

Good Practice Guide for Shipping Companies & Manning Agents working with situations involving missing seafarers



This guide covers managing relationships onboard, actions that should be taken, and managing relationships with the families of seafarers who have gone missing.



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Introduction

Seafarers play an important role in ensuring goods are delivered globally to the required destination and on time. This involves seafarers often having to travel to places they have never visited before and possibly working with new people. Most seafarers form a close bond with their working colleagues but there may also be times when seafarers feel less welcome within their team which could be for a variety of reasons including cultural differences, competition, age differences, gender, bullying and harassment, and a lack of a general team approach on board a vessel.

It is therefore essential for staff ashore to nurture a culture onboard their vessels that is supportive and welcoming and one where seafarers feel comfortable to approach both their peers and their managers when they are experiencing difficulties or seeking clarity on an issue.

Good initial preparation is essential for companies and manning agents to help their seafarers deal with any incident. This guidance is designed to aid companies to put in place procedures to assist seafarers in such situations. This Guide may assist some companies more than others. Some may already have plans in place, and may therefore choose to use this solely as a checklist or to modify their current plans. Companies that do not have a plan are encouraged to use this guide to establish an appropriate course of action.

Occasionally for a variety of reasons seafarers may go missing from a ship or when ashore on shore leave. This publication provides guidance on ways to handle such situations and the resulting effects on both seafarers and their families.

Peer support within a group of seafarers can be key to helping the crew on the affected vessels. This can be exercised through a shared perspective and constant sensitivity to each other's individual current moods, cultures and beliefs.

To avoid a negative culture onboard zero tolerance of bullying and harassment is fundamental. ICS and ITF have produced Guidance on Eliminating Shipboard Harassment and Bullying which can be downloaded from: [ics-shipping.org/docs/harassmentandbullying](https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/harassmentandbullying)

Interviews with colleagues following seafarers who have gone missing suggest that those briefed in advance on what to expect can cope better than those who are not and may aid their ability to understand and manage such a situation.

The best employers may introduce potential new seafarers to buddies and mentors.

A buddy may be a seafarer at the same level as the new hire who the seafarer can approach either ashore or on board to ask questions about what it is like to work for the company and to be able to ask questions they may not feel comfortable to ask their superiors. This may also help in answering any potential concerns before accepting a contract to work onboard.

Likewise, mentors may be appointed to assist seafarers in steering their careers forward and to have a confidential sounding board when necessary. The mentors will usually be experienced individuals who can proactively help seafarers who come to them seeking advice.



Support of seafarers

Good practice before an incident

Every seafarer will react differently to an incident as each situation is unique.

Preparation to handle an incident is paramount, and training should include psychological and practical aspects. When planning training, the company should take into account:

- Visibility of incidents has increased awareness of the risk of such incidents amongst seafarers.
- Seafarers have concerns for their families should anything happen to them.
- Changing global situations require continued monitoring and appropriate preparations.
- Awareness of possible dangers may make seafarers more vigilant but also reluctant to sail in certain waters.
- Fear of captivity or physical abuse may provoke anxiety amongst seafarers.
- The need, post-incident, to preserve forensic evidence for any investigation that might be undertaken, including not clearing up mess or cleaning the ship and cabins until the investigation has been completed.
- Circulation of the company contingency plan for such situations to crew and shore-based staff.
- To the extent possible, how to avoid the risk that someone wants to go missing in the first place. This is all about leadership and management.
- Having procedures for early possible detection of someone missing, both when in port or at sea. Effectively monitored signing in and signing out at the gangway in port is very effective. At sea, rely on watch handovers and vigilance of others. It is important to formalise a routine for regularly checking everyone is back on board. The Officer on Watch for the day should be informed when everyone is back on board. Stragglers should be chased up.
- Having procedures for confirming that someone is missing – mustering the crew when a missing person is suspected.

- Having procedures for finding people on board – initiating a methodical search of the ship once a person is confirmed missing. Whether the ship reverses course to try find a person suspected as going overboard would be a call for the Master.
- Initiating a search is not so easy ashore, and is probably a matter for local authorities, with a search informed by the last known whereabouts (if known). It may be useful to ask seafarers to write down where they are planning to go in a log book.

Seafarers could be reassured if the following is included in the training:

- Pre-planned methods of communication with the company during an incident and reporting to a single global contact.
- A company plan to communicate with and provide support for the seafarer's family.
- A clear understanding of the financial implications relating to the seafarer in such instances.
- If applicable, payments for entering a high risk area agreed between unions and management.
- Techniques to assist seafarers to remain self-controlled and optimistic.
- Leadership skills are important, as leadership and team cohesiveness are always needed.
- Company policies.
- Personal responsibility for seafarers to inform themselves about potential threats.
- Familiarity with the preparation and use of an emergency communication plan, including all essential emergency numbers and prepared messages.
- Personal safety of the seafarer should be of primary concern.
- Advise of emergency contact procedures for seafarers when ashore. Requiring everyone to provide up-to-date contact details and to proceed ashore with fully charged mobile phones often helps. International phone cards are also useful. Whilst they only support one way communications, it's a good way to ensure someone has a back-up to call the ship or the local authorities if they are mugged etc. This can help avoid someone going permanently missing.

