

**Good Practice Guide for Shipping Companies and Manning Agents for the  
Humanitarian Support of Seafarers' Families      November 2013**

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## **1. Introduction**

The recent events in the Philippines have inevitably had a huge impact on the Maritime Industry and the Filipino Seafarers who serve on board global vessels. While acknowledging the actions of governments, the United Nations and the International Maritime Organisation, and International Labour Organisation the shipping industry has recognised that assistance may be required to support seafarers and their families.

Recent events have meant that Seafarers on board global vessels share the concerns of their families often with a feeling of helplessness.

Seafarers, obviously, play a pivotal role in providing remittances and support to their families who often live in outlying areas and provinces, many of which are without power and communications.

Recognising all of these factors, partner organisations representing shipowners, ship-managers, manning agents, unions, and welfare associations, have joined together to provide coordinated advice for issuance to shipping companies and manning agents.

The industry level coordination team has been built around:

- A task group of multi-disciplined, international experts from various different seafarer welfare organisations
- Fact finding and experience of other difficult humanitarian situations
- Interviews with seafarers and families worldwide following similar situations
- A 24 hour seafarers' international telephone helpline

Our shared concern for the well-being and welfare of seafarers and their families at this time underpins our work. In responding to the recent tragedy a seafarer who may personally have been affected or their family may need adequate pastoral and practical support. This publication suggests ways seafarers can be supported by companies and manning agents.

The guide may be more applicable to the needs of some companies than others and we are aware that many companies already have such plans in place and therefore may choose to use this publication as a checklist for current practice. Where a Company does not have a plan this document could be used to establish a plan of action.

It cannot be emphasised enough how good preparation will help a Company and ultimately, seafarers during a crisis period. However the recent situation would have been difficult for any organisation to have foreseen and so we are focussing this publication on steps that can be taken now. Consideration should be given to both the immediate 'relief aid' which can be done through the existing relief agencies and also the longer term needs that seafarers and their families will have once the immediate needs are replaced with longer terms need such as rebuilding housing or relocating etc.

Consideration would have to be made whether the 'relief aid' is targeted at seafarers' families or all those affected. There may be a danger in 'relief aid' of singling out a particular group and so resentment from others of 'special' treatment. It is easier to target longer term assistance.

## **2 Seafarer Support**

Given the variety of different situations that the seafarers and their families may be facing it is important to recognise that the nature of a particular situation will have a significant impact on a seafarer and their **families**. Each situation is unique to the individual involved and can be traumatic if the seafarer feels isolated or does not know how to get hold of information from home. Seafarers who have been affected may be apprehensive in bad weather conditions due to fear of what might happen.

Seafarers have concerns for their families and how they are coping at this difficult time.

The increasing geographical size and scope of the disaster area presents challenges and lack of accurate information is causing anxiety.

Seafarers may feel they are 'worthless' as individuals and unable to make a valuable contribution to their families at the current time. Such thoughts provoke feelings of helplessness.

Some things that help reassure seafarers and could be considered include:

- Knowledge of the Company's policies and what assistance is available.
- Identification of the exact geographical area affected.
- Updated news of the crisis and the response.
- Free access to make a 5 minute call home or to relatives who may be able to find out more for them. Recognising that all seafarers will want to make early contact the initial calls may need to be limited in length. Priority should be given to all those in the affected areas but all seafarers who have family potentially affected should be encouraged to call home.
- Access to email and social media to try to keep in touch with loved ones at home.
- Coordination by the manning agency or shipping family in trying to contact seafarers currently on leave and seafarers families in order to be able to relay accurate information to their crews.
- The manning agent should assign someone in the Philippines office to try to make contact with seafarers' families or relief agencies or to consult the official whereabouts lists. The captain should be given clear advice as to how to gently break the news and to console those affected if necessary.

- Permission should be given to seafarers who are affected to visit seafarers' centres in port or to talk to welfare visitors on board the vessel. They may not wish to talk to their colleagues about their concerns or feel this could be seen to negatively impact onboard morale.
- Permission where possible to meet Filipinos on board other vessels to share information.
- Seafarers having Knowledge of a Company plan to communicate with and provide family support if required.
- Knowledge of the commitment from the Company/ manning agent that wages/remittances will continue to be paid in these difficult times.
- Suggestions of resistance measures such as spirituality, optimism, the ability to remain calm and emotional self-control may help.
- Emphasis on empathetic leadership skills is important. It is important. Leadership and team cohesiveness are critical to create a supportive environment in such situations.

