



ABANDONED SEAFARERS

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How to tell if you are abandoned

Abandonment happens either because the shipowner has 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.

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.

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. In particular, look for indications of problems on board. You can use:

- The **Look Up** section of the ITF Seafarers website (www.itfseafarers.org) 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 the 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.



- Websites that show the position and destination details of vessels.

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.
- Check that the agency is not red listed on the ITFShipBeSure.org directory of manning agents – this is a warning to seafarers that they should avoid seeking employment through that agency.

New rules to protect you

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

Under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC), all ships whose flag states have ratified the MLC must have insurance to assist the seafarers on board if they are abandoned. You can check who has ratified the convention here: <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/maritime-labour-convention/database-ratification-implementation/lang-en/index.htm>.

It is mandatory for the insurance certificate to be posted on board in English where you can see it. The certificate should provide both the name and contact details of the insurer or financial security provider. You should check that these details are real and up to date, in case you need to use them to trigger the abandonment procedures.

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

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.

Act quickly if you are abandoned

If you believe that the company is not fulfilling its obligations and that there is a risk of the ship being abandoned, **DO NOT WAIT**. If your shipowner does not respond, contact the insurance company or financial provider. This contact can be made by a seafarer, a member of a seafarer's family, an ITF inspector or affiliated maritime union, or anyone else interested in the wellbeing of the seafarers on board.

- **SPEAK OUT.** If the shipowner or insurer don't help, don't let fear of your employer stop you from acting. You can always reach out to the ITF, and you can speak to us completely confidentially.
- Contact an ITF inspector or an ITF affiliated seafarers' union, using the ITF Seafarers app or the Look Up section of the ITF Seafarers website.
- Email us at abandonment@itf.org.uk.
- But remember, we have no power to help you if you do not contact us in the first place.



Contact details for the International Group of P&I Clubs 24-hour helplines

P&I Club	Telephone	Email	Website
The Swedish Club	+46 31 151 328	swedish.club@swedishclub.com	www.swedishclub.com
UK P&I Club	+44 207 283 4646	mlc@ukpandi.com	www.ukpandi.com
Skuld	+47 952 92 200	mlc@skuld.com	www.skuld.com
Britannia	+44 203 280 2473	mlc@triley.co.uk	www.britanniapandi.com
Steamship Mutual	+44 783 178 4051	duty.team@simsl.com	www.steamshipmutual.com
Gard	+47 905 24 100	mlc@gard.no	www.gard.no
The London P&I Club	+44 207 772 8000	mlc@londonpandi.com	www.londonpandi.com
West of England	+44 7795 116602	mlc@westpandi.com	www.westpandi.com
NorthStandard (formerly North)	+44 191 232 5221 +44 191 232 0999	mlcenquiryteam@nepia.com	www.nepia.com
Shipowners	+44 203 829 5858	claims@shipownersclub.com	www.shipownersclub.com
The Standard	+44 793 211 3573	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	gcrew@piclub.or.jp	www.piclub.or.jp



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