During an incident

The company should emphasise that:

- Seafarer personal safety is paramount.
- The response will vary depending on the type of incident.
- In more serious incidents the company will put in place a crisis management team to ensure all necessary actions are taken.

The company should also bear in mind:

- 'The need to survive' is the initial basic instinct of a seafarer.
- All seafarers cope differently in a given situation. Some may initially handle situations well, while others may have reactions including shock, fear, anger, a sense of unreality, a sense of immediate physical vulnerability and a loss of trust in management (on board and ashore).

These are well-recognised 'normal' reactions to such incidents (see Appendix 1A).

Reporting

It is fundamental to stress the importance of reporting any incidents to the relevant authorities. This will assist in understanding the scale of such incidents, identifying patterns, and actions that can be taken to avoid recurrence.

Companies and the vessel involved may be requested to assist flag and port state authorities and associated police forces with an investigation following an incident.

The Company could also contact the local embassy for the respective crew member involved as well as the flag and port state. The local embassy can play an important role as they might also conduct investigations onboard with regard to the disappearance of their national and may be able to brief family members.

The company must also brief the family and act in line with the provisions laid down in national laws of the state of nationality regarding issuance of a presumed death certificate or death certificate by the authorities. This is often one of the major concerns of affected families.

Family members will primarily need to get a formal investigation report on the disappearance of their kin from the ship once an investigation has been

conducted. The Company must strive to share this report with the family at the earliest opportunity. This will help them accept the reality and assist them to move forward.

Past experience has suggested that families do not prefer to get counselling or such humanitarian support post incident but they want factual reports, and rather to meet up with other crew members on board the ship to try to better understand what happened on that day, etc.

Handling Incidents

Experiences to date have varied greatly depending on the type of incident and its consequences, and therefore not all situations can be addressed in this guide.

Leadership patterns and styles may strategically differ depending on the nature of the incident.

- In hostage situations, the phase when the ransom is being paid is very dangerous.
- Armed robbery can be fast and violent, and may cause loss of life. Sometimes this may include accidental shooting related to drug use or unreliable weapons. Criminals may want to take all they can quickly and leave a vessel to avoid detection.
- Every effort should be made to preserve evidence to assist investigating authorities.

Lessons learnt indicate that where seafarers have been captured as hostages:

- The level to which basic needs are withheld or manipulated, to ensure seafarers' compliance, dominates early on. This has a major impact on the seafarers' ability to adjust and cope with early captivity.
- The aggressors may lead the seafarers to believe that the company considers their survival or release as unimportant.
- There may be mock executions or fabricated reports of the death of a leader or colleague.
- Aggressors may use violence and may use a variety of tools, including sticks, machetes and gun butts.
- In isolated cases, torture has been used.
- Negotiations may be used to manipulate the psychological wellbeing of seafarers and to falsely report on incidents, which may initially inspire hope only for it to be dashed and increase despair.

After an incident

Many issues already mentioned still apply after an incident. There should be a well pre-prepared plan in place.

Company representatives ashore should be aware that:

- Seafarers may find it difficult to accept the situation of losing a colleague and not knowing if they are alive.

During an incident the company should consider the needs and requirements of seafarers affected. These should include but not be limited to:

- Vessel/seafarer location
- Relocation of the vessel
- Personal and organisational preparedness
- Length of captivity/incident
- Nature and severity of physical and psychological treatment
- Level of isolation/bonding/divisions within the crew
- Availability of family communications
- Level and style of leadership exercised
- Reassurance being given to the concerned seafarer/their family that the company will support their reintegration and rehabilitation process

The full psychological impact of such actions may only be fully realised after a seafarer has reached home, or even later. Several released seafarers have reported loss of self-esteem and self-worth, and an inability to discuss an incident with anyone other than colleagues who shared the experience.

Practical Advice when seafarers go missing from a ship

There have been a few cases reported where seafarers, especially youngsters, go missing from their ship (the reasons could be due to suicide, fall out among crew etc.) and they cannot be located or their bodies recovered. In such cases, fellow seafarers on

the ship may come under tremendous pressure and stress due to the investigations being carried out by various agencies required to conduct these. This can be a new unwanted experience for the crew so it is important for the senior management team on board to be briefed properly by the company ashore prior to joining the vessel as to how to handle such situations.

Practical needs of affected seafarers

The company should open communications with the master/crew to understand the needs of the crew and vessel, and to provide information and instructions on provision of emergency supplies, bunkers and sailing the vessel to a safe port, and to ensure seafarers do not clear up in order to preserve evidence.

