

Seacare

Communication strategy

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1. Aim

To contribute to keeping seafarers safe at work by ensuring they are aware of, and have access to, information about occupational health and safety (OHS) and to ensure that they have access to information about workers' compensation, rehabilitation and return to work programs in the event of injury.

2. Objectives

The two primary objectives of this communication strategy are:

(i) To increase seafarers' awareness of:

- OHS issues;
- Workers' compensation rights, entitlements and processes; and
- Rehabilitation and return to work entitlements, responsibilities and processes.

(ii) To Increase employer/operator awareness of:

- Duty of care responsibilities;
- Reporting obligations such as incidents, accidents and dangerous occurrences;
- Rehabilitation and return to work responsibilities and processes; and
- A better understanding of the jurisdictional coverage of the Seacare Scheme.

3. Key messages

Seafarers

- You have a right to a safe working environment
- How to work safely
- Entitlements and rights in event of injury
- How to claim for compensation
- Your responsibilities regarding claims, rehabilitation and return to work
- Where to find out more information
- Help and assistance that is available

Employers/Operators

- You have obligations under the OHS (MI) Act, Seafarers Act and other regulations
- Awareness of employee rights
- OHS incident reporting requirements
- Responsibilities regarding Safety Net Fund Levy payments and returns
- Responsibilities regarding provision of information to the Seacare Authority

HSRs and training organisations

- Workplace OHS arrangements (DWG, HSRs and HSCs)
- Roles and responsibilities
- Resources and assistance available
- HSR Training course approval process

4. Audiences

The target audience for this strategy are drawn from three sectors, these being

- Employees – seafarers
- Employers
- Operators

As the strategy outlines further on, there will be a range of secondary audiences that Seacare needs to engage with to indirectly reach the target audience.

5. Strategic approach

The strategic approach has been developed based on the lack of a mass communication channel (such as a national industry publication) which limits the possibilities of taking a blanket approach to communicating with the maritime industry, and within the limitation of no budget being allocated for any marketing type activities such as a complete overhaul of the Seacare website.

In addition, the industry is highly fragmented meaning communications with our audience will have to be undertaken by utilising where possible the communication channels of industry associations, unions and associated bodies.

The overarching approach of this strategy is to strengthen and develop partnerships and alliances with other associated bodies, and gain access to established industry communication including:

- those managed by Seacare and those managed by external stakeholders
- build upon existing relationships such as the MOU in place with AMSA and NOPSA
- forge or further relationships with organisations representing employers, operators and employees.

It is recommended that the communication strategy is conducted in two phases.

(i) Phase One

Will include targeting seafarers, employers and operators by implementing communication activities via established channels owned and managed by:

- Industry Associations
- Unions
- Insurance companies involved in the Seacare scheme.

(ii) Phase Two

Requires additional research into the channels, so should be considered for implementation post the completion of phase one. Specific groups that would be researched to identify opportunities include:

- Rehabilitation providers
- Government agencies and departments
- Maritime industry training organisations
- Superannuation (Maritime Super)
- Claims agents
- Providers of accredited HSR training courses

It is worth noting that whilst a large part of this communication strategy will be driven by Comcare's Marketing and Communication (MaC) department (subject to other MaC priorities), some activities within the strategy will have to be driven by the management of the Seacare Authority.

6. Channels

- Update the content of the Seacare website along similar lines to the Comcare website
- Revise and update all Seacare technical OHS guidance material
- Actively promote the biennial Seacare awards and conference
- Actively promote Sea Safe Work Day, usually held during Safe Work Australia week
- Participate at conferences and events organised by other agencies and associated bodies
- Investigate communication opportunities (i.e. newsletters, e-blasts) within industry associations, unions and other bodies that Seacare may be able to utilise.

7. External Communication Channels

Activities through these channels primarily consist of establishing contact with the communication departments, establishing what communication channels each organisation has in place, and whether Seacare can make use of those channels.

The deadlines are approximate, are flexible and are dependant on the date that the communication strategy is finalised.

