

ABANDONED SEAFARERS

Abandonment happens either because the shipowners have financial difficulties or because they can make more money by not paying the wages and the bills they owe.

This may be more frequent on older ships at the end of their sea life. In some cases the ship is worth less than the money owed to crew and other debtors.

On 18 January 2017 important new rules came into force on abandonment.

Under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC) shipowners must have insurance to assist the seafarers on board vessels if they are abandoned. It is mandatory for the insurance certificate to be posted in a visible place for you to see and should provide the name of the insurer or financial provider, and their contact details.

All ships, to which the convention applies, whose flag states have ratified the MLC must have the insurance certificate on board and on show in English. You can check who has ratified the convention on the [ILO website](#).

HOW TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF BEING ABANDONED

Before accepting a position on board, find out as much information as you can about the company and the vessel you will be joining, especially look for indications of problems on board.

You can use:

- The **Look Up section** of the ITF Seafarers website to check if the vessel is covered by an ITF agreement. Alternatively download the free ITF Seafarers app available from the Google Play Store and Apple Store.
- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) [database](#) on reported incidents of abandonment of seafarers. **Note:** It is better to search by IMO number if possible as the name of the vessel may have changed.

If you are recruited through a crewing agency, try to make sure that the agency is properly run and has a system for checking the stability of the companies for which they supply crew. Check maritime social media to see which companies are the subject of frequent complaints by other seafarers.



HERE IS WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:

If you think that you are in danger of abandonment, **DO NOT WAIT**. If your shipowner does not respond, contact the insurance company.

Abandonment occurs when the shipowner:

- fails to cover the cost of the seafarer's repatriation; or
- has left the seafarer without the necessary maintenance and support; or
- has otherwise unilaterally severed their ties with the seafarer including failure to pay contractual wages for a period of at least two months'.

The insurance will cover you for up to four months outstanding wages and entitlements in line with your employment agreement or CBA - **SO DON'T LEAVE IT TOO LATE** If you wait six months to apply, you'll only receive four months backpay.

The insurance must also cover reasonable expenses such as repatriation, food, clothing where necessary, accommodation, drinking water, essential fuel for survival on board and any necessary medical care. It will apply from the moment of abandonment to the time of arrival back home.

Members of the International Group of P&I Clubs have set up 24-hour emergency helplines. The details will be on that insurance certificate that must be publicly visible. Check it now. If you think it is not real or you feel you are in danger of being abandoned use the helpline number now.

REMEMBER, you can always contact an ITF Inspector or an ITF affiliated union using the ITF Seafarers app or the [Look Up section](#) of the ITF Seafarers website, or by contacting the ITF Seafarers' Support team by email at seafsupport@itf.org.uk.

P&I Club	Telephone	Email	Website
The Swedish Club	+46 31 151 328	swedish.club@swedishclub.com	www.swedishclub.com
Skuls	+47 952 92 200	mlc@skuld.com	www.skuld.com
Britannia	+44 (0) 207 407 3588	mlc@triley.co.uk	www.britanniapandi.com
Steamship Mutual	+44 (0) 207 247 5490	duty.team@simsl.com	www.steamshipmutual.com
Gard	+47 905 24 100	mlc@gard.no	www.gard.no
The London P&I Club	+44 (0) 207 772 8000	mlc@londonpandi.com	www.londonpandi.com
West of England	+44 (0) 7795 116602	mlc@westpandi.com	www.westpandi.com
North	+44 (0) 191 232 5221	mlcenquiryteam@nepia.com	www.nepia.com
Shipowners	+44 (0) 203 829 5858	claims@shipownersclub.com	www.shipownersclub.com
Standard Club	+44 (0) 7932 113573	pandi.london@ctplc.com	www.standard-club.com
The American Club	+1 212 847 4590	mlc@american-club.com	www.american-club.com
The Japan Ship Owners' Mutual Protection & Indemnity Association	+81 3 3662 7221	claims-dpt@piclub.or.jp	www.piclub.or.jp

If any of the issues identified are affecting your well-being you have the right to contact your trade union, an ITF Inspector or the ITF Seafarers Support team for assistance. Don't wait until it's too late.



ITF Seafarers
Your port of call online

Website: www.itfseafarers.org

Email: seafsupport@itf.org.uk

Facebook: [itfseafarerssupport](https://www.facebook.com/itfseafarerssupport)