



Australian Government

**Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority**

**SEACARE AUTHORITY
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY
(OHS) STRATEGY
2007-08 TO 2009-10**

**FOR THE SEACARE SCHEME
UNDER THE**

***OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
(MARITIME INDUSTRY) ACT 1993***

JULY 2007

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

The Seacare Authority's Mission

The mission of the Seacare Authority is to take a leading role in minimising the human and financial costs of workplace injury in the Australian maritime industry.

The OHS legislative framework for the maritime industry

The *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) Act 1993* (OHS(MI) Act) and regulations provide the legislative framework within which the Seacare Authority and stakeholders work towards achievement of this mission. The objects of the OHS(MI) Act are to:

- secure the health, safety and welfare at work of maritime industry employees;
- protect persons at or near workplaces from risks to health and safety arising out of the activities of maritime industry employees at work;
- ensure that expert advice is available on OHS matters affecting maritime industry operators, maritime industry employees and maritime industry contractors;
- promote an occupational environment for maritime industry employees that is adapted to their health and safety needs; and
- foster a cooperative consultative relationship between maritime industry operators and maritime industry employees on the health, safety and welfare of maritime industry employees at work.

The OHS Inspectorate and other stakeholders

The OHS Inspectorate function for the maritime industry is performed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). AMSA is a key participant with the Seacare Authority in implementation of the Seacare OHS Strategy, along with employers, industry associations, seafarers and employee organisations, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers.

The national OHS framework

In May 2002, the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council (WRMC) endorsed the *National OHS Strategy 2002-2012* developed by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) – now the Australian Safety and Compensation Council (ASCC). All Workplace Relations Ministers, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Australian Council of Trade Unions signed a commitment to accept responsibility for development and implementation of the National OHS Strategy.

Details on the National OHS Strategy are available from the ASCC website at: <http://www.ascc.gov.au/ascc/HealthSafety/OHSstrategy/NationalOHSStrategy2002-2012.htm>

A central element of the National OHS Strategy is the adoption of OHS improvement targets. The national OHS improvement targets for the ten years to 2012 are:

- to sustain a significant, continual reduction in the incidence of work-related fatalities with a reduction of at least 20% by 30 June 2012 (and with a reduction of 10% being achieved by 30 June 2007, i.e. over the first 5 years of the 10 year strategy); and
- to reduce the incidence of workplace injury by at least 40% by 30 June 2012 (with a reduction of 20% being achieved by 30 June 2007).

In April 2003, NOHSC agreed that 2001-02 be used as the baseline year for all targets. The incidence of workplace injury measures the rate of injuries using workers' compensation claims per 1,000 employees.

International obligations

Australia has ratified a number of International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) treaties which apply to the maritime industry and to maritime industry employers and employees. Some IMO and ILO treaty obligations impact on occupational health and safety, and to this extent are an important consideration in implementation of the Seacare OHS Strategy.

The Seacare Authority OHS Strategy for the maritime industry

Having regard to its statutory responsibilities, Australia's international treaty obligations (to the extent that they impact on OHS in the Australian maritime industry) and the National OHS Strategy, the Seacare Authority has adopted the following OHS Strategy for the period 2007-08 to 2009-10¹. This strategy builds on the previous Seacare Authority OHS Strategies 2002-03 to 2003-04 and 2004-05 to 2006-07.

PART 2: SEACARE OHS IMPROVEMENT TARGETS

The central element of the Seacare OHS Strategy is the establishment of OHS improvement targets for the maritime industry. The OHS improvement targets set by the Seacare Authority for the maritime industry covered by the OHS(MI) Act are:

- for fatalities, zero for the 5 years to 2007 and zero for the 10 years to 2012; and
- for injury incidence, a 20% reduction over 5 years to 2007 and a 40% reduction over 10 years to 2012.

The baseline year for all targets is 2001-02 to align with the ASCC national targets. The Seacare Authority reviewed the injury incidence target after the first two years to consider if a more ambitious target might be set for the remainder of the target period. The Seacare Authority decided to retain the improvement targets set in 2002.

¹ agreed by the Seacare Authority at its 68th meeting, 31 May 2007

Definitions

Injury incidence is measured by workers' compensation claims per 1000 seafarers employed. The Seacare Authority has agreed to report injury incidence in two ways:

- (i) using the ASCC definition of injury for consistency with national target reporting; and
- (ii) using a Seacare Authority definition of injury.

The ASCC definition of injury includes all accepted workers' compensation claims lodged in the reference financial year that resulted in a fatality, permanent disability or temporary disability where there was at least one week or more off work (excluding journey claims). Injury claims in this case excludes disease claims except those coded as musculo-skeletal diseases.

The Seacare Authority definition of injury includes all accepted workers' compensation claims lodged in the reference financial year that resulted in a fatality, permanent disability or temporary disability where there was any time off work (excluding journey claims). Injury claims include all disease claims in the Seacare definition.

At the end of 2006-07, there has not been a workplace fatality in the Australian maritime industry covered by the OHS(MI) Act for twelve years.

Detail on the injury incidence reduction required to meet the Seacare OHS Strategy targets, and progress towards these targets, is provided at **Appendix 1**.

PART 3: CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIVE NATIONAL PRIORITIES

In addition to a focus on fatality and injury incidence targets, the Seacare OHS Strategy acknowledges each of the **five national priorities** contained in the National OHS Strategy. These are:

Reduce high incidence/severity risks

This priority aims to use improved OHS data, research and industry knowledge to target high risks and hazards, and to design interventions.

