

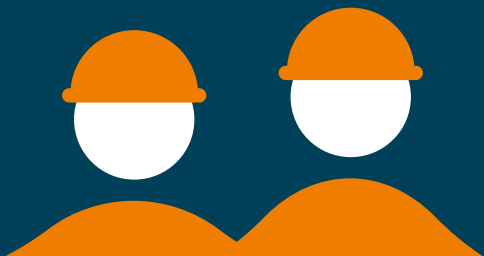


ALL ABOARD
ALLIANCE

GLOBAL MARITIME FORUM

Raising the standard at sea

Showcasing what good looks
like with the Sustainable
Crewing Guidelines



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Executive summary

One year after the launch of the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines, this report captures how 13 pioneering All Aboard Alliance member companies have translated the guidelines into practice.

Developed to help maritime companies create more inclusive, supportive and attractive sea-based workplaces, the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines were co-designed by many of the companies featured in this report. Their actions help demonstrate that improving life at sea is not just about following a checklist. It is about embedding good practices that reflect each company's culture, operations, and people, and that can serve as inspiration for others across the industry to learn from and build upon.

The report highlights strong practices across most of the nine guideline areas. There have been strong efforts to support respectful behaviour, career development, crew welfare, connectivity, community-building, feedback mechanisms, and inclusive personal protective equipment. There are also, however, areas that require further progress, especially in strengthening parental support. While maternity provisions are increasingly common, paternity leave and formal return-to-work pathways remain less established.

Rather than prescribing a single approach, this report showcases what good looks like in practice. It demonstrates how the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines can support continuous improvement while encouraging companies to adapt ideas to their own context. By sharing these experiences openly, these companies are helping accelerate learning, collaboration, and progress towards safer, more inclusive, and more attractive careers at sea.

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Introduction

The future of life at sea will be shaped by companies learning from one another and continuously raising the bar. The Sustainable Crewing Guidelines were developed through that spirit of collaboration, providing a shared framework for showcasing what good looks like and inspiring further progress across the maritime industry.

This report highlights the leading practices of 13 All Aboard Alliance companies that have been actively working to create safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable maritime careers. Many of these companies were also part of the Diversity@Sea pilot project, which between 2023 and 2024 brought together shipowners, ship managers, charterers, and seafarers to explore practical ways to improve life at sea and attract a more diverse workforce to the maritime industry.

The pilot project culminated in the publication of the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines in March 2025. Developed through extensive collaboration with select All Aboard Alliance member companies and seafarers, the guidelines identify nine areas that influence well-being, inclusion, retention, and career development:

1. Establish clear expectations of respectful and professional behaviour
2. Zero tolerance and clear consequences for unacceptable behaviour
3. Set rank-specific criteria for tasks, training, and appraisals
4. Ensure appropriate equipment and facilities for all
5. Provide a reliable daily connection to the wider world
6. Reduce isolation by building supportive communities
7. Offer flexible contract lengths and respect contract terms
8. Provide paid parental leave
9. Continuously collect feedback and take action

Rather than prescribing a single approach, the guidelines were designed to help companies define what good looks like and provide a practical framework for translating ambition into action across different operational contexts.

One year after the launch of the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines, companies from across the All Aboard Alliance were invited to reflect on their experiences and share examples of how they have worked with the recommendations in practice. Through a combination of self-assessments and follow-up interviews, 13 companies provided insight into the initiatives they have implemented, the challenges they have encountered, and the lessons learned along the way.

The purpose of this report is not to assess compliance with the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines or determine whether specific practices were introduced before or after the pilot project. Many participating companies already had strong practices in place, while others used the guidelines to review existing approaches, identify gaps, formalise procedures, or explore new ideas.

Indeed, one of the strongest findings is that the guidelines have often served as a catalyst for reflection and continuous improvement. The examples featured throughout this report showcase a range of approaches that companies are using to create more sustainable and attractive careers. By sharing these experiences, the report aims to highlight what leading practice looks like today and inspire continued innovation across the maritime industry.

Sustainable Crewing Guidelines



1. Establish clear expectations of respectful and professional behaviour



2. Zero tolerance and clear consequences for unacceptable behaviour



3. Set rank-specific criteria for tasks, training, and appraisals



4. Ensure appropriate equipment and facilities for all



5. Provide a reliable daily connection to the wider world



6. Reduce isolation by building supportive communities



7. Offer flexible contract lengths and respect contract terms



8. Provide paid parental leave



9. Continuously collect feedback and take action

Methodology

An invitation to participate in this report was sent to All Aboard Alliance member companies in early March 2026. The invitation included a link to a survey, which ran until the end of April 2026. The survey was completed by 13 companies, including ten that participated in the Diversity@Sea pilot project.

The survey was structured around 27 indicator questions that support the nine Sustainable Crewing Guidelines. For each indicator, companies were asked whether the practice or policy was currently in place, with the following response options:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ *No, but planned*
- ☐ *Not currently planned*

Throughout the report, the numbers listed under each guideline reflect how many of the 13 companies reported having the practice, policy, or process in place. For example, an indicator question marked 10/13 means that ten companies responded 'yes' to having that particular practice or policy in place.

Companies were also invited to provide open-ended responses, describing the measures they had implemented, how they were introduced, and any lessons learned during implementation.

Following the survey, all respondents were invited to a follow-up interview to provide additional context and examples. Nine companies participated. The interviews were used to clarify survey responses, explore implementation practices in greater detail, and identify examples that could support industry learning and knowledge sharing.

The findings presented in this report are based on both the survey responses and the follow-up interviews.

Participating companies

The All Aboard Alliance would like to thank the 13 companies that contributed to this uptake assessment by completing the survey, participating in interviews, and openly sharing their experiences and lessons learned. Their willingness to reflect on both achievements and challenges has provided valuable insight into how the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines are being translated into practice across different organisational and operational contexts.

