

Notice No. MSN 13 (2024)**Date: 08.08.2024****Background**

Vessels operating in the Arabian Gulf in the hot summer period from June to October need to be aware of the extreme temperature crew will be expected to operate. Recent maritime investigations have highlighted serious problems related to heat exposure/exhaustion among vessel crews. High air temperature and humidity significantly increase the risk of heat-related illness, exacerbated by insufficient onboard air conditioning. These extreme conditions, combined with long work periods, have led to crew members collapsing and, in some cases, fatalities.

In line with the UAE's commitment to seafarers' rights, RAK Ports urgently call on vessel owners and operators to implement effective measures to mitigate these risks.

Key adherence points and recommendations

- **Crew welfare:** Ensure a comfortable working environment by providing adequate ventilation, air conditioning, shaded areas and hydration facilities.
- **Workload management:** Adjust crew workloads to accommodate extreme weather conditions, with a strong emphasis on safety.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Conduct educational campaigns to raise crew awareness about the risks associated with heat exhaustion and heatstroke, emphasising preventive measures.

- **Emergency procedures:** Establish and implement emergency protocols for the prompt treatment and evacuation of crew members affected by heat-related conditions.
- **Medical assistance:** Prompt medical intervention is essential in the event of heatstroke to prevent severe health consequences.
- **Medical Guides Onboard:** Maintain compliance with the STCW Code by having the necessary medical guides onboard.
- **Regulatory compliance:** Crew welfare is a regulatory mandate under the IMO, encompassing safety, health, and working condition standards for vessels. Ensuring compliance is crucial to protect crew from risks such as heat exhaustion.
- **Toolbox Talks and briefings:** Ensure crew are briefed and well prepared before they go to mooring stations. At RAK Ports Mooring Operations, including channel transit, should not take more than 1 hour 30 minutes. Be prepared to discuss timings with Pilot.
- **Risk assessment:** Ensure heat has been factored into risk assessments.

Following a serious incident involving a fatality, the investigation report by the Malta Marine Safety Investigation Unit notes that:

“On-site treatment of heat stroke is crucial and should include, (most importantly) rapid, effective, and continuous cooling, rapid rehydration, and effective control of restlessness and convulsions. For cooling, the casualty of a heat stroke should be moved to a cooler place, have their clothing removed, and external cooling methods should be applied, such as: cold packs on the neck, armpit and groin; continuous fanning; and spraying of the skin with water of temperature between 25 °C to 30 °C.”

Note for Marine Agents: Marine Agents are requested to promptly share this notice with all relevant parties and vessels they serve, drawing their immediate attention to the instructions and recommendations outlined herein.

Capt. Michael Magee

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