics covered include minimising the risk of hepatitis, maintaining a healthy liver, HIV and AIDS, diabetes, head injuries, hydration and heat stroke. The team has also created booklets and posters specifically targeted to promoting improved mental health on board ([www.ukpandi.com](http://www.ukpandi.com)). ■

# The issues and risks of off-spec bunkers

**Ansuman Ghosh**, Chief Engineer and Risk Assessor discusses the concerns facing shipowners and charterers alike following the recent spate of bunker disputes. Implementing practical steps can help in minimising the financial risks and protect the ships' interests in dealing with post-delivery stem disputes.

It has been a year when the industry has seen a significant number of reported bunker quality related engine problems, notably arising from the delivery of fuel supplied in the US Gulf region, particularly in the Houston area. However, the problems have not just stopped there, with reported issues extended to fuels supplied at Panama and also similarly in Singapore and Asia.

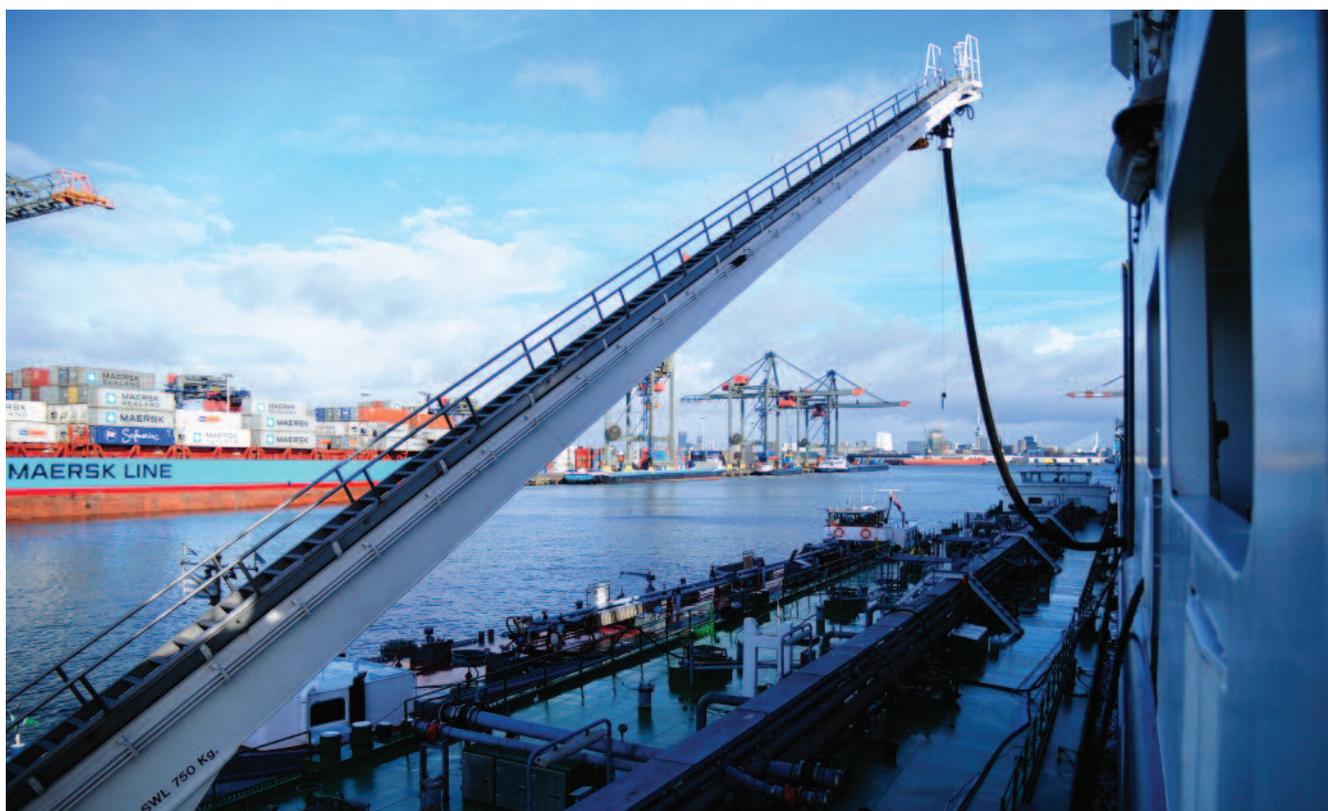
Ships that were affected reported a range of technical problems, including sludging, blocked fuel filters, sticking of fuel plungers, fuel pump seizures and failures. In some cases, these issues were so severe as to cause a loss of main engine