The report also includes a dedicated perspective from Cargill, illustrating how a charterer can support the implementation of the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines by setting expectations for vessel operators and the wider maritime value chain.

The All Aboard Alliance hopes that the examples presented throughout this report will recognise the progress already being made while inspiring continued learning and collaboration across the maritime industry.

The following companies contributed to this report:

- bp Shipping
- Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement (BSM)
- Cargill Ocean Transportation
- Diana Shipping Inc
- Dorian LPG
- GasLog LNG Services
- Hafnia
- Höegh Autoliners
- MISC
- Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL)
- Neda Maritime
- Shell
- Swire Shipping
- Synergy Marine Group



Guideline 1

Establish clear expectations of respectful and professional behaviour

A vessel’s onboard culture influences everything from well-being and teamwork to safety and retention. Establishing clear expectations for respectful and professional behaviour helps create environments where seafarers feel safe, included, and able to perform at their best, while reducing the risk of conflict, exclusion, and inappropriate conduct.

Are behavioural expectations related to respect and inclusivity included in appraisals and the code of conduct?	12	/ 13
Is ongoing training provided to promote awareness of inclusive practices?	13	/ 13
Does the company implement initiatives to improve communication and collaboration between shore-based management and seafarers?	12	/ 13

There is strong alignment among the participating companies in establishing clear expectations for respectful and professional behaviour. Most companies reported having established clear expectations through codes of conduct, company values, management systems, and behavioural policies. Company responses suggested that the focus increasingly lies not in defining expectations, but in ensuring

that they are consistently understood, reinforced, and reflected in everyday interactions across diverse crews and workplaces.

A recurring theme was the importance of continuous communication and engagement. Companies report using a wide range of measures to reinforce behavioural expectations, including pre-joining briefings, crew forums, vessel visits, webinars, awareness campaigns, leadership engagement, and computer-based training.

MISC highlighted regular engagement sessions, vessel broadcasts, and awareness initiatives, while GasLog and Dorian LPG emphasised town halls, crew conferences, onboard visits, and regular dialogue between ship and shore personnel. Similarly, Shell reported incorporating respect and inclusion into mandatory training, fleet conferences, and ongoing diversity and inclusion discussions.

Several companies also reported integrating behavioural expectations into appraisal and performance management processes. Höegh Autoliners, GasLog, Neda Maritime, and Dorian LPG all have appraisal systems, evaluations, or performance frameworks that include behavioural considerations, while Diana Shipping noted that formal integration into appraisal processes remains an area under development. This suggests that while expectations for respectful conduct are widely established, companies continue to explore different approaches to embedding them in everyday operations, leadership practices, and career development processes.

Overall, the responses indicated a growing recognition that fostering respectful and professional behaviour requires ongoing reinforcement rather than standalone policies. Communication, leadership visibility, training, and regular engagement between sea- and shore-based personnel are increasingly seen as important mechanisms for fostering a culture in which behavioural expectations are clearly understood and consistently applied.

Photo credit: 3.DC David Martinez, MV
ECO TRADER / Synergy Marine Group



SYNERGY MARINE GROUP**Creating a culture of respect through continuous engagement**

Synergy has a dedicated 'Relationship Team' that conducts individual conversations with all seafarers following each contract. Every off-signing seafarer, regardless of rank, participates in a structured discussion covering workplace relationships, well-being, communication, and any concerns experienced on board. Furthermore, female seafarers receive additional support intended to address challenges that may arise in a traditionally male-dominated working environment.

Synergy uses insights from these conversations to support learning and awareness across the organisation. Situations reported by seafarers are reviewed, verified, and anonymised before being incorporated into training sessions, briefings, and discussions with officers and crew. By using real experiences, the company seeks to create a shared understanding of how others may perceive behaviour and how seemingly minor actions can affect workplace culture.

The company further reinforces respectful behaviour through dedicated briefings for female seafarers, regular welfare and well-being checks, counselling services, and ongoing communication between sea and shore personnel. More recently, Synergy introduced a weekly check-in system for trainees, allowing seafarers to flag concerns and request support at an early stage. Responses indicating potential well-being or workplace issues trigger direct follow-up from shore-based personnel within 24 hours.

According to Synergy, one of the most significant changes observed in recent years has been the growing recognition of the professionalism, capability, and contribution of women seafarers across the fleet. While the company acknowledges that building a fully respectful and inclusive culture remains an ongoing process, it views continuous engagement, early intervention, and open communication as critical elements in supporting positive behavioural change across its fleet.



Guideline 2

Zero tolerance and clear consequences for unacceptable behaviour

Psychological safety depends on more than clear expectations for behaviour. Seafarers must also feel confident that their concerns can be raised safely and that the issues will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. Clear reporting mechanisms, support systems, and consequences for unacceptable behaviour are therefore important foundations for trust, accountability, and respect.

Do all seafarers have access to a confidential, anonymous third-party helpline via phone and/or email to report harassment, bullying, power abuse, or misconduct without fear of retaliation?	13	/ 13
Does the company’s code of conduct clearly outline the consequences of violating the behavioural standards?	13	/ 13
Does the company appoint a staff member on shore responsible for supporting seafarers’ welfare and addressing concerns?	12	/ 13

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was the importance of translating policies into practice. Several companies noted that policies alone do not change behaviour and that seafarers may interpret conduct differently depending on cultural background, experience, or onboard norms. As a result, companies increasingly complement traditional policies with practical examples, scenario-based learning, roleplay, and awareness initiatives designed to clearly define inappropriate behaviour and clarify expectations for respectful conduct. Such approaches were highlighted by Shell, BSM, and Diana Shipping, all of which emphasised the value of discussing realistic scenarios to strengthen awareness and encourage intervention when inappropriate behaviour occurs.