The Seacare Authority has **agreed** to use OHS data and compensation claims data to identify prevalent risks/hazards, and the location of those risks/hazards, to provide advice to employers to assist targeting OHS prevention strategies.

Improve the capacity of business operators and employees to manage OHS effectively

This priority aims to build the motivation and ability of employers to manage OHS risks effectively and of seafarers to work more safely and participate in OHS consultations.

The Seacare Authority has **agreed** to implement the Seacare Leaders Program aimed at assisting employers build capacity to improve OHS performance and to gain their commitment to setting and meeting injury incident reduction targets.

Prevent occupational disease more effectively

This priority aims to develop the capacity of regulatory bodies, employers, seafarers and other stakeholders such as rehabilitation providers and medical providers to identify the risk factors and potential exposures that lead to occupational disease.

The Seacare Authority has **agreed** to identify and report on current and future disease risk factors and exposures leading to potential diseases among seafarers in the Australian maritime industry.

Eliminate hazards at the design stage

This priority aims to identify and eliminate hazards at source. This requires the involvement of designers, manufacturers, constructors, contractors and suppliers.

The Seacare Authority, through AMSA and in conjunction with industry bodies, has **agreed** to identify and review design elements which lead to high risk hazards on prescribed ships and units, with the aim of reducing or eliminating hazards at source where possible.

Strengthen the capacity of government to influence OHS outcomes

This priority aims to sharpen the effectiveness of governments in securing better OHS outcomes and providing examples of best practice.

The Seacare Authority has **agreed** to develop Memorandums of Understanding or other joint cooperation arrangements with OHS regulatory agencies where the OHS legislation of that agency intersects with the application of the OHS(MI) Act, aimed at strengthening cooperation between agencies and improving services to industry.

PART 4: CONTRIBUTING TO THE NINE AREAS REQUIRING NATIONAL ACTION

The Seacare Authority has also identified a range of actions and initiatives aimed at contributing to the **nine areas requiring national action**, to help ensure that the national priorities and OHS improvement targets are achieved.

Over the period 2007-08 to 2009-10 the Seacare Authority will:

Comprehensive OHS data collections

- participate in ASCC programs to ensure Seacare scheme data inputs are consistent with the National Data Set for Workers' Compensation Statistics (NDS); and

- maintain Seacare scheme participation in the national Comparative Performance Monitoring (CPM) report and improve OHS reporting in the Seacare Authority Annual Report.

A coordinated OHS research effort

- with the support of Comcare, ensure improved OHS data for the Seacare scheme is available for policy making and to assist employers to benchmark enterprise performance.

A nationally consistent regulatory framework

- continue to adopt national standards and codes of practice to the extent applicable to the maritime industry, drawing on advice from the Seacare Authority's OHS Standards Task Force.

Strategic enforcement

- monitor and review scheme legislation to identify any additional enforcement measures in the context of possible advice to Government; and
- support AMSA as the OHS inspectorate to ensure strong compliance with the OHS(MI) Act and regulations.

Effective incentives

- promote the *Seacare Awards* to recognise and reward strong OHS performers and achievement.

Compliance support

- monitor and review scheme legislation to identify any additional enforcement measures in the context of possible advice to Government.

Practical guidance

- produce OHS guidance material, in particular to support the implementation of new Standards and Codes of Practice.

OHS awareness

- improve the use of the Seacare Authority website as a means to improve OHS awareness;
- revise and develop the suite of Seacare OHS guidance materials; and
- develop and provide a forum for health and safety representatives (HSRs).

OHS skills development

- facilitate the availability of high quality and accessible Seacare Authority accredited HSR training;
- develop and provide a HSR forum; and
- undertake direct communication with scheme stakeholders to identify OHS skills requirements and consider means of assisting skills development.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy

The OHS Strategy will be regularly reviewed by the Seacare Authority, to enable new or emerging priorities to be considered for inclusion in the Strategy and to monitor progress in its implementation.

Reporting on the Strategy

Progress on the implementation of the OHS Strategy, including performance in achieving OHS reduction targets, is reported in the Seacare Authority Annual Reports.

APPENDIX 1**Seacare scheme – performance against the improvement targets - injury incidence rates****Table 1: Seacare scheme – Employee numbers and hours worked under the Seafarers Act**

Employee (seafarer) numbers and hours worked	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Employees (head count)	3,152	3,355	3,933	4,260	4,912	5,690
Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Employee value	3,000	3,173	3,241	3,459	3,670	3,544
Hours worked	6,529,685	7,255,196	14,070,584	15,016,800	15,895,012	16,577,060

Table 2: Number of Seacare claims for OHS target reporting

Claims as a proxy for injury	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
ASCC definition	97	104	121	70	102	n/a ²
Seacare definition	122	124	148	81	123	98

Table 3: Injury incidence rates against five and ten year ASCC and Seacare targets

Injury incidence rate	2001-02 (base year)	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	5 year target (20% reduction)
							10 year target (40% reduction)
ASCC definition	35.6	31.8	35.2	21.4	30.6	n/a ²	28.5 (2006-07 target)
							21.4 (2011-12 target)
Seacare definition	40.67	39.08	45.66	23.42	33.51	27.65	32.5 (2006-07 target)
							24.4 (2011-12 target)

² as measured and provided by the ASCC. Rate for 2006-07 will be available after September 2008

Figure 1: Seacare injury incidence rate – progress against targets