power, giving rise to the possibility of serious incidents, such as collisions or groundings. Events leave shipowners at loggerheads with their charterers in costly bunker disputes over claims for engine damage, deviation, off-hire and consequential losses; whilst the charterers are often chasing the shadows of bunker suppliers.

The reported bunker cases indicate that the root cause for bunker fuels being off-spec are very much varied. Whether by deliberate introduction of contaminants into the supply chain, or simply negligence around quality control, various by-products of bio-fuel

production or other waste contaminants, such as phenolic compounds and resin acids have been found in marine fuels, and have been held responsible for causing damage to engine fuel system components.

Experience suggests that some marine fuels have been used as a dumping ground for waste chemicals and organic substances. In other cases, enhanced refining techniques have resulted in a decline in the quality of residual fuel as more blend components are used. Yet, despite the problems, the heavy blending of inappropriate blend components continues and will become



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ever more the problem as the demand for low sulphur fuel increases.

The introduction from 1st January, 2020 of the International Maritime Organization's low-sulphur regulations will require more refining of marine fuels. As a result, the level of cat fines, that are deliberately introduced to 'crack' the fuel, will inevitably increase. Unless completely removed by purification, these cat fines will cause serious damage to engine parts if burned in the marine fuel.

The major worrying issue for the industry has been the fact that conventional ISO 8217 testing alone has failed to detect a host of contaminants present in the US Gulf. Even the off-spec bunkers reported in Singapore were not apparently detected, where the sample testing procedures in Singapore are some of the most rigorous imposed in the world, governed by the Singapore Standard Code of Practice for Bunkering (SS 600), developed by the Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) in association with the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) and the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC). Other bunkering standards include TR 48, a technical reference for Bunker Mass Flow Metering, and SS 524, a quality

management standard aimed at ensuring an unbroken chain of control over the quality of bunkers supplied.

This is simply explained in that testing to current ISO 8217 characteristics only covers the parameters within specified limits, and designed to assess the levels of normal manufacturing and handling, impurities such as catalytic fines, water and used lubricating oil, as well as the presence of contaminants that may impinge on the flash point of the fuel. So it is not surprising why the standard ISO 8217 will not always detect all possible contaminants that might find their way into marine bunker fuels and reveal whether fuel is contaminated or not. Proving that fuel contains materials in a concentration which can adversely affect the fitness of fuel for use in a marine engine will often require non-standard, forensic levels of testing, typically using Gas Chromatography/Mass Spectrometry (GCM) and/or Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR). Such testing to be done each time before putting bunkered fuel in use is both costly and time-consuming to conduct and process the results.

Today, the extended marine fuel supply chain, with multiple participants, just

lacks the transparency and supervision needed to give shipowners/charterers the confidence in the market suppliers and their quality controls. It is, however, beyond the scope of this article to comment on industry solutions, but to highlight for our Members the most practical steps they should take to minimise the risks and financial exposure to avoiding costly bunker disputes.

## Mitigating the risks of stemming off-spec bunkers

The fuel supplied to the ship should have been ordered on the basis that it will be compliant with the International Standard, ISO 8217 and be suitable for consumption with respect to environmental regulations, applicable within the intended trading route of the ship.

It is recommended that Owners and Charterers are entered with a fuel analysis scheme and ensure that all fuels are sampled and tested to check compliance. Any recommendations from the appointed testing laboratory should be followed.

Adoption of onboard fuel testing kits for compatibility/stability and cat fines can insure initial screening and provide

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the necessary precaution/action to ensure the safe operation of marine machinery to some extent.

