



CREWING AGENTS

In countries where the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 has been ratified, crewing agencies (sometimes named manning agencies) offering recruitment services MUST NOT charge you for finding you work.

The only costs that can be charged to you are those:

- for obtaining your national statutory medical certificate
- your national seafarers' book
- your passport or similar personal travel documents

The cost of visas **MUST** be paid for by the shipowner.

Additionally, all private crewing agencies must be regulated and provide an efficient, adequate, and accountable system that protects and promotes your employment rights. The creation of blacklists that could prevent qualified seafarers from finding work is **forbidden**.

Even if your agency is in a country that has not ratified the MLC, shipowners with ships registered in the flags of countries that have ratified must still use agencies that comply with these minimum requirements.

Depending on which country you come from, your union may offer recruitment services under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement. The Flag State must make sure that if seafarers are recruited from a crewing/manning agency in a country that has not ratified the Convention, the shipowner recruiting them must ensure that the agency meets with the MLC's standards.

Where a crewing/manning agency is publicly operated, it must also be run in an orderly way that promotes your employment rights.

There must be a process in place to enable you to make a complaint if a crewing/manning agency is not run properly and is in breach of the requirements of this convention. Depending on the situation you may need to complain to the authorities of your own country (for example for Filipino seafarers this could be the POEA – Philippines Overseas Employment Agency), those of the Flag State or those of a Port State. You can also contact your union or the ITF for advice.

HOW TO TELL IF A PRIVATE CREWING/ MANNING AGENT OR RECRUITMENT COMPANY IS RELIABLE?

- Keep an up-to-date register of all their seafarer placements.
- Keep up-to-date lists of ships and company contact details where their seafarers are placed.
- Inform you of your rights and duties under an employment agreement and give you enough time to examine it before you sign up.
- Give you a copy of the employment agreement.
- Make sure their agreements comply with applicable national laws and CBAs.
- Check your qualifications for the job.
- Make sure that the shipowners or companies they work with are financially secure so that you do not get stranded in a foreign port.
- Have an effective complaints procedure in place.
- Have an insurance system in place in case they need to compensate you for any failure to meet their obligations under the recruitment and placement service, or if the shipowner fails to meet their obligations under the SEA.

AS A MATTER OF GOOD PRACTICE THEY SHOULD ALSO:

- Employ staff with relevant knowledge of the maritime industry.
- Respect your right to privacy and the need to protect confidentiality.
- Ensure that they can respond promptly and sympathetically to requests for information and advice from your family while you're at sea – at no cost to you or your family.
- Keep up-to-date lists of contact details in case of emergencies.
- Inform you of any relevant shipping company policies, eg. dry ship policies where no alcohol may be consumed onboard.
- Check that the labour conditions on ships where they supply crew comply with all applicable CBAs, laws and regulations.
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If you have any questions or concerns regarding a job or job offer, you can contact us via email at jobscam@itf.org.uk