The Company should also bear in mind:

- "The need to survive" is the initial basic instinct alongside a readiness to fight for personal safety and freedom. This is also true of the actions of people ashore which may cause concerns as reports of looting and violence emerge. News reports will heighten anxiety in this regard and so focus on the positive efforts of the Filipino Government and aid agencies is key.
- Seafarers may feel initial reactions including, Shock, Fear, Anger, a Sense of unreality a Sense of immediate physical vulnerability.
- These are well recognised 'normal' reactions to incidents (Appendix 1A).
- Seafarers may have a loss of trust in others on board and ashore.
- Seafarers should be encouraged to have a chat about their experiences.
- A review of the personal circumstances of each crew member should be conducted by the Master and monitored over coming months.

Consideration should be given to organising an appropriate event or activity for the crew to create a positive environment whilst recognising that some crew members will not feel like partying. Quizzes, cheerful films etc may help to delicately raise morale when the immediate crisis has been contained.

It should be noted that many seafarers will seek solace in their religious faith traditions and should be provided opportunities for prayer, mass or other forms of observance. Local seafarer centres should be contacted to offer these experiences.

Seafarers' experiences will vary greatly and so not all situations can be addressed. The level to which basic needs are being met to ensure survival dominates the early stages. This has a major impact on the seafarers' ability

to adjust and cope. Seafarers may think that the Company considers survival of either themselves or their families as unimportant. So showing you care at an early stage with concerted follow up will be appreciated.

News reports of violence and looting will heighten anxiety. Seafarers may also be anxious about fair prioritisation of resources in affected communities. Focus on positive efforts of the Filipino Government and aid agencies is key.

Those immediately affected will experience a general lack of usual hygiene practices if for example soap, toothpaste and other toiletries and toilet and domestic water supply are unavailable assistance in providing these basics to seafarers' families will be appreciated.

Seafarers' families may suffer illness due to a lack of, or no:

- Access to prescribed medication for established medical conditions.
- Immunisation or prophylactic medication appropriate for protection against prevalent diseases in the geographical areas

Those affected may experience the fear or reality of:

- Mental and physical anguish
- Food deprivation and dehydration.

Seafarers will be concerned how their families are coping and will worry about financial and other implications. They will share reactions at moments of elation on hopes of positive news, and collective despair when such hopes are dashed. This constitutes the 'ups and downs' of emotional survival, and can build a unique bonding process forming part of the recovery process.

The Company should have an increased awareness that:

- the crews' physical needs to be met
- delay in offering appropriate support can be detrimental.
- they may need to help provide prescribed medication for established medical conditions.
- communications with the families may prove very difficult but this should not prevent them trying all available options to make contact.
- Peer support within a group of seafarers can be key, exercised through a shared perspective and constant sensitivity to each other's individual current moods, cultures and beliefs.
- Special attention should be given to the effect on seafarers if friends, families and colleagues have died or are missing.
- Returning home may be difficult for those with no home to which to return.

- The full psychological impact of actions may only be fully realised after a seafarer has reached home or through the passage of time. Reactions may not surface for months, even a year after the crisis as the full impact of the event is realised.

### **3. Practical needs of a seafarer**

Below are some practical actions to be taken once seafarers return home:

- The seafarers need to resume their normal routines and duties. A sense of normality will help them but be aware of dangerous work as they may be distracted and not fully able to concentrate.
- Seafarers should have direct communication with family members as soon as possible. Recognising all crew members will wish to make early contact, initial calls may, of necessity, be restricted to a short duration of approximately 3 minutes. Seafarers should be encouraged not to talk about the incident but about themselves and their families. Further communication with families should be made available when possible.

The Company should consider:

If a Seafarer has been badly affected by their home being destroyed, family injured, missing or deceased.

Consideration should be given to support of that seafarer when they receive the news or that the news is broken carefully to the seafarers.

- The company should consider early repatriation and ensure he receives his salary as appropriate to assist him in returning home and assisting his family. Otherwise he will face the dilemma of staying on board to earn money to help the family or going home to support them with no income.
- Sending a message to all seafarers acknowledging the ordeals experienced and confirming the Company's continuing support.
- Providing fresh food and drinking water where possible to affected families.
- Providing basic essentials such as disinfectants, cleaning materials and toiletries where possible.

### **4 Practical needs of seafarers upon arrival in port**

- Where a Company has personnel trained to provide practical and emotional support to crew members it should be made available. Some will want to discuss their concerns while others will prefer not to. Both reactions are normal and should be respected.
- Most seafarer centres have trained welfare workers available who are capable of listening and guiding seafarers as they respond to the crisis at home.
- Hospital, medical and dental treatment should be given as appropriate.

