



Australian Government

Seafarers Safety, Rehabilitation
and Compensation Authority

SEACARE NEWS

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Chairperson's comments

At its recent meeting in Sydney, the Seacare Authority finalised *Seacare 2015*, a five year strategic plan implemented by the Authority to provide strategic direction to the Seacare scheme and the Authority to 2015. The strategic plan adopts three broad strategic priorities of injury prevention, injury management and rehabilitation and scheme sustainability which will provide the focus of activity for the Seacare Authority through to 2015.

The Seacare 2015 Plan was developed in the context of the current maritime reform initiatives and its release coincides with the announcement of the Government's package of reforms to revitalise the shipping industry. The Authority is committed to delivering on the Government's priorities by protecting the health, safety and welfare of Australian seafarers, providing support when they are injured and maintaining a sustainable scheme.

While it is pleasing to note that no fatalities were recorded in the scheme during 2010-11, the injury incident rate is still substantially above the Authority's target rate for the year and is a matter of ongoing concern for the Authority. As the number of employees in the scheme continues to increase, the Seacare scheme performance indicators highlight the need for the Authority to remain focussed on its strategic priorities and objectives to improve health and safety outcomes in the scheme.

To reinforce the injury prevention message to the jurisdiction, the Authority is holding an Injury Prevention Forum in Fremantle on 23 November 2011. I invite all interested parties to attend the forum which will feature a number of presentations on injury prevention, safety management systems and a workshop activity and will provide an opportunity for scheme participants to interact and network with their colleagues and peers.

I look forward to seeing all scheme participants in November.

David Sterrett
Chairperson

2015 Strategic Plan

The Seacare Authority has now finalised 'Seacare 2015', a five year strategic plan to provide direction to the Authority and the Seacare scheme.

In its strategic plan, the Seacare Authority has adopted three themes of injury prevention, injury management and scheme sustainability, on which to frame the strategic priorities of *Seacare 2015*. These are:

- > Injury Prevention
- > Injury Management and Rehabilitation
- > Scheme Sustainability

The strategic priorities in *Seacare 2015* will provide the focus of activity for the Seacare Authority through to 2015.

A copy of *Seacare 2015* has been enclosed in this edition of the Seacare News and can be provided on request. If you would like more information about the Authority's strategic plan please contact the Seacare Management Section.

Permanent Impairment Guide

The Seacare Authority has finalised its revision of the *Guide to the Assessment of the Degree of Permanent Impairment Edition 2.1* (the Seacare Guide). This review was undertaken in response to the Federal Court decision in *Broadhurst v Comcare* (2010) where it was found that Table 9.17 of the Comcare Guide was inapplicable to the extent that it did not provide for a 10% impairment value.

The Authority has edited the Seacare Guide to provide 10% impairment value for all affected tables. The edits will also accommodate the decisions of the High Court of Australia in the matters of *Canute v Comcare* (2006) and *Fellowes v Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission* (2009).

The Seacare Guide is presently with the Minister for approval and is intended to commence on 1 December 2011.

Seacare Annual Report

The Seacare Annual Report is in the final stages of production and will soon be available. The Annual Report provides an overview of the operations of the Authority for the year. It includes scheme performance data (an overview has been provided in this newsletter), reports on the statutory functions and operations, a report on the Seafarers Safety Net Fund and the financial statements for the year.

It is intended that the Seacare Annual Report will be tabled in Parliament in October and circulated to the industry thereafter. An electronic copy of the report will also be available on the Seacare website upon finalisation.

Seacare Injury Prevention Forum

The Seacare Authority Injury Prevention Forum will be held at the Western Australia Maritime Museum in Fremantle on 23 November 2011. The Forum is designed to educate delegates on injury prevention within the Seacare scheme and to provide an opportunity for delegates to interact and share their experiences and expertise in relation to maritime incidents and injury prevention.

The Forum will be conducted from 9:00am to 5:00pm on 23 November and will include sessions on injury performance in the Seacare scheme, the role of the OHS inspectorate, enhancing the role of HSR's, safety management systems and injury prevention from an employee's perspective. A workshop will also be conducted to consider injury prevention in relation to hypothetical maritime incidents. The Forum will conclude with social drinks.

Information on how to register to attend the Injury Prevention Forum will soon be circulated to the industry and included on the Seacare website.

Guidance on Confined Spaces Training

On 20 April 2010, the *Occupational Health and Safety (Maritime Industry) (National Standards) Regulations 2003* (the Regulations) were amended to introduce confined spaces provisions.