Companies also reported investing in multiple reporting pathways and support mechanisms to encourage seafarers to speak up. MISC supplements its reporting mechanisms with internal platforms such as Dignity@Sea, WeCare, and Women@Sea, as well as dedicated shore-based support personnel. Höegh Autoliners highlights its Höegh Improvement System (HIS) reporting tool and Speak Out initiative, while Swire Shipping emphasised confidential reporting systems, shore-based welfare support, and leadership accountability as key components of its approach. Several companies also reported providing access to independent helplines, counselling services, or third-party reporting channels, recognising that preferences and comfort levels may vary across reporting routes.

Responses indicated a growing recognition that achieving zero tolerance requires more than disciplinary procedures alone. It calls for clearly defining and demonstrating what unacceptable behaviours look like, ensuring that seafarers feel safe raising concerns, and establishing trust in the organisation to respond fairly when issues are reported.

The most important aspect for me is the emphasis on respect, equal opportunity, and psychological safety in a traditionally male-dominated environment.

For women at sea, these are not abstract concepts—they directly affect whether people stay in the industry and how confidently they can perform their roles.

Chief officer, BSM



BERNHARD SCHULTE SHIPMANAGEMENT (BSM)

Turning Zero Tolerance into Everyday Practice

BSM makes it very clear that policies alone are unlikely to change behaviour. To reinforce expectations around respectful conduct, the company integrates bullying, harassment, and reporting procedures into multiple touchpoints throughout a seafarer's employment journey.

Before every assignment, seafarers are required to complete computer-based training, review company policies through a specific seafarer app, complete a pre-joining checklist, and participate in a pre-joining briefing. During these briefings, particular emphasis is placed on behavioural expectations, the company's Speak Up policy, and the reporting channels available to seafarers. Rather than assuming policies have been read and understood, BSM actively revisits them with the seafarer before every contract.

Recognising that multinational crews may have different perceptions of what constitutes inappropriate behaviour, BSM increasingly uses

practical examples and scenario-based learning to support awareness. Through its diversity, equity, and inclusion training programme, seafarers are presented with realistic workplace situations and invited to reflect on how actions may be perceived by others and how they should respond. The company believes that roleplay and real-life scenarios help create a more consistent understanding of respectful behaviour than policies ever will.

BSM also recognises that trust is critical to effective reporting. Seafarers can raise concerns through multiple channels, including the company's Speak Up system, independent third-party providers, welfare personnel, and shore-based contacts. The objective is to ensure that seafarers can choose the pathway they feel most comfortable using and seek support before concerns escalate.

For BSM, achieving zero tolerance is not solely about defining unacceptable behaviour or establishing disciplinary procedures. It is about creating awareness, reinforcing expectations, and ensuring that seafarers have both the confidence and the means to speak up when concerns arise.



With continuous training and guidance from the company, onboard operations and interactions improved significantly.

While we occasionally faced challenges, the overall experience of working with a diverse crew was positive and rewarding.

Captain, Synergy



Guideline 3

Set rank-specific criteria for tasks, training, and appraisals

Clear and transparent processes for appraisals, training, and promotion help create fairer and more inclusive workplaces. By providing seafarers with a clear understanding of how career decisions are made and what is required to progress, companies can support talent development, retention, and equal opportunities across the workforce.

Does the company clearly define roles and training opportunities by rank and ensure that seafarers are aware of them?	13	/ 13
Does the company provide seafarers with clear and transparent appraisal criteria?	12	/ 13
Does the company explicitly state its commitment to equal and diverse recruitment policies in job advertisements and on its website?	10	/ 13

This is another strong-performing area among the 13 companies. Structured career development systems, transparent appraisal processes, and clearly defined training pathways are already well established across much of the participating group. A common theme across responses was the use of rank-specific competency frameworks, training matrices, and formal performance management processes to support fair and transparent career progression. Höegh Autoliners, for example, defines roles, responsibilities, and training requirements through its Competence and Training Matrix and Competence Assurance System, while GasLog reported clear role definitions, training pathways, and transparent appraisal processes designed to support fair career progression. Similar approaches were reported by Hafnia, Swire Shipping, Diana Shipping, Synergy, and Dorian LPG, all of which have clearly defined rank-specific requirements for training, appraisal, and career development.

Several companies also highlighted how career development is increasingly linked to broader commitments around inclusion, employee development, and equal opportunities. Swire Shipping has established targets to increase female representation among seafarers to 20% by 2030, while MOL Group's Human Capital Vision places diversity, equity, inclusion, engagement, and employee empowerment at the centre of its people strategy. Other companies, including Shell, Synergy, GasLog and Dorian LPG, report explicitly communicating commitments to equal and diverse recruitment through company communications, recruitment processes, or corporate policies.

MISC**Creating clear pathways for career development**

MISC has established a structured approach to career development that combines clearly defined promotion pathways, formal performance management, and long-term talent development. Roles, responsibilities, training requirements, and promotion criteria are defined for each rank, providing seafarers with a clear expectation of what is required to progress throughout their careers.

All seafarers participate in a formal appraisal cycle through the company's online performance management system, COMPAS. Performance reviews are conducted after each contract and include input from both onboard supervisors and the seafarers themselves. The system enables performance to be monitored over time and provides a consistent basis for development discussions and promotion planning.

Promotion decisions are managed ashore through MISC's Talent Management Division. While masters and senior officers may recommend individuals for promotion, these recommendations are reviewed alongside appraisal records, promotion criteria, sea service, and workforce planning considerations before decisions are made. According to MISC, promotion decisions are based on performance demonstrated across multiple contracts and evaluated by multiple reviewers, rather than relying on the judgment of a single manager.

Career development is further supported by MISC's broader Talent Strategy, which emphasises capability building, succession planning, employee well-being, and the creation of an inclusive working environment. Together, these measures provide seafarers with transparent career pathways and a clear understanding of how performance, development, and promotion are managed across the organisation.