Once crew members' return home they should be encouraged to communicate with their families. Conversations should be kept light and positive, and focus on the next steps.

It may be appropriate for a doctor to examine the crew members and prescribe any appropriate treatments. Following such an incident, a seafarer may also need emotional and psychological support. Listening and observation skills and the ability to provide basic humanitarian support is most appropriate immediately after such an incident. Medics sent aboard should be made aware of the circumstances, and preferably able to communicate in a language the seafarer can easily understand. Psychological first-aid techniques from suitably trained responders may be beneficial. Counselling or other forms of psychological intervention techniques are not considered appropriate immediately after release of the seafarers.

Practical suggestions for positive mental health are also available for download in the ISWAN Seafarers' Health Information Programme booklet "Steps to Positive Mental Health":

seafarerhelp.org/assets/downloads/Steps-to-Positive-Mental-Health-English

Seafarers should be briefed on the company's actions and the support provided before and after release.

Support of seafarers and their families

Introduction

Seafarers families play an important role, both in their support to a serving seafarer and their response to an incident. This Guide advises on ways that family members can be supported, including provision of appropriate procedures. Some companies already have plans in place, and may therefore choose to use this guide solely as a checklist or to modify their current plans. Companies that do not have a plan are encouraged to use this guide to establish an appropriate course of action.

Good practice before an incident

Good practices and procedures will help a company, and ultimately seafarers and their families, in situations of such incidents.

Appointment of a family liaison representative(s)

Companies are encouraged to:

- Establish a family liaison team with, ideally, at least two family liaison representatives
- Consider the provision of consultants to assist with family liaison
- Consider having team members appropriate to the crew nationality
- Recognise that staff carrying out a family liaison role could become emotionally involved with family members, and may benefit from professional support and training

Choice of the family liaison representative

The appointed family liaison representative may be:

- Part of the crisis management team
- Able to have direct access to decision-makers
- Based at the company offices, or elsewhere with good access to communications tools
- Well established within the company
- Respected for their integrity and sensitivity in their dealings with all parties, and their ability to gain the trust of all sides
- Knowledgeable of the local culture and language of the families involved
- Accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to family members and the crisis team during the period of identified need, which may last many months
- Able to access legal advice and discuss this on behalf of the company
- Able to appreciate the need for confidentiality while respecting the legal, financial and ethical boundaries between the company and family members
- Assist in dealing with media attention, incorporating company policies if appropriate, and advise families of the pitfalls associated with providing information via social media
- Be able to seek out and maintain links with other local, regional and international resources, including professional support
- Show willingness to enhance their skills and seek further training associated with being a family liaison representative; training should include understanding normal reactions to crisis situations, communicating with those who are traumatised and delivering bad news.

Developing an action plan for pre-deployment

The company should:

- Communicate that a plan exists to support seafarers and family members at the time of an incident. This should be during the pre-deployment briefing or by issuing an appropriate leaflet to anybody potentially affected (see Appendix 2).
 - If allowed by flag state and country of nationality legislation, each seafarer should identify a person the company should contact. The seafarer may choose not to use their legal next of kin due to unique family circumstances. A pre-departure form for the seafarer to complete is provided in Appendix 3. Forms can be amended at any time. In rare circumstances a seafarer may not wish a family member to be notified.
 - Communicate the family liaison team plans within the company.
 - Establish a procedure for the Family Liaison Team to develop links with the family when an incident occurs.
 - Notify the family liaison representative of the corporate personnel and structures involved in responding to an incident and ensure that an up-to-date contact list is readily accessible.
 - Establish links with local support services, and identify the family liaison representative and available contact points. Ask the support contact to complete a form to be held by the company for future use (see Appendix 4).
 - Check the contact lists regularly (typically every 6 months) to ensure they are valid.
- Prepare a procedure for how to initially handle a situation, and an outline script for the first and subsequent phone calls and/or visits to the family contact (see Appendix 5). **This should outline:**
 - The most appropriate means for informing the nominated family contact quickly, recognising the need to be understood, given language considerations
 - The role of the family liaison representative and their contact information
 - The available resources for ongoing support and assistance
 - The available and verified information
 - Activities started between the company and the relevant authorities
 - Follow-up calls
 - How to deal with any media matters, including social media - the boundaries of confidentiality
 - How to handle calls from captors (see Appendix 6)
 - Encourage the family contact to liaise with the family liaison representative for information if they hear rumours or are contacted by the media.

The company should prepare a complete file of all the above data, either in hardcopy form or stored electronically, that can be easily accessed at a time of crisis. The file should contain copies of any agreed procedures, and a simple record sheet for contacts and phone calls made by the family liaison representative (see Appendix 7). It should be ensured that the data is always secure.