These provisions implement the Australian Standard relating to confined spaces with adaptations relevant to conditions in the maritime industry and require an operator to provide both general and specific training to persons working on a prescribed ship.

In light of this, the Seacare Authority recently released *Guidance on Confined Space Training*. This guidance provides information on the confined spaces provisions and outlines a best practice approach to training.

For more information on the Regulations or the guidance, contact the Seacare Management Section.

Freedom of Information

The *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) gives the Australian community access to information held by the Commonwealth Government by requiring agencies to publish information and by providing a right of access to documents.

From 1 May 2011 the FOI Act was amended to establish the Information Publication Scheme (IPS), which requires Australian government agencies to publish a broad range of information on their websites and to make that information available online where possible.

The Seacare Authority has prepared a Draft Agency Plan to address the implementation and administration of the IPS in respect of its own information holdings. Information on the Authority's Draft Agency Plan is available on the Seacare website.

Asbestos

It has recently come to the attention of both the Seacare Authority and AMSA that asbestos has been identified on board vessels built after 31 December 2003 which have been imported into Australia.

Asbestos is still being used in some products outside Australia, and while these products may only contain small amounts of asbestos, their use would not be considered compliant with Australian legislation. In Australian legislation, 'asbestos free' means zero asbestos content for vessels built after 31 December 2003.

In view of the recent discovery of asbestos on vessels built after 31 December 2003 the Seacare Authority and AMSA are contacting operators and ship owners to verify the asbestos free status of their vessels.

The Seacare Authority has also revised its *Guidance on the prohibition on the use of asbestos in workplaces in the Seacare jurisdiction* which can be found on the Seacare website at www.seacare.gov.au/OHS/asbestos.

Claim forms and brochures

The Seacare Authority is currently developing new claim forms and information brochures as part of its strategy to improve claims management in the Seacare scheme. As part of this process the Authority will be conducting tailored consultation exercises to obtain stakeholder comments and feedback on the draft claim forms and brochures.

The Authority will soon advise the industry of the date and venue of the consultation exercise once the details have been finalised. In the interim, comments and suggestions regarding the current Seacare workers' compensation forms can be provided to the Seacare Management Section at GPO Box 9905 CANBERRA ACT 2601 or by email to seacare@comcare.gov.au.

Scheme performance

The Seacare scheme's performance for the 2010-11 is summarised below:

- > 279 claims for 2010-11 compared with 253 in 2009-2010
- > injury incident rate per 1000 full time employees of 45.7, which remains above the target rate of 25.5
- > injury frequency rate per 1 million hours worked of 10.4, which has decreased from 10.5 for 2009-10
- > employees covered by the scheme increased by just over 10.5% to 7126, while full-time employees increased by over 6% to 4818
- > the number of hours worked by employees increased to 20 649 648 compared to 20 240 480 for the previous year
- > there were 34 employers of seafarers and 66 operators engaging 307 ships in the scheme throughout 2010-11
- > 63 safety incidents were reported to AMSA compared to 55 in 2009-10
- > AMSA commenced 106 investigations compared with 73 in 2009-10
- > 52 OHS notices were issued by AMSA compared to 23 for 2009-10

Seacare notices

Seacare notices are issued to scheme employers and published on the Seacare website. Current notices include:

04/2011 – Maximum Level of Benefits
(effective 18 August 2011)

03/2011 – Indexation of Compensation Benefits
(effective 1 July 2011)

02/2011 – Maximum Level of Benefits
(effective 19 May 2011)

Seacare Authority membership and contact details

Members

Chairperson

Mr David Sterrett

Deputy Chairperson

Mr Paul O'Connor—Comcare CEO

Employee representative

Mr John Wydell—Industrial Officer, Australian Maritime Officers Union (AMOU)

Employee representative

Mr Mick Doleman—Assistant National Secretary, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)

Employer representative

Mr Peter Bremner—Consultant, Strategic Marine Group

Employer representative

Mr Mal Hearnden—Manager, Swire Pacific Ship Management (Australia) Pty Ltd

AMSA CEO

Mr Graham Peachey—CEO, Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA)

Deputy Members

Deputy to Mr Wydell

Mr Martin Byrne—Assistant Federal Secretary, Australian Institute of Marine & Power Engineers (AIMPE)

Deputy to Mr Doleman

Mr Jamie Newlyn—Branch Secretary, South Australia, MUA

Deputy to Mr Bremner

Ms Teresa Hatch—Executive Director, Australian Shipowners Association (ASA)

Deputy to Mr Hearnden

Mr Tony Caccamo—General Manager, Operations, Australian Mines & Metals Association (AMMA)

Deputy to Mr Peachey

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