

Loss Prevention 17 Jun, 2025

## **Amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention - Adopted to Strengthen Seafarer Welfare and Protections**



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**At the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference (2–13 June 2025), the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the fifth set of amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006). These amendments, adopted on 6 June 2025, are expected to enter into force in late December 2027 and reflect the international community’s continued commitment to enhancing the rights, safety, and well-being of seafarers.**

The amendments address a broad range of issues, including the recognition of seafarers as key workers, improved protections against shipboard violence and harassment, enhanced access to shore leave and repatriation, and updated medical and occupational safety standards.

## Key Amendments:

### Recruitment and Placement (Regulation 1.4)

New provisions require recruitment and placement services to implement measures to prevent and address violence, harassment, and sexual assault, ensuring ethical and safe employment practices from the outset.

### Entitlement to Leave (Regulation 2.4)

A new standard formalises seafarers' entitlement to non-discriminatory shore leave. Visa or special permit requirements are eliminated, and port authorities must provide written reasons for any denial. Shipowners are required to facilitate shore leave in line with operational needs and seafarers' well-being.

### Repatriation (Regulation 2.5)

Seafarers are formally recognised as key workers, with Member States obligated to facilitate their movement for repatriation, shore leave, and medical care. Shipowners' financial responsibilities for repatriation have been clarified to include travel, accommodation, food, medical treatment, and personal luggage.

### Accommodation and Recreational Facilities (Regulation 3.1)

Ships must now provide appropriate menstrual hygiene products and disposal facilities, addressing gender-specific health needs and promoting inclusivity.

### Medical Care onboard Ship and Ashore (Regulation 4.1)

Medical training to be based on the latest *International Medical Guide for Seafarers and Fishers (First Edition - Published 2023)*, enhancing onboard medical training and care. Training must also refer to the *International Medical Guide for Ships*, the *Medical First Aid Guide for Use in Accidents Involving Dangerous Goods*, the *Document for Guidance – An International Maritime Training Guide*, and the medical section of the *International Code of Signals*, ensuring shipboard medicine chests and equipment align with updated international standards.

### Health and Safety Protection and Accident Prevention (Regulation 4.3)

The regulation has been expanded to explicitly prohibit shipboard violence, harassment, sexual harassment, bullying, and assault. Previously, the guidelines did not distinguish or explicitly refer to sexual harassment and assault. Member States must implement legal prohibitions, require shipowners to adopt preventative policies, and establish safe and effective reporting mechanisms. Updates to Guideline B4.3.1 mandate appropriately sized personal protective equipment. Amendments to Guideline B4.3.6 require that investigations into shipboard violence and harassment include cooperation between flag States, port States, and labour-supplying States. Guideline B4.3.11 encourages international collaboration on assistance, programmes, and research to address these issues.

### Access to Shore-Based Welfare Facilities (Regulation 4.4)

Amendments ensure that seafarers detained in foreign ports are treated fairly and receive appropriate consular protection, in line with the *ILO/IMO Guidelines on Fair Treatment of Seafarers detained in connection with alleged crimes*.

### Flag State Responsibilities (Regulation 5.1)

Revisions strengthen confidentiality and anti-victimisation safeguards in onboard complaint procedures. Seafarers must be able to report grievances without fear of retaliation, while also ensuring protections against vexatious or malicious complaints.

These amendments represent a significant step forward in aligning maritime labour standards with evolving expectations around safety, dignity, and human rights at sea. Shipowners, operators, and crewing agencies are encouraged to review the changes in detail and begin preparations for compliance ahead of the expected entry into force in December 2027.

The official ILO text of the 2025 amendments to the MLC, 2006, can be accessed [here](#).

Members requiring further guidance should contact the Loss Prevention department.