SYNERGY MARINE GROUP

Supporting career development through the Synergy Skill Map

As part of its broader competency management framework, Synergy has developed the Synergy Skill Map to support career development, training, and promotion planning across its fleet.

The Skill Map compiles information from multiple sources, including certifications, training records, sea service, rank experience, professional development activities, and operational performance. This information is used to generate a crew skill index, providing shore-based crewing, training, and fleet leadership teams with a consolidated overview of each seafarer's qualifications, experience, and development progress.

Rather than serving as an automated basis for promotion decisions, the Skill Map is designed as a decision-support tool to help identify training needs, support career planning, and inform discussions around future development opportunities. According to Synergy, the objective is to provide a more holistic and transparent view of individual development while reducing reliance on isolated or subjective assessments. The initiative continues to evolve as Synergy refines the underlying indicators and expands its use across the fleet.



Guideline 4

Ensure appropriate equipment and facilities for all

Appropriate equipment and facilities are essential for seafarer safety, well-being, and dignity. Personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be comfortable and functional for those who use it, rather than being offered only for a presumed standard body type, while onboard facilities and hygiene provisions should reflect the needs of a diverse workforce. Ensuring suitable PPE, gender-appropriate facilities, sanitary products, and discreet disposal options helps create safer, more inclusive working environments at sea.

Does the company have a policy to ensure a variety of PPE sizes are available to seafarers?	13	/ 13
Are there gender-separate changing rooms on board?	9	/ 13
Does the company have a policy to either supply seafarers with sanitary products or enable them to bring their own?	12	/ 13
Does the vessel have appropriate facilities for the disposal of menstrual products?	10	/ 13

A recent MLC amendment requires the provision of all necessary, appropriately sized PPE, and this is reflected in the practices of respondents. The strongest area of implementation was the provision of PPE suitable for different body types and operating environments. The companies reported offering a range of sizes, with most having taken additional steps to improve inclusivity and provide female-friendly PPE.

Similarly, many companies mentioned they are considering how vessel facilities can support a more diverse workforce. The majority of companies involved also reported providing sanitary products and appropriate disposal facilities. Neda Maritime, MISC, and Synergy all reported providing sanitary products onboard together with disposal arrangements, while BSM noted that its policy in this area was introduced following the Diversity@Sea pilot. These findings suggest that, beyond meeting regulatory requirements, several companies are taking practical steps to ensure that onboard facilities and equipment better reflect the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce.



Taking part in the Diversity@Sea pilot was both encouraging and validating. As a woman in the maritime industry, it is not always easy to find structured spaces where your experience is genuinely understood and reflected in policy discussions. The project created that space. It allowed for open and honest conversations about inclusion, representation, and the everyday realities women face onboard and ashore.

Most importantly, it felt like a step toward being heard not as an exception, but as part of the normal workforce at sea.

Chief officer, BSM



SHELL**Using seafarer feedback to improve PPE**

Shell maintains a structured process for reviewing and selecting PPE to ensure it meets the needs of a diverse workforce. The company provides a wide range of PPE sizes across its fleet and works closely with crewing teams to ensure vessels are appropriately stocked before crew members join.

To support equipment selection, Shell involves seafarers directly in the evaluation process. During a recent review of boiler suits, three suppliers were invited to provide equipment for testing. Seafarers attending fleet conferences were asked to try different designs and provide feedback on fit, comfort, weight, durability, and suitability for different operating environments. The feedback was used to assess the available options and inform procurement decisions.

The review highlighted the importance of offering a broader range of sizes and demonstrated that PPE requirements vary considerably between individuals. According to Shell, some male seafarers preferred the fit of boiler suits originally designed for women because the cut better suited their body shape, reinforcing the importance of focusing on fit rather than assumptions about gender.

Following the review, Shell expanded the range of boiler suit sizes available across the fleet and continues to apply the same approach when reviewing other PPE items, including gloves. Seafarer feedback remains an important part of the company's PPE selection process and helps ensure that equipment is suitable for different body types, working conditions, and operational requirements.

CARGILL OCEAN TRANSPORTATION

Charterer's perspective: How Cargill influences human sustainability through due diligence

While the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines were primarily developed with shipowners and ship managers in mind, charterers also play an important role in shaping conditions at sea. Although charterers do not directly employ seafarers, they influence the operating environment through the standards they expect from vessel operators and the decisions they make when selecting ships.

Cargill highlights that this responsibility can be exercised through due diligence and engagement with shipowners. The company monitors compliance with key labour standards, including Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) requirements related to employment conditions and crew changes, screens operators for potential cases of crew abandonment, and engages with shipowners when concerns arise.

From Cargill's perspective, clear behavioural expectations, zero tolerance for harassment and bullying, and respect for employment contracts are among the most important foundations for protecting seafarers' rights. Whilst acknowledging the challenges charterers face in enforcing requirements, the company firmly believes that charterers can contribute to higher standards by incorporating crew welfare considerations into their due diligence processes and commercial relationships.

As the industry seeks to improve life at sea, responsibility does not rest solely with shipowners and ship managers. Charterers, cargo owners, regulators, and other actors across the maritime value chain also have opportunities to influence outcomes and support the conditions that enable seafarers to thrive.





Guideline 5

Provide a reliable daily connection to the wider world

Connectivity and access to shore leave play an important role in supporting seafarers' well-being, mental health, and retention. Maintaining connections with family, friends, and the wider world helps reduce isolation, while access to learning opportunities and personal development can support long-term career satisfaction. Together, connectivity and shore leave contribute to a more attractive and sustainable life at sea.

Does the company provide at least 1 GB of free data per day to seafarers?	11	/ 13
Does the company enable seafarers to take shore leave at least monthly?	11	/ 13
Does the company allow seafarers to make phone calls daily using the ship communications system for a free limited period and then at a reasonable price?	9	/ 13

Connectivity and access to the outside world emerged as a strong-performing area across participating companies. In all interviews where connectivity was discussed, companies reported that internet access was the most frequently raised topic by seafarers during feedback rounds.