Where possible, demanding a quality assurance programme from suppliers for ensuring that they are taking every possible precaution regarding the supply of quality fuel. It will be prudent to ask for additional GCMS Analysis and certain specification guarantees beyond ISO 8217 right at the procurement stage.

Adhering to the following shipboard practices is also of paramount importance.

## Before the delivery

- Agree with the barge master where and how his delivery samples will be taken. Ideally, this should be by continuous drip at the ship's receiving manifold, however, continuous drip at the barge discharge manifold should also be acceptable, providing the process can be observed by a member of the ship's crew. If the barge master does not intend to take reliable continuous drip samples then issue a letter of protest and inform him that you will take delivery of samples. He may issue later, but you will record that they were not taken properly.
- Check the drip sampling device is fully operational and clean, and fit a clean collection bag.
- Always try to segregate new bunkers from pre-existing fuel. Loading into empty tanks will avoid incompatibility problems, and if the new fuel has a quality defect it will not contaminate other fuel.

## During the delivery

- Ensure that a continuous drip sample is obtained throughout the entire delivery. This should be approximately 5 litres.

## On completion of the delivery

- Fully mix the bulk drip sample.
- The barge master should be invited to witness sample preparations.
- Fill at least four 1 litre sample bottles, adding fuel to each bottle a little at a

time and making multi-passes over the bottles. The bulk sample container should be mixed or shaken several times during this process.

- Label and seal all the samples. Make sure the following is recorded on the labels: Ship's name, port, barge name, date, type of fuel (HFO/MDO), sampling method, sampling location, seal number. The Chief Engineer and barge master must sign the labels.
- Make a list of the samples and their seal numbers with remarks on how they were distributed e.g. Ship retained, barge retained, test laboratory. One sample should be issued to the barge and a signed receipt obtained.
- Check that the bunker delivery receipt records all the seal numbers and distribution.
- If the barge master issues samples that were not taken under agreed witness conditions, then sign for "receipt only – source unknown". A letter of protest should also be issued.
- One delivery sample should be sent for testing arranged through a routine bunker testing service.
- If possible, do not use the new fuel until you have received the test results.
- Check the laboratory test report and take into account any recommendations given by the laboratory, such as heating and use of purifiers. Record in the engine log book the use of purifiers and fuel temperatures.
- Always record, in the engine log book, every day the primary bunker tank being used for transfer to the settling tank.
- If problems are experienced with fuel treatment or engine performance then ensure that appropriate entries are made in the engine log book.
- If it is suspected that the new fuel has some quality defect, due to filter, purifier or engine problems, then take samples before and after the purifier, and before the engine, after the fine filters.
- Take great care with sampling hot fuel oil. Label and seal the samples,

and ensure the labels contain all relevant information on when, where and how the samples were taken. Send them to the laboratory as soon as possible.

- If there is excessive sludging at the purifiers, or filters are getting blocked, then obtain samples of the sludge for testing.
- Take photographs of purifiers and filters to demonstrate the problem.
- If engine components sustain damage, then preserve the damaged parts as evidence.
- The Master and Chief Engineer should keep an accurate record of the following:
  - When was the fuel first burned?
  - What were the immediate manifestation of the problems?
  - What action was taken to reduce the problem?
  - Was the action effective?
  - When were repairs carried out and under whose supervision?
  - What parts were renewed or overhauled?
  - When was the fuel last burned?
  - What was done with the bad fuel and in which tanks is it stored?
  - Performance of the engine once the vessel had ceased to burn the contaminated fuel?
- Keep head office fully informed of problems, as it will need to communicate with the charterer and/or fuel supplier and arrange for attendance of a surveyor.
- All records of expenses in de-bunkering should be maintained.
- Statements from crew should be taken as soon as is practicable to obtain a contemporaneous report of what occurred at bunkering. ■

*For additional information and guidance, please visit the websites of the UK P&I and Defence Clubs. Alternatively, please contact the Club Managers directly for further assistance.*

GLOBAL NETWORK

