

IFSMA BRIEFING TO THE NIPPON FOUNDATION

IFSMA's Mission is: "To be an independent, apolitical and financially viable organisation dedicated to representing the views and professional interests of the serving Shipmaster on the International Stage at the IMO, and else-where, upholding the International Standards of Professional Competence for Seafarers." Currently IFSMA consists of 34 Member Associations and with a small number of individual members representing more than 11,000 shipmasters from 60 nations. The President of IFSMA sits on the Board of Seafarers Rights International.

IFSMA has **5 enduring Key Challenges** to face in the future.

1. First, the Skills and Competence of Ships' Crews. We must learn from our membership where crews are lacking in practical skills and competence and influence STCW amendments where necessary at the IMO, and we have to help Shipmasters to be more available to undertake their training and mentoring responsibilities. IFSMA has set up an internal Working Group to evaluate key issues for the IMO fundamental review of STCW.
2. Second, the Criminalisation of the Shipmaster. We must influence International Regulations to reduce the incidence of Criminalisation of the Shipmaster and to this end it is important to introduce a Shipmasters' Insurance Protection Scheme. IFSMA has just introduced the IFSMA Shipmaster and Chief Engineer Legal Insurance Policy and if there is sufficient interest this will be extended to Chief Mates: <https://www.ifsma.org/resources/Legal-Insurance-SUMMARY.pdf>
3. Third is the Operation of the increasingly Digitised Ships of the Future. IFSMA must influence the use and development of Ships of the Future and specifically the Role of the Shipmaster, both onboard and ashore. Most importantly we must influence the regulation of Ships of the Future at IMO and other International Bodies and ensure the proper regulation of Standards of Competence for the Maritime Workforce of the future. IFSMA is seen as one of the lead NGOs in this area and its papers to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee and Legal Committee in early 2020 during the Regulatory Scoping Study on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships, one of the very few papers that remain extant highlighting the role of Shipmasters and seafarers and key points of International Jurisdiction in the Law of the Seas.
4. Fourth is that of Safety Management. Our ultimate task is to promote the removal of Shipmasters from the Watchkeeping Roster so that they are able to fulfil their responsibilities as Master, as required by International Legislation, and, at the very least, to influence removal of the Shipmaster from the Master / Mate 6 on / 6 off roster by the implementation of improved Deck Officer Manning Levels in ships. We must raise awareness and reduce the Administrative Burden of the Shipmaster, and bring to the attention of the shipping industry its responsibilities to meet the objectives of the ISM Code. In the last few years IFSMA has been very active in this area working on a number of projects with the World Maritime University in Sweden. Following discussions with the Secretary General of IMO in 2017, IFSMA formed the Human Element Industry Group (HEIG) to take key issues forward with other like-minded IGOs, NGOs and a few sympathetic nations. Because of these efforts it has been agreed to once again start up the Joint IMO/ILO Human Element Working Group and led to the HEIG developing a revised check list which has to be completed for all new outputs at the IMO to ensure the Human Element is properly taken into account. The HEIG is leading with China on a new output to reduce deaths in enclosed spaces which is increasing year on year and is currently the largest cause of deaths in the industry.

5. Finally and not least is Public Relations and Communications. IFSMA is now seen as the International Voice for Shipmasters. It shares information between Shipmasters and represents the professional views of the Shipmaster at IMO and other International Bodies, based on the practical and operational knowledge of its 11,000 Shipmaster Members. In recent years IFSMA has developed very good relations with a few key Global Media organisations with IFSMA being approached to give interviews to various media forums (TV, Radio, and International Newspapers) and International Seminars.

IMO INVOLVEMENT

6. At the IMO, IFSMA representatives attend all of the Committee, Sub-Committee, Council and Assembly meetings, in particular those meetings where IFSMA members have an interest and where IFSMA felt it could make a useful contribution for the subjects on the agenda. Where appropriate, IFSMA has also attended various Working Groups and Drafting Groups where the subject would be of particular interest to our members or needs input from the Shipmasters' point of view. Similarly, we participate in correspondence Groups where the subject matter is of relevance to our shipmaster members.
7. Interventions are regularly made during Committee and Sub-Committee meetings to assist delegates on technical matters where the views of shipmasters need to be taken into account. IFSMA has developed a reputation for providing sound advice and is frequently praised for the quality of its input.
8. IFSMA sponsored and co-sponsored 16 Papers from March 2019 to March 2021 and is regularly approached by other delegations and International Organisations for advice on various topics requiring Shipmaster professional expertise. Currently in discussion with other NGOs on the subjects of Human Element, Lifeboat Safety, MASS and Maritime Corruption, these may lead to the submission of papers at IMO. IFSMA is also a very active member of the International Lifeboat Group and in conjunction with the International Chamber of Shipping(ICS) and International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) at the Maritime Anti-Corruption Network Cross-Industry Working Group were the driving force behind a paper that led to Maritime Anti-Corruption being accepted as a new output in the Facilitation Committee and a set of Guidelines are currently in production for Nations. IFSMA is a Panel Member for the selection of IMO Exceptional Bravery at Sea Awards.
9. IFSMA's Secretary General usually makes 2 formal calls on the Secretary General of the IMO to discuss shipmasters' matters of mutual concern. Additionally, both the President and Secretary General of IFSMA are invited to attend IMO Round Table Meetings chaired by the Secretary General with other key UN Agencies and NGOs to discuss various issues including, the Human Element, unsafe mixed mass migration by sea, COVID – 19 Pandemic and other relevant topics.
10. IFSMA publishes summaries of all IMO Meetings attended on its website for easy access by its Shipmaster members, these highlight all the issues of interest. An IMO section is included in its monthly newsletter to include subjects not covered elsewhere, for example, measures taken to enhance crew changes during the pandemic and the designation of seafarers as keyworkers. Subjects raised at IMO may also be included at IFSMA Biennial General