Most companies provide around one gigabyte (GB) of free data per day on board and continue to invest in solutions that enable seafarers to maintain regular contact with family and friends. Several companies report connectivity levels that exceed the guideline recommendations. Swire Shipping, for example, provides eight GB of weekly data from one provider and one GB from another to ensure connectivity across different areas.

Interview discussions further highlighted that reliable internet access is increasingly viewed as an essential part of life at sea. Companies emphasised that good connectivity helps reduce isolation, supports well-being, and enables seafarers to remain connected with family and support networks.

While progress on connectivity has been significant, shore leave remains a challenge. Most companies reported that shore leave is encouraged whenever possible. Still, they noted that access is often constrained by factors outside their direct control, including short port stays, terminal restrictions, immigration requirements, security procedures, and operational demands.

Responses to this guideline suggested that, although companies continue to invest in both digital connectivity and shore-based welfare, enabling regular shore access remains one of the industry's more complex challenges.



Open channels for feedback and reporting encouraged crew members to speak up, contributing to stronger teamwork and a healthier working environment.

The project reinforced my belief that reducing gender bias in shipping is both achievable and beneficial for building stronger, more supportive teams.

Second officer, Hafnia

DORIAN LPG

Providing reliable connectivity across the fleet

Dorian LPG provides free internet access to all seafarers through a dual-system setup. By maintaining two service providers across the fleet, the company aims to ensure reliable connectivity wherever its vessels operate.

As internet speed and reliability do not always go hand in hand, Dorian LPG provides three GB of data per day with Starlink. In geographical areas where Starlink is unavailable, the company ensures five hours of internet access per day. On top of this, Dorian LPG provides additional internet allowances during Christmas and Easter to help seafarers stay connected with family and friends during these important holidays.

Connectivity is reviewed regularly through pre-joining briefings, officer debriefings, superintendent attendance, senior management visits, and crew seminars. These occasions provide seafarers with an opportunity to share feedback on onboard internet services. According to Dorian LPG, crew feedback is consistently positive, and increased internet allowances are often received “almost like a salary increase”, which demonstrates the importance of good connectivity to the seafarers.





Guideline 6

Reduce isolation by building supportive communities

Supportive onboard communities help create a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation. When seafarers feel connected to their colleagues and included in onboard life, it can strengthen well-being, teamwork, morale, and long-term retention.

Does the company provide an allocated budget for social activities on its vessels?	13	/ 13
Does the company provide mentorship opportunities for all seafarers?	10	/ 13
Does the company have allyship support networks?	7	/ 13

Efforts to reduce isolation emerged as a leading practice, with all reporting companies allocating budgets for onboard social and recreational activities and supporting initiatives to strengthen well-being, social interaction, and a sense of community among crew members.

The responses indicated that many companies provide mentorship and peer support, although approaches vary. Synergy reported that mentorship opportunities are available through structured and informal guidance from senior officers, while MISC described buddy systems and mentorship arrangements for cadets and trainees. These approaches suggest that companies view mentorship as both a development tool and a means of supporting integration and well-being.

More formal support networks, however, remain less common. While some companies have established dedicated networks for female seafarers or other underrepresented groups, many continue to rely on informal support structures and onboard relationships to build supportive communities.

Several companies also emphasised the importance of fostering a sense of community and belonging on board, recognising that social connection remains an important contributor to well-being.

DIANA SHIPPING**Creating community through shared experiences**

Diana Shipping allocates a dedicated monthly budget of \$200 per vessel for crew welfare and recreational activities. The social budget is typically used for activities such as cookouts, celebrations, sports events, movie nights, board games, and other crew gatherings that help strengthen teamwork and reduce isolation during long periods at sea. Rather than the company prescribing how the funds should be spent, the master, together with the crew, decides how the budget will be used based on the crew's interests and preferences. In addition to the monthly budget, the company may also approve additional recreational purchases. This could, for example, be larger sporting equipment, karaoke equipment or even massage chairs. The company encourages a flexible and crew-driven approach to social activities, which are typically organised by the crew with the support and encouragement of the master and senior officers.

According to Diana Shipping, the aim is to encourage participation and thereby create a positive onboard atmosphere. This approach has enabled the development of activities and facilities that reflect the crews' interests. While the actual purchases differ, all are designed to support social interaction and well-being by encouraging crews to spend time together, build relationships, and maintain a strong sense of community.

Photo credit: Fourth Engineer
Arpit Gupta, GENCO DEFENDER
/ Synergy Marine Group





Guideline 7

Offer flexible contract lengths and respect contract terms

Respecting contract lengths allows seafarers to plan their time with family and friends at home, supporting a healthy work-life balance and sustained motivation. When contracts are unexpectedly extended, it can cause undue stress, fatigue, and dissatisfaction.

Does the company offer seafarers a choice of contract length, including as short as four months?	7	/ 13
Does the company ensure at least 90% of seafarers are off-boarded within 15 days of the end of their contract?	9	/ 13

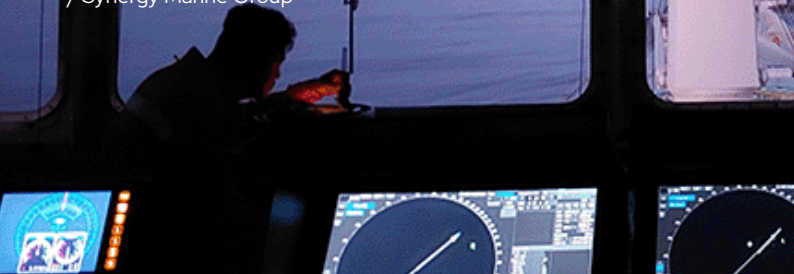
According to the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), the maximum period on board a ship without leave is 11 months. All participating companies reported contract lengths considerably shorter than this threshold. Contract durations vary across fleets, ranging from rotational schedules measured in weeks to contracts of around nine months, reflecting different trading patterns, vessel types, collective bargaining agreements, and operational requirements. For example, both Shell and bp offer three to four-month contracts for officers and six-month contracts for ratings.