Development of an action plan during an incident

In the event of an incident, the situation will be made much easier if preparations described in the previous section have been completed. **The next steps to take are to:**

- Develop a timeline – what is urgent, what needs to be done in the first few days and what can be dealt with in the longer term.
- Activate the family liaison team as soon as possible.
- Ensure that the company is the first to inform the family of the incident, before they hear it from another source.
- Make contact by telephone and/or in person where appropriate. Where the family cannot access a telephone, contact should be made with a local support agency, such as an appropriately trained representative of a welfare association, a faith-based organisation or a union official, who may transport the family contact to a telephone or convey an initial message until the company can make contact.
- Outline clearly what the family liaison representative or delegated representative can say and use the prepared script for the initial contact to ensure essential facts are given as appropriate (see Appendix 5).



The family liaison team should:

- Ensure that the family liaison representatives clearly identify themselves to the nominated family member. Ensure that a telephone call is not made to an elderly member of the family who may react badly to such situations.
- Ask questions to establish that the right person is being addressed. This is essential in cultures where first names are often passed down through different generations.
- If it is necessary to leave a message for the family contact, say only that the team is trying to make contact; do not disclose the reason for the call and/or visit. Make further contact at a time suggested. The family liaison representative should not break bad news by phone to an elderly member whose health could be adversely affected.
- Ensure that the first contact is factual and concise. Promise to speak to the family contact again within a short time to allow them to absorb the news, and support them in their initial reaction.
- Recognise that the family contact may be shocked and unable to absorb the news. Provide adequate time and suggest that they might like to write down questions to prepare for the next contact.
- Make the promised follow-up contact at the time agreed to demonstrate that promises will be honoured and to establish trust.
- Encourage questions and try to answer them as openly and honestly as the incident permits. Any questions that cannot be answered should be identified and an appropriate course of action to obtain a response agreed.
- Write down any queries or anxieties expressed by the family contact.
- Listen with empathy.
- Note thoroughly what was discussed during the call/visit.
- Recognise that affected families may contact each other.
- Support the family with anxieties at home about illness or when other distressing incidents occur.
- Brief the family on how to react if contacted directly by the family member and how to avoid giving the seafarer bad news from home that might add to their distress.

In addition:

- It is advisable to have more than one designated family liaison representative involved. This means that if one representative is unavailable when the family contact calls, the second representative can take the call, advise the family and handle any problems. The second family liaison representative should be identified to the family contact from the start and fully apprised of the case. This will promote continuity of care and contribute to the family feeling respected at a time of great anxiety, thereby helping them to cope. A family contact may get very angry if they speak with a different person every time they contact the company, so it is important to ensure continuity of appointed contacts. Both family liaison representatives should keep accurate records of all calls and update each other to ensure they are both fully aware of the latest discussions with the family. A small company with only one family liaison representative may consider taking on a consultant to work alongside the established representative to ensure consistency of cover over leave periods.
- Affected families may find it important to meet senior company representatives. This can also benefit the company by helping establish trust between the parties.
- Regular liaison with the family contact should be established and maintained. At the beginning of the incident daily contact may be essential. During a prolonged period of captivity appropriately agreed

and timed contact periods should be established. Research suggests continuity of contact is the best way to control rumours and relieve additional stress. Family members involved in past incidents have advised that notification of no progress is easier to accept when explanations are given.

- Regular contact is valued, irrespective of the message. Many companies fail to contact family members because they feel a sense of failure if they have no good news to report. However, families state that lack of contact produces a fear of having been forgotten which can increase family stress.
- Family contacts should be reminded to sensitively share with children, if age appropriate, information given about the situation that is occurring.
- The family liaison representative should only give information that does not give false hope, and only report information authorised for circulation by the company.
- The family may hear rumours about the incident and ask the family liaison representative for verification of authenticity. The company must be made aware of such rumours. Consistent information should be given by the company and family liaison representative at all times.
- The media may contact the family to test out any rumours. This could negatively affect negotiations if mixed messages are given by the company and the family in the press. The family liaison representative should try to mitigate any such problems.



Role of the family liaison representative post incident

The family liaison representative should where seafarers are found alive:

- Ensure that the family contact is notified before the media if an incident is resolved. Even if news is limited, it should be given with the promise that further contact will be made when more is known about repatriation.
- Advise the family of the pitfalls in providing information via social media. Social media may initially be used to draw attention to their plight, but this may result in unintended consequences, which can put seafarers and their families at risk.
- Make every effort to allow seafarers to phone their families as soon as possible. Families should be advised that further contact will be made by the seafarer, or the company, when more arrangements are established as to where, when and how repatriation will occur.
- Be fully involved as the link with the family throughout. Trust gained in the 'difficult times' will be important later on.
- Endeavour to discuss with the family contact how to handle the actual homecoming and possible psychological reactions.
- Introduce support personnel.
- Be given assistance to move freely through immigration and customs with ease and without delay.
- Allow for a dignified and private reunion with all family members.
- Remind family members to include children, if age appropriate, in preparations for the homecoming and at the actual time of reunion.
- Be available for continued contact but respect the family's need for space to reconnect with each other.
- Ensure the company provides an update on all compensation due.
- Provide a valuable link to the family to arrange a medical examination and other support.
- Where possible give an opportunity to talk freely or use available support resources, such as welfare workers, representatives of faith-based organisations or trade union representatives, who can assist with important legal papers related to compensation or other benefits.

