**{NAME} PORT WELFARE COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**AMEND AS NECESSARY**

**1. BACKGROUND**

National Seafarers’ Welfare Boards (NSWB) and Port Welfare Committees (PWC) provide a forum where all those involved in seafarers’ welfare can meet regularly, share information, provide mutual support and generally network. They also provide an opportunity to brief members on wider issues that may affect seafarers and their families visiting or resident around their ports.

Under the International Labour Organisation’s Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) there are clear guidelines for the establishment and maintenance of Welfare Board’s and Port Welfare Committees. This Convention lays down under “*Regulation 4.4 – Access to shore-based welfare facilities”,* that *Members* should “*take measures to ensure that adequate welfare facilities and services are provided for seafarers in designated ports of call and that adequate protection is provided to seafarers in the exercise of their profession”.* It also emphasises under *Guideline B4.4.3 – Responsibilities of Members* that: -

1. *“Welfare boards should be established, at the port, regional and national levels, as appropriate. Their functions should include:* 
   1. *keeping under review the adequacy of existing welfare facilities and monitoring the need for the provision of additional facilities or the withdrawal of underutilized facilities; and*
   2. *assisting and advising those responsible for providing welfare facilities and ensuring coordination between them.*
2. *Welfare boards should include among their members representatives of shipowners’ and seafarers’ organizations, the competent authorities and, where appropriate, voluntary organizations and social bodies.*
3. *As appropriate, consuls of maritime States and local representatives of foreign welfare organizations should, in accordance with national laws and regulations, be associated with the work of port, regional and national welfare boards.”*

The SWBs / PWCs recognise the unique strengths of each member organisation and the great value of their local knowledge in understanding seafarers' needs. In addition to providing a meeting forum, membership of a board/committee provides a regular opportunity to meet and better understand the work of others involved with maritime welfare in that area. This can be invaluable at times of crisis, or even when dealing with day-to-day problems. The board/committee is pleased to welcome, as members, those who have a contribution to make to the welfare of seafarers.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

The board/committee is established to encourage and co-ordinate the efforts of its members to provide welfare support and facilities for active, or retired, seafarers and their dependents within its area.

#### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is drawn from organisations that contribute to the welfare of seafarers, fishers and their dependents within the area covered by the local board/committee. Members must be nominated by their parent organisation and approved by the board/committee.

National Seafarers’ Welfare Boards should include representatives of:

* the statutory organisation responsible for maritime affairs
* ship owners and managers
* maritime trade unions
* voluntary organisations involved with seafarers’ welfare

Local and Regional Welfare Boards should, where appropriate, include representatives of:

* all of the above
* port authorities
* port health authorities
* pilotage authorities
* ships agents
* immigration authority
* port police/security
* local government
* any other organisation actively involved in seafarers’ welfare.

Membership is not available to private individuals although they may be invited to attend meetings when appropriate.

#### 4. MEETINGS

**4.1 Frequency**

Boards/committees should hold sufficient scheduled meetings to discharge all of its duties as set out in these terms of reference, but subject to a minimum of three meetings per annum. In addition, there should be an Annual General Meeting which will be held to coincide with the date of an ordinary meeting. The AGM will be used to confirm changes in the membership and elect, or re-elect, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

**4.2 Location**

Members are encouraged to hold meetings at venues connected with the welfare of seafarers within their area. This enables them to familiarise themselves with the work of colleagues. Travel and other costs of members are normally borne by members’ organisations.

**4.3 Agendas**

Agendas will be circulated at least two weeks prior to a meeting. These will include any reports received from members, an IPWP report and details of any grant application seeking the support of members.

**4.4 Quorum**

A quorum normally consists of not less than four members representing four separate organisations. Notwithstanding the Chairperson, in consultation with the secretariat, shall have the right to decide whether the numbers attending are sufficient to allow a meeting to be effective.

Individuals in attendance at meetings by invitation may participate in discussions but do not form part of the quorum and may not vote.

**4.5 Absence**

Members are asked to notify the Secretary, giving as much notice as possible, if they are unable to attend. This will enable the Secretary to consider an alternative date if there are only small numbers of members available.

Any member who has missed three consecutive meetings, without apology, will be approached to confirm their willingness to continue to represent their organisation. Any member who has not attended for five successive meetings, with or without apologies, will be considered to have retired and a replacement nomination shall be sought from their parent organisation.

**4.6 Preparation**

Members must be fully prepared for committee meetings to be able to provide appropriate and constructive input on matters for discussion.

**4.7 Conflict of Interests**

If a matter requiring a decision by the board/committee concerns, or affects, one of the organisations represented at the meeting the representative/s must declare an interest. A Member must absent themself from any discussions in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between the Member’s duty to the Port Welfare Committee and any personal interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest) unless expressly invited to remain in order to provide information.

The Chairperson shall be responsible for ensuring that Conflicts of Interest are on the agenda for each meeting and shall have the authority to request a Member to absent themselves if a conflict of interest is identified.

**4.8 Voting**

On occasions where boards/committees are required to vote, such as at the election of a Chairperson or Vice Chairperson, or in considering grant applications, there will be one vote only per organisation present. The Chairperson, or acting Chairperson, shall have a casting vote in the event of a tie.

**4.9 Minutes**

The minutes must be completed as soon as possible after the meeting and circulated to the Chairperson and Members for review thereof. The minutes must be formally approved at the next scheduled meeting.