Agency/Organisation	Comments/History	Proposed Activity	Deadline	Outcome
Maritime Industry training organisations such as Challenger TAFT NSW TAFE Hunter Institute Australian Maritime College www.amc.edu.au	The Seacare Authority has not engaged in a meaningful way with Industry training organisations in the past. They represent a potentially valuable channel of communication to new and retraining seafarers.	Contact them to ascertain what communication channels they have available.	August End.	Establishment of communication channel.
Australian Maritime Officers Union www.amou.com.au	They have two divisions, one of which is Offshore and the primary focus of Seacare is the Offshore sector.	Contact their communication team and ascertain what channels they have and whether Seacare can utilise them.	August End.	Establishment of communication channel.
Australian Maritime Safety Authority www.amsa.gov.au	AMSA is the OHS inspectorate and Seacare has an MOU in place with them.	Build upon the existing relationship and ascertain how we can look at cross promotions. We do need more regular communication.	August End.	Increased communication and possible development of cross promotion.
Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers www.aimpe.asn.au	On their website they mention a review into the Seacare Act listed in 2001.	Investigate whether we can have a web link.	September End.	Aim to develop a web presence as a minimum.
Australian Shipowners Association www.asa.com.au	Members include blue water, coastal and offshore oil & gas ship owning and operating companies.	Build upon the existing relationship and ascertain how we can look at cross promotions. We do need more regular communication and contact	September End.	Aim to develop a web presence as a minimum.
Australian Mines and Metals Associations	Primary focus in employment and industrial relations in the mining industry. Maritime	Seems to be quite influential. Maritime activities may be	August End.	Establishment of communication channel.

www.amma.org.au	issues not at forefront of activities.	small but need to examine their communication channels.		
Baird Maritime www.bairdmaritime.com.au	Publish various boating magazines and has a database of maritime companies.	Possible source for media releases, maybe web links, investigate their communication channels.	September End.	Investigate their audience reach, consider for media releases.
Maritime Union of Australia www.mua.org.au	Represent around 5,000 seafarers. The MUA sit on the Seacare Authority.	Investigate their communication channels and whether Seacare can utilise them. Are there cross promotion opportunities?	August End.	Increased communication and development of cross promotion.
National Marine Safety Committee www.nmsc.gov.au	Government agency focused on marine safety. Needs to be considered as a key stakeholder. They also have newsletters which we may be able to utilise and a conference in August which we should look to attend.	Investigate all their communication channels.	July End (primarily for the conference).	Establishment of communication channel.
Shipping Australia www.shippingaustralia.com.au	Industry Association representing overseas owners and agents. We need to engage with this association to reach employers.	Research cross promotion and other communication channels	August End.	Establishment of communication channel.
Company of Master Mariners of Australia www.mastermariners.org.au	Have a membership of around 400 who are mostly captains. This group needs to be reached to explain onboard duty of care and OHS. Active membership primarily retirees.	Need to investigate their communication channels and their reach, consider them for direct campaigns such as training and workshops.	August End.	Increased communication, possible partner for OHS workshops.
National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority www.nopsa.gov.au	Responsible for administering offshore petroleum safety legislation. Confusion can arise for Seafarers engaged in the offshore sector as at certain stages they may be covered by both Seacare and NOPSA.	Need to investigate their communication channels, may be opportunities for cross promotion, they also have a safety conference in August.	July End (primarily for the conference).	Communication and cross promotion.
Maritime Super www.maritimesuper.com.au	Industry Superfund, may be able to include information in their mail outs, targeting the employee.	Contact them to investigate their communication channels and audience reach.	August End.	Possible conduit for information dissemination.
Accredited HSR Training providers	Responsible for the provision of HSR Training courses.	Utilise contacts to provide information and obtain list of seafarers undergoing training.	August end.	Conduit for information dissemination and source of information on HSRs.

8. Direct Communication Channels

Activities and outcomes through these channels will be relatively easy to monitor as they are activities driven internally by MaC. For instance, we can monitor the success of the Seacare awards and conference by the number of delegate registrations, we can monitor visitor traffic to the Seacare website, and we can monitor our presence at external events.

The deadlines are approximates, are flexible and are dependent on the date that the communications strategy is finalised.

Product/Channel	Comments/History	Proposed Activity	Deadlines	Outcomes
Sea Safe Work Day	Usually held to coincide with World Maritime Day in September.	Produce various materials promoting safety at work and at sea.	September 2010 (TBC).	Increased awareness of maritime OHS Issues.
Seacare Awards and Conference	Biennial event, usually held during Safe Work Australia Week.	Use the marketing for the conference to really promote the Seacare message, if a budget can be found, consider printing some material about Seacare such as the scheme. Information about the 2010 awards needs to be on the Seacare website.	27 – 28 October 2010.	Increased market awareness about the Seacare scheme.
Seacare Website www.seacare.gov.au	Website consisting of various information, a good deal of which is out of date.	Content of the site to be updated and revised along similar lines as the Comcare website. Technical material to be revised by the Seacare Authority.	Underway.	A more intuitive and easier to navigate website. More user friendly with relevant content.
Seacare HSR Forum	Three have been held to date, delegates have included OHS staff, insurers and rehabilitation providers.	Tends to be held in the alternate years to the Seacare Awards and Conference. Continue to run as a biennial event in an alternative location to the Seacare Conference.	October 2011.	Increased engagement from HSRs.
Seacare News	Published biannually to inform jurisdiction of developments.	Review contents and style to ensure greater impact.	September 2010.	Exposure to a larger audience.
External Conferences	Identify external conferences organised by other associated bodies and professional conference organisers.	Research external conferences and workshops (including government agencies and industry associations), there may be the possibility of being involved as presenters, sponsors or just inserting leaflets in delegate packs.	Underway.	Exposure to a larger audience.