Several companies report accommodating requests to adjust contract lengths where circumstances allow, while emphasising the importance of mutual agreement between the seafarer and employer. Höegh Autoliners, for example, noted that collective bargaining agreements primarily govern its contract durations but can be adjusted based on individual circumstances, while Neda Maritime reported offering shorter contracts to seafarers who request them. Swire Shipping similarly highlighted that flexibility is available where justified, while stressing the importance of maintaining fair and predictable crew rotation systems.

Timely crew changes were also identified as an important contributor to seafarer well-being. Companies generally reported strong performance in planning crew reliefs, but acknowledged that this is not always possible due to external factors. Synergy reported that in such cases, a crewing manager personally reaches out to those seafarers who are unable to offboard on time and provides an explanation for the delay and a revised timeline. According to Synergy, transparency and clear communication are ways for the company to take ownership of the delay and reduce frustration among the crew.

Most companies reported using structured planning processes to support timely crew changes and minimise delays beyond agreed contract periods. For example, BSM requires approved replacement crew to be identified for 95% of seafarers due for relief within the next 30 days, helping to support timely crew changes and reduce the risk of contract extensions, while Hafnia emphasises advance planning and proactive relief management, with crew changes coordinated well in advance between vessels, crewing teams, manning offices, and travel providers. This approach helps the company achieve a high percentage of crew reliefs within 15 days of the agreed contract completion date, while reducing unnecessary contract extensions.

Photo credit: AB Allan Poe
Villalobos Ortega, AMIS XCEL
/ Synergy Marine Group

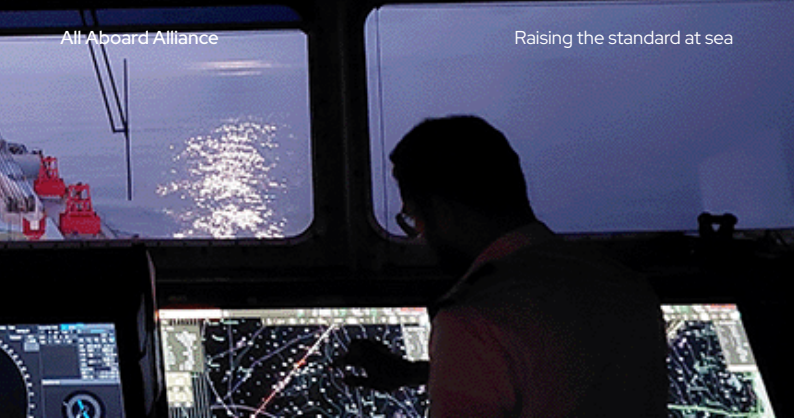


MISC

Using structured planning to support timely crew changes

MISC operates a continuous employment model in which seafarers remain employed by the company between assignments, while rotation schedules vary according to vessel type, trade, rank, and operational requirements. Depending on the fleet segment, rotations range from 42-day schedules and two-month rotations (for Brazil) to approximately three months for senior officers and six months for junior officers, ratings, and cadets.

To support timely crew changes across its diverse fleet, MISC combines long-term workforce planning with a structured crew deployment process. At the centre of this approach is COMPAS, the company's end-to-end crew management system, which provides real-time visibility of crew contracts, certifications, training requirements, travel arrangements, deployment schedules, and upcoming relief needs. Crewing teams, manning offices, training centres, travel providers, and other stakeholders work from the same platform, helping to coordinate crew changes and maintain a shared view of workforce requirements.



Crew-change planning begins well before the end of a contract. Through a six-month rolling deployment plan, the company identifies future relief requirements and coordinates medical examinations, visas, training, documentation, and travel arrangements in advance. Readiness checks are conducted at key stages before travel, while weekly staffing reviews help identify and address potential gaps before they affect planned crew changes. Vessel schedules and potential crew-change ports are also monitored continuously to support timely relief and repatriation.

The company closely monitors delays beyond agreed contract periods as part of its crewing management process. Any time served beyond the agreed contract length is recorded as a delay, allowing the company to track the proportion of seafarers who remain on board beyond their scheduled relief date and identify opportunities for improvement. According to MISC, fewer than 5% of seafarers remain onboard beyond their agreed contract period, while recent performance has been reported at below 2%. By monitoring delayed reliefs and addressing potential gaps before they affect crew changes, the company aims to provide seafarers with greater predictability regarding both their time at sea and their return home.



Guideline 8

Provide paid parental leave

Parenthood can present significant challenges for seafarers. Supportive policies and clear pathways for returning to work can help parents balance family life with a career at sea. Paid parental leave helps to retain experienced talent, strengthen workforce diversity, and enable more sustainable maritime careers.

Does the company provide parental benefits to seafarers currently under contract or within three years of their last contract, if they worked at sea for at least 12 months during that period?	5	/ 13
Does the company provide either appropriate shore-based work options or paid pregnancy leave to pregnant seafarers, based on the preferences of the seafarer and no later than 24 weeks of pregnancy?	4	/ 13
Does the company provide a minimum of 14 weeks of paid leave (at least 50% of regular salary) for birthing parents or primary caregivers and at least two weeks for non-birthing parents or secondary caregivers, to be used within six months of birth or adoption?	4*	/ 13
Is there support provided for returning to work, e.g., onshore assignments or short periods on a vessel?	6	/ 13

**No participating company currently provides paid parental leave to fathers or secondary caregivers, though some reported exploring the option.*

Amongst leading companies, there is a growing recognition that supporting parenthood is important for both retention and workforce diversity. Existing measures primarily focus on maternity leave, medical coverage, contractual wage protection, and future employment opportunities following childbirth.