- Give advice on maintaining a peer support network for seafarers to keep up with colleagues overseas. There should be parity of ongoing practical and psychological support of a consistent quality, irrespective of seafarer nationality. Facilitation of a virtual network is encouraged.
- If agreed with the company's senior management, contact the family shortly after the seafarer returns home and offer to meet with those involved to assess current and anticipated future needs.
- Discuss with the company's senior management any potential ongoing support to be provided.
- Advise the family regarding how long support will remain in place.
- Make a full report on the incident and note lessons learnt. This information should be shared within the company and used to adjust future incident plans. It is worthwhile to encourage family members to provide feedback as well.
- Inform families that if there be a need for advice at a later stage, confidential support can be obtained through SeafarerHelp (*contact numbers are available at www.seafarerhelp.org*).

The family liaison representative should where seafarers are not found alive:

- Be fully involved as the link with the family throughout. Trust gained in the 'difficult times' will be important later on.
- Advise the family regarding how long support will remain in place.
- Make a full report on the incident and note lessons learnt. This information should be shared within the company and used to adjust future incident plans. It is worthwhile to encourage family members to provide feedback as well.
- Inform families that if there be a need for advice at a later stage, confidential support can be obtained through SeafarerHelp (*contact numbers are available at www.seafarerhelp.org*).



Appendix 1

Key concepts

The continuum of reactions possibly experienced by those affected

Events during the pre-crisis period can directly influence reactions experienced by those involved during the incident and in the immediate aftermath. Shock reactions can bring feelings of unreality and disbelief that an incident has occurred. A person may experience confusion, inability to concentrate and powerlessness whilst confronting such a situation.

Realisation follows a sense of shock as the reality of the incident becomes clearer. Fear of the unknown, of injury or survival may produce feelings of helplessness to change the situation. Anger that the incident has actually happened can also occur.

After prolonged periods there will be periods of anger, hope, despair, feelings of helplessness, and potentially renewed shock reactions experienced. Although the crew may not be aware of the actual causes of the incident their reactions may well still differ from their usual behaviour.

Fellow seafarers and members of the affected families can experience a period of adaptation to normality of family life after such experiences. Practical issues need to be discussed to enable those affected to return to normal patterns of life.

More information, or even lack of information, can lead those affected to fully acknowledge the situation as they handle their respective anxieties.

Fellow seafarers may not wish to discuss their feelings with their own family. Peers or trained responders may be able to assist in such matters. Such memories need to be cognitively processed to enable integration into experience so that they can be lived with and do not prevent the ability to work or function normally in their daily lives.

Resilience, Recovery and Resistance

Resistance – the form of psychological/behavioural immunity to the impact of distress.

Resilience – the ability of an individual, a group, an organization or a population to cope with and to rapidly and effectively rebound from a traumatic incident.

Recovery – the ability to recover and adaptively function in a post-traumatic situation.

Use of the three Rs of Resistance, Resilience and Recovery for both seafarers and their family members can help in considering the issues. It also identifies that during pre-deployment some preparation, and the supply of relevant information, can help build resilience to traumatic stress, if required, during an incident. Resilience to stresses during an incident can enhance recovery in the aftermath.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Source: Abraham Maslow (1943 paper), 'A Theory of Human Motivation'

This diagram identifies factors which motivate human beings and contribute to their sense of mental wellbeing. Maslow explains that the most important issues are at the base of the diagram. These are the basic human needs necessary for survival and are of paramount importance throughout an incident. Practical needs predominate and must be met whenever possible.

The next level is safety and features security, stability and freedom from fear. The further levels indicate higher levels of motivation described as quality motivators. These are desirable but not essential for basic survival. These features may form part of the deprivation experienced by those affected.

The pyramid can also apply to the needs of a seafarers' family. However, lack of validated communication and contact with loved ones will be a key feature which will impact on feelings of safety, insecurity, fear and a missing sense of belonging resulting from the prolonged absence of a loved one.

Survivor syndrome

When the initial threat of death passes, there can be a sense of euphoria at survival and cheating death. Not all survivors feel this euphoria and may carry a sense of guilt of surviving when others died. This reaction may be hard to understand for people, such as family members, not directly involved in the situation where deaths occurred.

