

Factsheet: Crew Change Crisis

For more information visit the [ICS website](#).

Crew change

- Between March and August 2020, ICS estimates that only [25%](#) of normal crew changes were able to take place.
- During normal circumstances, ICS estimates around **100,000 seafarers are rotated every month**, with 50,000 disembarking and 50,000 embarking ships to comply with relevant international maritime regulations, governing safe working hours and crew welfare, so that they can continue to **transport global trade safely**.
- Estimates show up to [400,000](#) seafarers are currently stranded at sea by the crew change crisis, with up to 400,000 unable to join ships.

Impact

On seafarers

- Fatigue after long periods at sea has significant consequences on the physical and mental wellbeing of these seafarers. Physically, seafarers can often work [7 days a week and 10-12 hours shifts](#) to man ships, performing tasks that require constant professional attention. They also typically work between four and six months on ships, followed by a period of leave. However, extensive periods at sea, in some cases, over 17 months, have become routine as a result of COVID-19 and increase the risk of accidents onboard.

On global trade

- Inability to crew change also poses a significant threat to the integrity of maritime supply chains. Around [90% of global trade is transported by commercial shipping](#), which moves the world's food, energy and raw materials, as well as manufactured goods and components – including vital medical supplies and many products sold in supermarkets.

Other info on shipping and seafarers

On shipping

- As of 2019, the total value of the annual world shipping trade had reached more than 7 trillion US Dollars.
- Around [11 billion tons of goods](#) are transported by ship each year, representing 1.5 tons per person based on the current global population.

On seafarers

- According to the latest [Manpower Report](#) from ICS and BIMCO, the worldwide population of seafarers serving on internationally trading merchant ships is estimated at 1,647,500 seafarers, of which 774,000 are officers and 873,500 are ratings.
- China, the Philippines, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine are estimated to be the five largest supply countries for all seafarers (officers and ratings).
- The Philippines is the biggest supplier of ratings, followed by China, Indonesia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. While China is the biggest supplier of officers, followed by the Philippines, India, Indonesia and the Russian Federation.

	FOR ALL SEAFARERS	FOR OFFICERS	FOR RATINGS
1	China	China	Philippines
2	Philippines	Philippines	China
3	Indonesia	India	Indonesia
4	Russian Federation	Indonesia	Russian Federation
5	Ukraine	Russian Federation	Ukraine

(source: ICS & BIMCO [Manpower Report](#))

Significant steps taken by international organisations and governments so far

May 2020: ICS, with input from the wider industry, developed a comprehensive '[Framework of Protocols](#)' for conducting crew changes safely which was circulated to governments via IMO at the beginning of May.

Jul 2020: ICS (and the UK Chamber of Shipping) persuaded the Government of the United Kingdom to host a global summit of ministers on the crew change crisis on 9 July 2020. This high level meeting, attended by senior political representatives from a wide range of nations, as well as IMO, ILO, ICS and ITF, made a number of useful pledges from [15 countries](#).

1 Dec 2020: [United Nations General Assembly](#) adopts a resolution calling for all countries around the world to designate seafarers as key workers and implement crew change protocols.

17 Dec 2020: Landmark ruling from the [International Labour Organisation](#) (ILO) finds that governments have breached seafarers' rights and failed to comply with several provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention during the COVID-19 pandemic, including Article I(2) on the duty to cooperate.

18 Dec 2020: The IMO states that [46](#) IMO Member States* and one Associate Member have designated seafarers as key workers

*IMO Member States that have designated seafarers as key workers:

Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominica, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kiribati, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Moldova, Montenegro, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen.

Associate Member: Hong Kong (China)

Countries that have recently reimplemented tighter crew change restrictions

The spread of new variants of COVID-19 in the UK, Brazil and South Africa have contributed to stricter crew change restrictions globally, in addition to travel bans to foreigners and the requirement of negative COVID-19 test that some countries have already introduced.

The Philippines, 15 Jan 2021: An important crew change hub in Asia, the Philippine has introduced a temporary crew change ban to [35 countries](#), barring foreign seafarers from disembarking at Philippine ports. All vessels coming from these countries within 14 days are not allowed to conduct any kind of crew change activity in the six Philippine crew change facilities until the end of January 2021.

China, 5 Jan 2021: Local health authorities in [China](#) are imposing new rules to crew change, base testing on their own risk assessment if required for vessels which have had a crew change over 14 days ago.

For example: Following a crew change, berthing is only allowed in Zhuhai after a mandatory 14-day quarantine period. Customs authorities will also board ships to conduct body temperature tests.

While Zhanjiang does not require 14 days quarantine, its customs may still ask crew to test for the virus.

Singapore, 4 Jan 2021: [Singapore](#) is denying entry to crew who have travelled to the UK or South Africa in the last 14 days, and those who took direct or connecting flights from the two countries.

South Korea, 15 Jan 2021: Valid [negative tests](#) will be needed for all seafarers joining ships to avoid issues with the country's quarantine officers.

France, 29 Dec 2020: At most [French ports](#), crew arriving from UK for crew change must have a negative PCR test result of less than 72 hours.

Russia, 23 Dec 2020: The port of Novorossiysk in [Russia](#) has banned all crew changes or visits, excluding Russian crew or inspectors.