While Höegh Autoliners, MISC, Swire Shipping, Hafnia, and bp all reported having established maternity-related provisions, other companies indicated that their policies are under development or review. BSM, for example, said it is developing procedures to provide contractual wage protection and priority access to future vacancies, while Shell reported that a dedicated project team has been established to explore options in this area.

A recurring theme across the responses was that supporting parenthood is about more than leave provisions. Several companies highlighted measures such as temporary shore-based assignments, shorter contracts, priority access to future vacancies, and structured return-to-work arrangements. Synergy and Dorian both described support mechanisms designed to facilitate a return to sea following childbirth, while MISC said it provides opportunities to work ashore during pregnancy.

While some companies said they have not yet encountered a situation that has required a dedicated pregnancy policy, emerging practice suggests value in establishing clear frameworks before they are needed. Findings from the Global Maritime Forum report, *Pregnancy at sea: From hidden risk to retention edge*, indicate that clear policies can provide greater transparency and predictability for seafarers, while helping companies retain experienced talent and support career continuity during major life events.

No companies involved in this report currently offer paid paternity leave. However, several respondents indicated that discussions are underway, reflecting a growing recognition that supporting parenthood may play an important role in retaining skilled seafarers and enabling long-term careers.

HAFNIA**Supporting careers through parenthood**

Hafnia introduced its maternity policy nearly four years ago as part of a broader effort to attract and retain more female seafarers. The policy was developed by a cross-functional working group comprising representatives from crewing, HR, technical, and operational functions, as well as experienced female seafarers. The objective was to create a framework that would enable women to continue their careers at sea after becoming parents.

The policy provides 18 weeks of paid maternity leave for eligible seafarers and applies to both birthing and non-birthing mothers. Pregnant seafarers are signed off as soon as a pregnancy is confirmed and receive contractual compensation in accordance with company procedures. In addition to leave provisions, Hafnia considers individual support on a case-by-case basis, offering temporary shore-based work, financial assistance, or other arrangements depending on the seafarer's circumstances and the company's operational needs.

A key feature of the policy is the emphasis placed on returning to sea. Rather than requiring seafarers to return within a defined timeframe, Hafnia enables them to decide for themselves when they are ready. When they do return, the company offers practical support to help ease the transition back to sea. This may include assistance with certification renewal, additional overlap periods to rebuild confidence and familiarity with the role, and shorter contract lengths until the child reaches three years of age.

Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, the policy is designed to provide flexibility in close dialogue with the seafarer. Exit interview data suggests that female seafarers who make use of the programme generally express a desire to return to sea, indicating that the policy may help retain experienced team members. Since the programme was introduced, 16 children have been born to seafarers covered by Hafnia's maternity policy.





Guideline 9

Continuously collect feedback and take action

Creating channels for seafarers to share feedback is an important part of building trust and improving life at sea. By listening to crew perspectives, responding transparently, and acting on insights when possible, companies can strengthen engagement and support continuous improvement across the organisation.

Does the company monitor well-being on board through surveys of all seafarers at least every six months?	7	/ 13
Does the company share the survey results and the proposed actions with the respondents?	11	/ 13

Survey responses and follow-up interviews revealed a strong commitment to gathering seafarers’ feedback and using it to inform decision-making. While approaches vary, most companies have established mechanisms for monitoring well-being, collecting feedback, and sharing the resulting outcomes with seafarers. Common practices include annual engagement surveys, post-contract debriefings, pulse surveys, crew conferences, and workshops.

For many respondents, collecting feedback is only the first step. Increasingly, companies are focusing on creating clear feedback loops by sharing survey results, discussing findings with crews, and using the

insights to guide improvements. For example, Swire combines contract-end feedback with regional engagement workshops held several times a year, while BSM supplements larger surveys with regular pulse surveys and post-contract debriefings. Synergy conducts monthly well-being checks and contacts all off-signers within 15 days of returning home.

Interview discussions revealed a growing use of digital tools for well-being monitoring and support. Providing mental health support at sea was highlighted as a growing priority by several companies, and respondents including Høegh, Shell, MISC, and Synergy, have already installed specific mechanisms to improve well-being on board.

The need to balance information gathering with survey fatigue, while ensuring that feedback processes remain meaningful and lead to visible action, was also raised several times, and companies acknowledged that seafarers are more likely to engage with feedback mechanisms when they can see that their input is heard, shared, and translated into tangible improvements.



Having sailed both as the only female onboard and on a vessel with a majority female crew, I observed that the key difference was not gender representation alone, but improved communication, teamwork, and inclusivity. Professionalism and competence became the primary focus, supported by policies that were actively reflected in daily operations.

Open channels for feedback and reporting also encouraged crew members to speak up, contributing to stronger teamwork and a healthier working environment.

Second officer, Hafnia

GASLOG

Creating a direct line between seafarers and management

As part of its crew conferences, GasLog uses an interactive digital platform that enables seafarers to raise questions and share their views anonymously with company representatives and presenters. The platform provides a safe environment in which crew members can openly express concerns, seek clarification, and contribute suggestions without fear of being identified.

Participants may direct their submissions to specific departments, while all attendees can view and vote on the topics they consider most relevant. This allows GasLog to identify common themes, prioritise discussions during the conference, and gain valuable insight into emerging concerns across the fleet.

All submissions are reviewed by the relevant departments and addressed during the conference. Every submission receives a response, regardless of the number of votes received, ensuring that each seafarer has the opportunity to be heard and receive feedback. A dedicated session is also reserved at the end of each Crew Conference for an open discussion, focusing primarily on the questions and topics raised by seafarers through the platform. This provides an additional opportunity for direct interaction, clarification, and constructive dialogue between seafarers and shore-based management.