If fatalities arise, survivors may experience death guilt. This can manifest itself in such questions as 'Why did I survive when x died?' Seafarers may have difficulty dealing with relatives of their deceased colleagues with whom they come into contact. Survivors conduct in-depth questioning of their own actions at the time. Could they have done more to save others? Survivors talk of their actions to try to rationalize any actions taken or not taken.

If required companies should, via their liaison representatives, make the seafarers families aware of this state of mind, especially if there was a fatality during the incident.

Even where survivors recognise a need for help, they may reject the offer in case it would be viewed as a sign of weakness, confirming in their own minds that others felt they were not worthy of survival. These thoughts may result in survivors seeking help and reassurance from others involved. Self-help through contact with other seafarers involved has the advantage that survivors do not have to explain their emotions when recalling the event. Listeners were there and experienced similar feelings. This support is particularly important to released hostages where there have been fatalities. The possibility of this syndrome indicates the benefit of keeping the crew together for a short period following release to give an opportunity to discuss such matters and gain peer support through mutual understanding within the group. Continued contact is not always possible due to the multinational nature of crews and dispersal to different countries to travel home. An understanding of the impact of Survivor Syndrome by those involved in support to released hostages and family members may assist in the overall recovery process.

Crisis management techniques

Many crisis intervention technique models exist and it is important that those using them are qualified, fully understand the method, the underlying theoretical basis for the technique and the possible impact of such models on seafarers and the family members feeling emotionally vulnerable by such an incident.

Specific needs of the seafarer or family member will dictate the type of intervention required. Techniques can range from active listening, information sharing, psychological first aid and skilled professional treatment. Debriefing is often utilised following such incidents but should not be seen as a panacea for all situations. There are many types of debriefing including operational, forensic and psychological. Care must be taken to inform participants on the type of debriefing conducted. Practitioners using techniques which address psychological reactions must be well trained in the appropriate model and adhere strictly to the prescribed protocol.

Those assisting should be aware of the 'normal' reactions expected following such an incident. These may vary from understandable reactions to the experience to more complex symptoms which due to their complexity, duration and severity may require skilled psychiatric assessment and treatment. Needs identified will vary.

All those helping seafarers and their family members in such circumstances must be aware of their own competence and limitations. Understanding of the issues should ensure seafarers can get appropriate help.

ISWAN has a group of trained first responders who will may be able to provide assistance in such situations.

Appendix 2

Family leaflet

Back page of A5 leaflet

Front page of A5 leaflet

Other useful numbers:

Contact numbers for support or information in the event of major crisis.

-
-
-
-
-

SeafarerHelp is a 24-hour multilingual helpline for seafarers and their families to contact at no cost for advice and referral to other suitable agencies.

Family support

[Insert company logo]

SeafarerHelp
The lifeline for seafarers

- Free help
- Confidential
- Multilingual
- 24/7

www.seafarerhelp.org

+44 (0)7860 018 538
 help@seafarerhelp.org
 info-seafarerhelp.org
 +44 207 323 2737
 (Request call back)
 www.seafarerhelp.org
 WhatsApp
 +44 7909 470 732

Facebook, Twitter, ISWAN logos

Your local contact person is:

Left centre page of A5 leaflet

SOMEONE TO TALK TO ...

There are times when people experience a major crisis in their lives and as a consequence they may become unusually stressed or anxious. This leaflet is to help anyone who is affected in this way and explains about the support that is available.

If you have experienced a major crisis in your life, it is important to know that it is normal for people to have some reaction to severe stress.

The Family Liaison Representative is available to support you and your family members through this period if you wish to contact us.

Sometimes it helps to talk to someone outside the family who knows how to help in crisis situations. Your family doctor and representatives of faith-based organisations are also people who can help.

Please remember also that your children may benefit from some support.

Stress may result in a person being unable to wholly focus on other issues.

Remember it is the situation which is abnormal not you.

Right centre page of A5 leaflet

YOU MAY EXPERIENCE:

Your emotions may be very mixed and very powerful at this time and you may experience:

- A sense of unreality that this situation is happening.
- Intense anxiety and prolonged stress as events unfold.
- Anger mixed with a feeling of helplessness at your inability to change the situation.
- A reawakening of other situations of stress which you have experienced in the past.
- A sense of being overwhelmed by your reactions, by the people around you or by the media.
- An inability to 'unwind' and relax. This may affect you during the day or night.
- A sense of being unique and isolated in your particular worry.
- Fear that if you seek help with these feelings now, or in the future, you will be labelled as not 'coping'. This is not true.

Appendix 3

Seafarers' nominated family contact

<i>NOMINATION OF A FAMILY CONTACT IN CASE OF EMERGENCY</i>	
Please insert the name and contact details for your nominated person, whom the company should contact in case of an emergency while you are at sea	
Name (first and last name):	
Address:	
Home telephone number:	
Work telephone number::	
Mobile/cell number:	
Email address:	
Relationship to you (e.g. wife, son, father, sister):	
Please advise us of any issues we should be aware of before contacting this person	
Please sign to confirm you would like the above named person to be your Family Contact	Signature: _____ Date: / /

Appendix 4

Local resource contact

Local/regional/national resources – example document

Companies and manning agents can develop their own list of contacts within the countries where the seafarers live. These contacts can be activated when a crisis occurs. SeafarerHelp can assist in finding contact details of charities and agencies who can help with specific issues.