9. Seacare Authority Activities

Product/Channel	Comments/History	Proposed Activity	Timing	Outcomes
Seacare leaflets and guidance material	The technical content for all material needs to be revised and updated.	Seacare Authority Management to review the technical material. MaC can assist with design and some printing costs. If possible, distribute at identified upcoming conferences.	July End.	Increased market exposure, possible distribution at conferences.
Seacare Website www.seacare.gov.au	Website consisting of various information, a good deal of which is out of date.	As part of the review of the website Seacare Authority Management to check that the technical details and legislation etc is up to date.	Underway.	A more intuitive and easier to navigate website. Much more user friendly with relevant content.

10. Evaluation

Highlighted throughout this communication strategy is the fact that it is extremely difficult to communicate directly with our target audiences, and that the large majority of our communication activities will have to be undertaken using external communication channels. Therefore, proof of a successful campaign could include:

- The number of links to the Seacare website from other associated websites;
- Closer working relationships between the Seacare Authority and other agencies/bodies regarding policy development and implementation;
- An increased presence at external events of relevance;
- An increase in industry media exposure i.e. industry association journals, Maritime Workers Union Journal; and
- An increase in enquiries from employers and employees.

Outcome of an effective communication solution

Seafarers

- Increased level of awareness about safety issues and the right to a safe working environment.
- Access to educational material.
- Increased awareness about workers' compensation rights and entitlements and process.
- Increase awareness about rehabilitation and return to work rights and responsibilities and process.
- Increased engagement with the Seacare Authority.

Employers/Operators

- Increased awareness of employee rights and responsibilities and employer rights and responsibilities regarding compensation claims and rehabilitation and return to work processes.
- Increase awareness and compliance with regards to reporting obligations under the Seafarers Act and OHS (MI) Act and regulations.
- Increased engagement with the Seacare Authority.
- Access to educational materials.

Background

The Seacare Authority

The Seacare Authority is a statutory body established under the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1992* (Seafarers Act). It reports to the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

The Seacare Authority performs functions under the Seafarers Act and the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS (MI) Act) and associated Regulations. It also manages the Seafarers Safety Net Fund (the Fund) and administers the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Act 1992* (Levy Act) and the *Seafarers Rehabilitation and Compensation Levy Collection Act 1992* (Levy Collection Act) and associated Regulations.

The Seacare Authority regulates occupational health and safety (OHS), workers' compensation and rehabilitation for defined sections of the Australian maritime industry. Its mission is to minimise the human and financial costs of workplace injury in the Australian maritime industry.

The Seacare Authority:

- ensures that obligations imposed by the OHS (MI) Act and Regulations are complied with
- formulates policies and strategies relating to the OHS of employees
- advises operators, employees and contractors on OHS matters
- accredits OHS training courses for Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs)
- collects, interprets and reports on OHS information
- monitors the operations of the Seafarers Act
- promotes high operational standards of claims management and effective rehabilitation procedures by employers
- publishes material that explains the operation of the Seafarers Act, the operational standards of claims management, effective rehabilitation and how to reduce the incidents of injuries to employees
- cooperates with other bodies and people about OHS and other topics to reduce the incidence of injuries to employees.

The Seacare Authority advises the Minister about:

- regulations and Codes of Practice matters
- compensation matters
- the rehabilitation of employees and
- issues related to the Authority's functions and powers.

The Seacare Scheme

Seacare is a national scheme of OHS workers' compensation and rehabilitation arrangements which applies to defined seafaring employees, and in relation to OHS, to defined third parties such as contractors on ships.

Seacare is one of ten rehabilitation and workers' compensation schemes in Australia and is one of two such schemes operating under Commonwealth legislation (the other is Comcare). Seacare is the only national, industry-based OHS, workers' compensation and rehabilitation scheme in Australia.