GasLog uses the platform not only to collect feedback but also to establish a structured closed-loop communication process between seafarers and management. Where follow-up is required, the relevant departments take appropriate action and communicate updates back to seafarers. Where changes are not feasible, GasLog seeks to explain the rationale behind its decisions whenever appropriate. In this way, the platform serves both as a feedback mechanism and a communication tool, strengthening transparency, trust, accountability and meaningful two-way engagement between seafarers and management.



Supporting mental health at sea: Different approaches to a shared challenge

While mental health was rarely discussed openly in the industry a decade ago, several companies now describe it as an important part of their well-being strategies. The approaches vary, but a common objective is moving from reactive approaches towards earlier intervention, greater awareness, and more accessible support for seafarers.

Höegh Autoliners focuses on building awareness and capability through training.

Recognising that officers and senior crew members are often best placed to identify early signs of distress, the company has introduced mental health training designed to help seafarers recognise changes in behaviour, start supportive conversations, and direct colleagues towards appropriate support when needed.

Synergy takes a preventative approach through regular well-being check-ins. Using its in-house Ahoy platform, seafarers provide weekly feedback on how they are feeling. Responses indicating potential concerns trigger follow-up from the company's relationship team, while more serious cases are referred directly to professional counsellors. The aim is to identify issues before they escalate and ensure support is available at an early stage.

MISC combines well-being monitoring with professional support services through its partnership with the Big Yellow Fish platform. This platform provides seafarers access to psychologists, counsellors, and well-being resources, while helping the company identify aggregated trends and potential areas of concern across the fleet. This enables MISC to take a more proactive approach to supporting seafarer well-being.

Shell has expanded an existing physical safety intervention policy to explicitly include psychological safety. Through training and scenario-based exercises, seafarers are encouraged to recognise inappropriate behaviour, intervene when concerns arise, and support one another in challenging situations. By applying the same intervention principles to interpersonal behaviour as to operational safety, the company aims to create an environment where concerns are addressed early, people feel confident speaking up, and potential issues are resolved before they escalate.

Together, these examples illustrate that supporting mental health does not rely on a single solution. Training, regular check-ins, professional support services, and psychologically safe working environments all play a role. While the approaches differ, they share the common ambition of ensuring that seafarers have both the confidence and the support needed to seek help when challenges arise.



Conclusion

This assessment suggests that participating companies have made substantial progress in implementing many of the recommended practices in the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines. Strong alignment was observed in areas such as respectful behaviour, reporting mechanisms, career development, connectivity, community-building, and crew welfare, while parenthood-related support remains an area where implementation is still evolving.

While approaches vary between companies, their responses revealed several common themes. Policies and procedures are widely established, but many companies also place significant emphasis on transparency, communication, and engagement. Respondents frequently highlighted efforts to provide seafarers with clear information on behavioural expectations, career pathways, reporting mechanisms, crew change arrangements, and the support available to them throughout their careers. Training, briefings, crew conferences, feedback mechanisms, welfare checks, and direct dialogue between sea and shore personnel were also repeatedly described as important tools for reinforcing policies and translating them into everyday practice.

The findings further suggest that implementation is not solely about introducing new policies. It also requires embedding them into everyday practice by ensuring that seafarers are aware of how they work, have confidence in the processes that affect them, and feel able to provide feedback and raise concerns. Across multiple guidelines, companies described efforts to increase transparency in decision-making, strengthen communication, and maintain ongoing dialogue with their crews.

The report also highlights that many of the challenges facing the industry cannot be addressed by individual companies alone. Issues such as shore leave, crew changes, workforce diversity, parental support, and retention are influenced by a broader ecosystem of employers, charterers, regulators, ports, and other stakeholders.

Continued progress will therefore require collaboration across the maritime value chain, as well as a willingness to share experiences and learn from different approaches.

Taken together, the findings demonstrate that the Sustainable Crewing Guidelines provide a useful framework for identifying best practices, highlighting areas for improvement, and supporting dialogue on how to create safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable careers at sea. Perhaps most importantly, the report demonstrates that many of the principles outlined in the Guidelines can be successfully translated into practice across different organisational and operational contexts.

The Sustainable Crewing Guidelines represent an important milestone in improving working conditions for seafarers, but they are not the final destination. Building on the experiences shared in this report, more than 30 companies and key industry stakeholders, together representing over 100,000 seafarers, are now collaborating through the All Aboard Alliance to develop ten independently verifiable Sustainable Crewing Standards for life at sea.

Developed in close collaboration with seafarers, senior officers, shore-based professionals, and classification societies, the ambition is clear: to define what good, better, and best look like in practice and drive meaningful improvements rather than simply adding another checklist. A strong set of Sustainable Crewing Standards will improve living and working conditions for seafarers and help maritime companies ensure that their vessels are attractive and inclusive for the future workforce.



ALL ABOARD ALLIANCE

GLOBAL MARITIME FORUM

About the All Aboard Alliance

The All Aboard Alliance brings together leading maritime companies committed to improving lives at sea. By working collectively across the value chain, the Alliance seeks to strengthen working conditions, advance health and well-being, foster inclusion, and support sustainable career pathways in global shipping. Through collaboration and shared accountability, member companies work to raise standards and drive measurable progress across these areas, helping ensure that the maritime industry remains safe, attractive, and resilient for the decades ahead.



GLOBAL MARITIME FORUM

About the Global Maritime Forum

The Global Maritime Forum is an international not-for-profit organisation committed to shaping the future of global seaborne trade. It works by bringing together visionary leaders and experts who, through collaboration and collective action, strive to increase sustainable long-term economic development and human well-being. Established in 2017, the Global Maritime Forum is funded through a combination of grants and partner contributions. It operates independently of any outside influence and does not support individual technologies or companies.

Learn more about the Global Maritime Forum and our work on human sustainability at www.globalmaritimeforum.org.