<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Contact person (Tel.)</i>	<i>Support available</i>	<i>When, and possible duration</i>
Seafarers Mission 23 Dock Road Santos	Father Pedro Centre 07945 676767	Counselling by Father Pedro, contact with international seafarers' agencies	24 hours a day Office 9- 5 pm

Appendix 5

Family liaison representative scripts

First call/visit

Is that _____ speaking?(Check name)

Are you _____ ? (Check relative's basic details)

I am _____ (State your name and organisation clearly)

I am making contact with you on behalf of _____ (company or named person)

We have just been told that your _____ (relationship, e.g. husband's) ship has been involved in an incident _____ (time, day, location)

We do not have many details as yet, but we do know: _____

I can assure you that everything is being done to resolve these problems. (If possible, give some details)

Do you understand what I am telling you?

Add any advice or cautions necessary on confidentiality or dealing with the media, if appropriate.

Advise that a further call will be made and suggest that the contact person prepares a list of questions.

Phone back as arranged – keep trying if the phone is engaged, as the person notified may be notifying other family members.

Second and subsequent call/visit

Is that _____ speaking?(Check name)

This is _____ calling again. (State your name and organisation clearly)

How are you feeling now?

Is there anyone with you?

Have you any questions for me? I will try to answer but, as I said before, we do not have many details as yet. Would you like me to repeat what we do know?

(Questions) I have made a list of your questions and I will try to find out some more information.

Appendix 6

Template for communication to be used at time of notification of an incident

This template is designed for use when liaising with a family involved in an incident and at the time of notification. The contents of the letter may be adapted to match the particular situation. Companies are encouraged to try to personalise the letters by inserting the appropriate names of the seafarer, the family and the family liaison representative.

Initial news of an incident should be handled either by telephone call or by a personal visit. The following letter or email could then be sent:

Dear *personal name/s*,

Insert a paragraph expressing the concerns of the company CEO and how much the company regrets what has happened. Assure the family of the company's support.

Contact arrangements

Your Family Liaison Representative with the Company will be *insert name*.

They can be contacted on *insert (phone number)* and at the following email address: *.....@.....*

If *insert name of Family Liaison Representative* is not available then please speak to *insert name of second Family Liaison Representative*, who can be contacted on *insert phone number* or at *insert email address*.

Once the Family Liaison Representative is identified refer to them by name in the rest of the letter and any future correspondence (e.g. 'You should telephone x').

As has already been explained during the phone call/visit (*delete as appropriate*), we will try to keep you informed whenever there is any verified news.

There will be times when the incident investigations will appear to progress very slowly but this does not mean that investigations are not continuing. We appreciate that this will be a very stressful time for you and your family so we will arrange a regular time to speak with you whether we have news or not.

It would help us if you nominate one family contact member to be contacted by *the Family Liaison Representative*. The Family Contact can then pass the information on to other family members and friends, which will allow information to pass quickly. Please advise *the Family Liaison Representative* who this shall be.

Please do not believe rumours that you may hear from colleagues, other families, the media or any other parties. However, please contact *the Family Liaison Representative* if anything you hear causes you distress. We will do our best to help you when we can.

If someone outside the company contacts you please note their phone number and what they say. Pass this information to the *Family Liaison Representative*, as it will be very helpful for the company to know what is being said and may assist the investigation.

You will undoubtedly think of many questions to ask. Please write them down for when you next speak to *the Family Liaison Representative* who will try to answer these.

Based on the experiences of other families facing a similar situation, please bear in mind the following:

- After the initial news of an incident there can be little news. This can be a time of great uncertainty and anxiety for both you and the company.
- Investigations can take many weeks or months. The company appreciates this is a stressful time for family members and will keep in touch on a prearranged regular basis.
- You may be contacted by the media. It is advisable that you refer all such calls to *the Family Liaison Representative* to deal with them on your behalf.
- Everyone is working to get *clarification on the incident as soon as possible*. Contact the Family Liaison Representative if you hear rumours that distress you or receive calls that are difficult to handle.
- You may hear rumours that raise your hopes. Wait until you hear verified news from us before celebrating.
- Once clear information is available we will inform you.

What can you do to help?

Trust your Family Liaison Representative, *insert their name*.

