



Department  
for Transport

# The Seafarers' Charter

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# 1. The Seafarers' Charter

## 1.1 Objectives

- 1.1.1 The Seafarers' Charter is a voluntary agreement. It has been introduced as part of the Seafarer Protections Nine Point Plan. The Seafarers' Charter aims to protect and improve seafarer employment and welfare.
- 1.1.2 The goal of the Seafarers' Charter is good quality seafarer employment.
- 1.1.3 Nothing within the Seafarers' Charter alters the principles of effective social dialogue between local worker representatives and employer representatives, the legal obligations of employers, or minimum entitlements as provided under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006, or any other mandatory requirements. Where items identified in this framework differ from mandated requirements, the higher of those standards is applicable.

## 1.2 Scope

- 1.2.1 The Seafarers' Charter primarily seeks to support seafarer employment protections and welfare, its provisions align to this intent. It has been developed with input from the maritime industry. It is primarily aimed at, although not limited to, those vessels in scope of the Seafarers Wages Act. The provisions of the Seafarers' Charter apply to all those working aboard vessels, at all grades, ranks and roles.

## 1.3 Compliance

- 1.3.1 To apply to the scheme operators will submit to the Department for Transport evidence of their (the operators) compliance, across all routes with UK calls, with the standards set out in the Seafarers' Charter. The Department for Transport will review the evidence against the Seafarers' Charter standards. Successful applicants will then be awarded Verified Seafarers' Charter status.
- 1.3.2 Where applicants are unable to demonstrate immediate 100% compliance, they should provide clear measurable plans as to how they will meet all the standards within 12 months. Department for Transport will review the plans. The operator will be awarded progressing towards Verified Seafarers' Charter status if the plans sufficiently demonstrate the operators' intent and ability to meet all Seafarers' Charter standards within 12 months. Plans should include measurable check points at regular intervals. E.g., at 3,6 and 9 months.

- 1.3.3 Supporting evidence will be provided in a format set out by the Department for Transport.
- 1.3.4 If needed operators will work with the Department for Transport to provide further evidence and/or to clarify any evidence already provided.
- 1.3.5 The Department for Transport will consider whether:
- a. Individual Operator's evidence has met the standards in the Seafarers' Charter.
  - b. Individual Operator Charter documents show evidence of ongoing efforts to improve seafarer welfare.
- 1.3.6 The Department for Transport may invite industry academics or experts to support the review of evidence. In such instances, those who see individual operator's evidence will be required to adhere to principles of commercial confidentiality.
- 1.3.7 Holders of Verified Seafarers' Charter Status must ensure their seafarers have ready access to the Seafarers' Charter and related guidance documents.

## **1.4 Verification**

- 1.4.1 Where, upon review of evidence provided, the Department for Transport agrees that the Standards of the Seafarers' Charter have been met, operator will be awarded Verified Seafarers' Charter status. This status will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 1.4.2 If the Department for Transport subsequently identifies, or is made aware of, practices by an operator holding Verified Seafarers' Charter status that do not meet the Seafarers' Charter standards, the Department for Transport will agree with the operator any action(s) required to address these issues and a date for completion. Failure to suitably address these may result in the loss of Verified Seafarers' Charter status.

## **1.5 Development of Standards**

- 1.5.1 The Department for Transport will continuously monitor operators who have been awarded Verified Seafarers Charter Status for examples of good practice, to inform both process delivery and wider seafarer protections' policy.
- 1.5.2 Seafarer protections and maritime law are evolving fields. One year after the launch of the Seafarers' Charter, standards will be reviewed in collaboration with industry. Following this initial review, the Seafarers' Charter standards will be reviewed at least every three years in collaboration with industry stakeholders, and outside of that period by exception.