Assemblies where members can raise issues for further discussion which can lead to policy advice on the direction Shipmasters wish to take in future when these subjects are on the IMO agenda. The Japanese Captains Association will host the next meeting in October 2023.

IMO PAPERS SPONSORED OR CO-SPONSORED SINCE MARCH 2021

1. 16 Mar 21 – Comments on Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear (the Requirements).
2. 25 Mar 21 - Review and revision of the IMO Compendium on Facilitation and Electronic Business, including additional e-business solutions.
3. 1 Jul 21- Proposal for a new output to initiate a scoping exercise and enhancement of the effectiveness of provisions on seafarers' hours of work and rest hours, and fatigue.
4. 13 Aug 21 - Support of document MSC 104/17/1 _ Key Worker status of Seafarers during COVID Pandemic
5. 18 Feb 22 Proposal for a revised output to amend IMO Model Course 1.21 – Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities
6. 8 Mar 22 - Impacts on shipping and seafarers of the situation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov
7. 13 Jun 22 Proposal for a new output to amend MSC.1/Circ.1331 to address the safety risk to crew when rigging of safety netting from the ship's deck to the outboard side of an accommodation ladder and/or gangway
8. 17 Jun 22 - Revised draft amendments to paragraph 4.4.7.6.17 of the LSA Code LSA Code to ensure adequate safety standards for lifeboats and rescue boats fitted with single fall and hook systems with on-load release capability.
9. 1 Aug 22 – Comments on the Revision of the revised recommendations for Entering Enclosed Spaces Aboard Ships (Resolution A.1050(27))
10. 30 Aug 22 - Report on safety learning culture
11. 13 Sep 22 - Comments on document MSC 106/16/1 Revision of the Revised recommendations for Entering Enclosed Spaces Aboard Ships (Resolution A.1050(27))
12. 2 Dec 22 - Training provisions on psychological safety addressing bullying, sexual assault and harassment in the maritime sector.
13. 10 Dec 22 - Proposal for developing guidelines on Nautical Port Information
14. Currently authoring a paper on Role of the Shipmaster and Seafarers in the proposed Code for MASS
15. IFSMA continues to work with the World Maritime University on a number of topics that we expect to develop into further papers for IMO on:
 - a. Seafarers and Fatigue
 - b. SAFEMODE – Safety Learning Culture
 - c. Seafarers Hours of Work:Rest and a Culture of Adjustment

OPEN LETTERS AND STATEMENTS

1. 11 May 21 Letter to Norwegian Minister of Justice and Public Security, Minister of Trade and Industry, Minister of Health and Care Services and Norwegian Institute of Public Health – Demanding that Seafarers must be exempt from quarantine hotel requirements
2. 7 Mar 22 - Open Statement on the crisis in Ukraine

3. 15 Jun 22 – Co-written Letter with 5 NGOs to His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy – Asking for Ukrainian seafarers to be exempted from the departure restrictions from Ukraine under current restrictions of Martial Law.
4. IFSMA President’s Statement - Conduct of Forces Boarding Ships.
<https://www.ifsma.org/resources/Statement-by-the-President.pdf>
5. Notice to all Shipmasters, on Covid-19 - June 2020 : <https://www.ifsma.org/resources/IFSMA-letter-to-shipmasters-8-Jun-20.pdf>
6. Open Letter to all Governments - An urgent call from Shipmasters
Has the Merchant Shipping industry and its seafarers been forgotten?
<https://www.ifsma.org/resources/Open-Letter-to-all-Goverments-FINAL4.pdf>

OTHER ISSUES

1. IFSMA is an Observer NGO at the ILO, but presently does not have the resource to attend. However, as it is a tripartite organisation IFSMA keeps up to date through close cooperation with both ICS and ITF and has a particular interest in the IMO/ILO Human Element Working Group.
2. IFSMA is a regular attendee and various meetings on Maritime Security at the NATO Maritime Headquarters at Northwood, London.
3. IFSMA is currently working with the ICS on the production of a new publication “A Shipmasters Guide to International Law”. This publication will be an easy to read guide on how International Law affects Shipmasters as they conduct their business around the world. It will not be a complicated technical publication and is expected to be published in time for the Biennial General Assembly in Tokyo in October 2023.