- Tell key people in your family what has happened.
- Appoint someone as a Family Contact and the first point of contact for *the Family Liaison Representative*. If you don't wish to do this yourself, appoint a trusted family member. The company will then only give news to this family member, who will then pass messages onto you and other family members. This helps to stop too many people contacting you or outside agencies trying to get news.
- Maintain your daily routine as much as possible. Eat regular meals and maintain sleep patterns to preserve the health of both yourself and your family.
- Keep hope alive but maintain realistic expectations of when you will hear news.
- Try to involve any children or adolescents in any news received, as appropriate for their age. Even a very young child can sense your anxiety and will need support to understand what is happening. They may even blame themselves for your anxiety. You may seek the support of a teacher or other adult the child trusts.
- Encourage children /family members to keep a scrapbook of family events or news. This can be shared with *insert name of seafarer* upon return to the home.
- It might help to keep a diary of people you have spoken to and a list of contacts made.
- If you have any practical problems as a result of the situation please feel free to discuss these with *the Family Liaison Representative*, who will try to assist you or guide you to another suitable source of help.
- Make contact with any trusted friends or other sources of support, such as your faith community or union representative, with whom you already have a good relationship.

Further help and support is available from the SeafarerHelp support team. www.seafarerhelp.org

Appendix 7

Log of call made to family contact

<i>LOG OF CALL MADE</i>	
Date:	
Call to:	
Time:	
Relationship to seafarer:	
Call made by:	
Content of call:	
Questions raised by relative:	
Date and time arranged for next call:	
Actions to be taken:	
General observations on level of distress, coping, etc.	
Comments re. family or support being utilised:	

Appendix 8

Reporting incidents of missing seafarers

It is a best practice to encourage reporting of incidents when a seafarer is missing from their ship due to an incident of piracy or hostage-taking, or where they may have fallen overboard or committed suicide, or due to any other reason, in order to warn other seafarers and the ships in the area where such an incident has occurred. This aims to assist with the search and rescue operation that may involve nearby coastal states, merchant and naval assets or prosecution of pirates and armed robbers, should they be arrested by law enforcement agencies.

Where seafarer has been kidnapped or involved in an incident of piracy:

For incidents worldwide

Ships are advised to maintain anti-piracy watches while transiting areas of high risk, and to report all piratical and armed robbery incidents, including suspicious movements of boats and skiffs, to the 24-hour manned **International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

ICC IMB (Asia Regional Office),
PO Box 12559,
Kuala Lumpur, 50782, Malaysia

Tel: + 60 3 2078 5763

Fax: + 60 3 2078 5769

Email: imbkl@icc-ccs.org; piracy@icc-ccs.org

24-hour Anti-Piracy Helpline, Tel: + 60 3 2031 0014

For incidents in the Indian Ocean area

Call the Maritime Security Centre, Horn of Africa (MSCHOA).

Tel: +44 (0) 1923 958545, +44 (0) 1923 958700

Fax: +44 (0) 1923 958520

Email: postmaster@mschoa.org

United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations (UK MTO)

Tel. (24 hours): + 971 50 552 3215

Email: UKMTO@eim.ae

For incidents in the West African area

Vessels in the Voluntary Reporting Area are encouraged to report to **Marine Domain Awareness for Trade, Gulf of Guinea (MDAT-GoG)** via either email or phone. Both are monitored 24 hours. In the event of an attack or the sighting of suspicious activity, masters should call MDAT-GoG directly by phone.

Tel: +33 (0) 2 98 22 88 88

Email: watchkeepers@mdat-gog.org

NB: as of June 2016 MTISC-GoG is no longer operating; MDAT-GoG replaces their function.

Appendix 9

Further resources

A list of websites and organisations which provide help, up-to-date guidance and other information useful to seafarers, companies and manning agencies.

- Interpol** – The international police organisation with a maritime task force
- IMB** – International Maritime Bureau, provides statistics and reports on reported incidents
- IMO** – The International Maritime Organization, provides guidance and recommendations for the maritime community
- ISWAN** – International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network, offers a 24-hour multilingual helpline and online information on seafarers’ centres and welfare facilities around the world: www.seafarerswelfare.org
- ICS** – International Chamber of Shipping www.ics.shipping.org
- ITF** – International Transport Workers’ Federation, offers guidance for seafarers.

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- ICMA** – International Christian Maritime Association
- ICS** – International Chamber of Shipping
- IGP&I** – International Group of P&I Clubs
- ILO** – International Labour Organisation
- IMB** – International Maritime Bureau
- IMEC** – International Maritime Employers’ Council
- IMHA** – International Maritime Health Association
- IMO** – International Maritime Organization
- InterManager** – International Ship Managers’ Association
- ISWAN** – International Seafarers’ Welfare and Assistance Network
- ITF** – International Transport Workers’ Federation

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Tel +44(0)208 253 0161
Email iswan@iswan.org.uk

www.seafarerswelfare.org
www.seafarerhelp.org

International Seafarers' Welfare
and Assistance Network
Suffolk House
George Street
Croydon
CR0 1PE