**4.10 Secretary**

The board/committee will appoint a Secretary for all boards/committees. In the unexpected absence of the Secretary, the Chairperson may appoint another committee member to act as secretary for that meeting.

**4.11 Evaluation**

The committee should evaluate its composition, format and effectiveness every three years. The review process should also include a review of these terms of reference.

#### 5. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The board/committee annually nominates and elects, or re-elects, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from among the members. The maximum term of office for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson is five years which, in exceptional circumstances, can be extended for one further year. In the event a Chairperson, or Vice Chairperson, leaves the organisation that they represent, during their tenure of office, they may remain in post in an independent capacity, until the next AGM. In exceptional circumstances, and subject to re-election, they may also continue as an independent Chairperson, or vice Chairperson, for one further year. This is to ensure stability and continuity of the Seafarers’ Welfare Board/Port Welfare Committee.

#### 6. DUTIES OF SEAFARERS’ WELFARE BOARDS/PORT WELFARE COMMITTEES

The primary objective is to endeavour to ensure that both serving (including those from overseas) and retired seafarers (and/or their dependants) are receiving the highest possible levels of welfare within the resources available. In undertaking this objective, the board/committee should examine the needs of seafarers taking into account any relevant issues both nationally and within the locality of their area, keeping in mind that that duplication of effort is often wasteful.

Responsibilities will include:

**6.1 Review and Monitoring of Welfare activities**

Coordination, review and planning of the Welfare activities within the Port, including: -

* Understanding the needs of seafarers visiting the Port.
* Review of the adequacy and use of existing port welfare facilities within the Port, utilising [www.portvisitor.com](http://www.portvisitor.com).
* Make recommendations on proposals for new services or changes to existing services.
* Encourage cooperation between unions, missions and other welfare agencies, including offering assistance and advice.
* Improve seafarers access to shore based facilities, including welfare services, shops, medical
* services, legal advice and places of worship.
* Provide mutual support during a crisis – e.g. pandemics (vaccination information), incidents involving casualties, abandoned seafarers, etc.
* Assist in producing port information with details of available services and important phone
* numbers.
* Provide information on grant applications to funding organisations (e.g. ITF Seafarers’ Trust).
* Lobby for a port levy scheme and monitoring the effective use of funds raised by such a scheme.

#### 6.2 Members’ Reports to the Board/Committee

Organisations are encouraged to report briefly on their recent activities and draw to the attention of the SWB/PWC any issues that they consider may have local, national or international significance, ideally by submitting a written report in advance. Such reports will be attached to the agenda in order that other members may consider the issues and/or make recommendations. In the absence of a written report members will be encouraged to verbally report matters of interest.

**6.3 IPWP Reports to the Board/Committee**

The IPWP will disseminate information at meetings about its own activities as well as other matters it considers of interest. Issues of a more urgent nature will be circulated to all members between meetings, wherever possible by email.

#### 6.4 Capital and Start Up Grant Applications

All those maritime organisations making grants to other charities welcome, and will almost certainly require, the views of the local Seafarers’ Welfare Board/Port Welfare Committee on any proposed local capital or start up project. Those organisations might include the ITF Seafarers’ Trust and The Seafarers’ Charity (British and Commonwealth countries only). This might include proposals for the opening, closing or major refurbishment of any seafarers' facility within the area and for the provision of additional or replacement vehicles. The recommendations and/or comments of a board/committee will be forwarded to the appropriate potential donor charity, or charities.

Additionally, the board/committees should monitor the progress of any application and subsequent work until completion. It is important to understand that charities, making grants to organisations, set different deadlines and criteria. It is therefore recommended that details are submitted to the Secretary at an early stage in order to prevent any delays in the grant process.

The SWB/PWC members are asked to consider:

* Whether the proposal will benefit visiting seafarers and/or those domiciled in that area.
* Whether there may already be sufficient existing alternative welfare coverage provided either by the applicant or from another source.
* If an application is unsuccessful whether local seafarers' welfare provision will be adversely affected.
* Whether there are any alternative suggestions or recommendations.
* Whether the members can make any suggestions to improve the project outlined within the application.
* If a grant application is for funding towards an additional or replacement vehicle details of the usage including average numbers of seafarers transported (if applicable), age and mileage of any current vehicle along with any outstanding major repairs must be included. Consideration should also be given as to whether the new, or existing transport, within that area can be shared with other seafarers' charities.

The SWBs/PWCs are not empowered to either approve or veto any grant application. The ultimate decision will always be with the funding charity, or charities, to which an application has been made. Nevertheless, those charities recognise the unique value of local knowledge and will always take SWB/PWC comments into account as part of their decision making process.

#### 7. Conclusion

Great emphasis is placed upon the importance of National Seafarers' Welfare Boards and its Port Welfare Committees. The ongoing hard work, support of the many members and the time they give in support of seafarers' welfare is greatly valued and appreciated. Any feedback to improve and enhance their role is always welcome.

**Date:**

*Note: Ideally meetings should look to start at 11:00 and refreshments should be provided at the end of a meeting around 12:30. Apart from being a way of thanking members for their time, it also allows time for informal, but invaluable, networking. Members pay their own transport costs to and from meeting and many make contributions to the cost of venue (usually provided free) and refreshments.*