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Global governments must act decisively to improve crew changes during the pandemic - UK P&I Club comments

Stuart Edmonston, Loss Prevention Director at UK P&I, discusses the issue of crew changes, mobility and repatriation, calling on governments to implement special exemptions to ease the burden on seafarers:

“COVID-19 has paralysed supply chains and the movement of people, but nowhere has the disruption been starker than the issue of crew changes. Port restrictions and the global lockdown have stifled crew mobility and the repatriation of seafarers. Crew have had to remain on vessels well beyond their contracted period, while others have been unable to join their ships. We believe governments need to act decisively to ease the strain on global seafarers.

“Governments and relevant national authorities have been asked to introduce special exemptions for seafarers in laws restricting the movement of people during the pandemic and to ensure that means of transport, especially between ports, airports and the homes of the seafarers are available to crew. Additionally, a relaxation of documentary requirements for seafarers is necessary during these extraordinary times.

“A recommended framework of protocols for ensuring safe ship crew changes and travel during the pandemic have been drawn up by multiple global industry associations and endorsed by the IMO. However, it’s disappointing that few governments and national authorities have to date implemented this framework, as doing so would hugely assist in addressing the issues of safe conduct of crew changes and repatriation.

“At this time, UK P&I Club reiterates its support and solidarity with seafarers around the world and charities such as the Mission to Seafarers and the Sailors Society, who are working tirelessly on their behalf.”

For the latest legal, operational, contractual and cover guidance related to crew changes, including an in-depth FAQ, visit: <https://www.ukpandi.com/knowledge-publications/industry-issues/industry-developments/impact-of-covid-19-on-crew-changes/>

Ends

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Notes to Editors

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