There are approximately 6000 employees and 35 employers involved in the Seacare scheme. The continuing strength of the offshore oil and gas sector indicates that the number of seafarers covered by the scheme is likely to be maintained if not increased over the coming years.

However, it is recognised that there is a skills shortage within the maritime sector and that this will present an OHS challenge for the industry in the future. In addition, the maritime industry workforce is ageing which also presents challenges for rehabilitation and return to work.

Reported injury incidence rates

The Seacare 2008–2009 Annual Report reported a significant increase in injury incidence rates, and also reported were three work related fatalities. The scheme reported an injury incidence of 30.9 compared to 28.9 in 2007–2008.

For the same reporting period the return to work (RTW) program data stood at 76 percent and does not compare well to the national average of 83 percent. Over the last five years Seacare's RTW average data has been 79.4 percent, so 2008–2009 shows a decrease on the previous five years, and represents a significant challenge for industry and the Seacare Authority.

These negative trends suggest that there is a continuing challenge facing the Authority in communicating health and safety messages to employers, operators and seafarers.

Issues

Government agencies/policies

Safety management within the maritime sector has significant government involvement, both at the Commonwealth and state and territory level. At the Commonwealth level maritime safety and regulation is the responsibility of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). The National Petroleum safety Authority (NOPSA) regulates the offshore petroleum industry while the Australian Safety Transport Bureau (ATSB) is responsible for investigating maritime and other transport accidents.

The states and territories have separate maritime safety regulatory bodies, covering recreational maritime activities and parts of the maritime industry not regulated by AMSA.

In regard to OHS in the maritime industry, the Seacare Authority provides the regulatory framework while AMSA provides the OHS inspectorate functions. For the offshore petroleum industry, NOPSA is the OHS regulator.

A number of reforms are taking place in the maritime industry and in OHS that have the capacity to impact on the Seacare scheme in the future. These are:

- Model OHS Laws – The Workplace Relations Minister’s Council has agreed to the introduction of model OHS laws for all states and territories. The laws are due to come into effect in 2012. Within the model OHS laws framework, separate industry based OHS laws will only continue where they are objectively justified and if justified will need to comply with the model laws. The future of the OHS (MI) Act in this arrangement is yet to be determined.
- Uniform National Maritime Regulation – The Council of Australian Governments has agreed to implement national regulation for maritime safety. Under the reform, AMSA will be the safety regulator for all non-recreational maritime activities. The reforms are due to be implemented by 1 January 2013.
- Revision of the Navigation Act – The Navigation Act is to be rewritten to reflect contemporary conditions. As the jurisdiction of the Seacare scheme is contained in provisions in the Navigation Act, any revisions of the Navigation Act will have implications for the Seacare scheme. Current intentions are to remove Seacare scheme coverage provisions from the Navigation Act and make the Seacare scheme legislation (Seafarers Act and OMS (MI) Act) stand alone.

Communication issues

The maritime industry has a number of characteristics that make communication with operators, employees, contractors and other stakeholders about OHS and workers' compensation difficult. The industry is characterised by:

- operators and employers of varying sizes and degrees of sophistication in OHS and compensation systems
- often complicated and confusing relationships between owner, operator and employer
- a highly mobile workforce
- vessels of varying sizes, crew levels and sophistication of communication facilities
- a workforce with varying communication capabilities
- Remote employment locations, such as employees at sea for extended periods of time with limited access to communication facilities
- employees located in geographically dispersed locations, often removed from employment location
- robust industrial relations environment

In addition to the challenges facing communications within the maritime industry generally, there are specific challenges for the Seacare Authority in communicating effectively with the jurisdiction. These are:

- the division of regulatory responsibilities between the Seacare Authority and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) as the OHS Inspectorate
- some degree of confusion on the jurisdictional coverage of the Seacare scheme
- limited financial and human resources available to the Seacare Authority
- confusion surrounding the respective roles and responsibilities of employers insurance companies and rehabilitation providers in the claims management and rehabilitation process
- fragmentation within the maritime industry

Factors that need to be considered when communicating with the jurisdiction:

- differences in safety cultures between operators, vessels and seafarers
- the limited opportunity and facilities to communicate with seafarers while at sea and also while not on a swing.
- the complexity of the legislation regarding OHS and workers' compensation.
- the communication skills of seafarers (limited English language skills, lack of formal education, literacy issues, and IT skills)
- limited access to educational/information material, and lack of knowledge that such information exists.
- differences in operations between the offshore and bluewater sectors.