- The Company should explain repatriation and payment arrangements if appropriate. Take time to fully explain the reason for actions required.
- Further communication with families should be made available.
- Clothing for use once home might be provided, taking into account that such supplies at home may have been lost.

## **5. Practical needs of seafarers arriving in the Philippines**

Where there are a group of returnees, they should stay together as much as possible in the initial days. Peer support which may have been of key importance when news broke will be required to cope with changes faced at home.

A safe and secure initial post-return environment should be provided. Some companies fly key family members to the site of repatriation (usually in their home country) and allow time for them to be together before the journey home.

In considering relevant actions in each situation several practical actions are suggested once seafarers arrive back in their own country:

- Assistance given to arrive freely through immigration and customs with ease and without delay.
- Medical examination.
- Introduction to support personnel.
- Company update on payments.
- Dignified and private re-union with family members.

Where possible seafarers should be able to talk freely or use available support resources, such as Welfare Workers, representatives of faith-based organisations or Union representatives, who can assist in completing important legal papers related to compensation, and other benefits. Independent advice can be helpful.

## **6. On-going care of seafarers**

Psychological reactions to traumatic experiences can occur within days, weeks or months of an incident. The probability exists for re-stimulation of reactions when a sensory reminder such as similar smells and sounds occur. Some psychological reaction is normal. Problems during recovery will resolve over time given appropriate support from family, colleagues, the Company and other support organisations. Access to additional competent support may be necessary.

A small minority may develop post-traumatic psychological reactions requiring treatment including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, anxiety disorders or substance misuse problems requiring professional

assessment and treatment from a Psychologist, Psychiatrist or other mental health professional (see Appendix 1F).

Increased stress for seafarers and family members may be reported when seafarers return to work and when travelling home. Seafarers may avoid seeking help for fear of their future employment.

## **7. Provision of the Family Liaison Representative**

Suggested essential criteria are:

- Based at Company offices or elsewhere with good access to a variety of communications tools with 24-hour accessibility.
- Well established within the Company system and respected for their integrity in their dealings with all parties including seafarers.
- Appreciates the sensitivity required to deal with the issues involved.
- Sensitive to, and has an understanding of, the local culture and language of the families involved.
- Being accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to family members during the period of identified need which may be required for many months.
- Able to access legal advice and discuss this on behalf of the Company.
- Appreciates the need for confidentiality and respecting legal, financial and ethical boundaries to be maintained between the Company and family members if trust is to be developed and unrealistic expectations are to be minimised.

Suggested criteria for the appointed Family Liaison Representative:

Willingness to enhance their existing skills and seek further training associated with their tasks as a Family Liaison Representative.

The training should include understanding normal reactions to crisis situations, being able to communicate with those who are traumatised and dealing with situations when giving bad news. • Recognises the importance of seeking out and maintaining links with other local, regional, and international resources including professional support.

The role of the Family Liaison Representative is to provide

- contact information
- The follow-up calls.
- The boundaries of confidentiality.
- Encourage the Family Contact to get in touch with the Family Liaison Representative for information if they hear rumours or via the media.



- Prepare a complete file of all employee and family data either in hardcopy or stored electronically to be easily accessed at a time of crisis. This should contain copies of any agreed protocols and a simple record sheet for contacts and phone calls made by the Family Liaison Representative. (As outlined in Appendix 7).

## **8. Development of an Action Plan in the Event of an Incident**

In the event of an incident preparations should make the next steps easier.

- Activate a Family Liaison Representative service as soon as possible.
- Make every effort to be the first to contact the family of the seafarer before they hear from another source.
- Make contact by telephone and/or in person where appropriate. Where the family does not have access to a telephone, contact should be made with a local support agency, such as an appropriately trained welfare association representative, a faith-based organisation or union official, who may transport the Family Contact to a telephone or carry an initial message to the family until the Company can make contact.
- Be clear as to what the Family Liaison Representative or delegated representative can/ cannot say - use the prepared script for initial contact to ensure essential facts are given. (See Appendix 5).
- Ensure the Family Liaison Representative clearly explains who they are.
- Establish that the right person is being spoken to by asking a few questions. This is particularly necessary in cultures where first names are often passed down through different generations of a family. Some questions to ask may be; Can you please advise me how you know x ?, Is there anybody else in your family who has the same name as you such as your father or grandfather etc....?
- If the nominated Family Contact is not available ask when/where they can be contacted. Only leave a message that you are trying to contact them, do not disclose the reason for the call and/or visit. Ring back at the time suggested.
- Keep the first contact factual and concise. Promise to speak to the Family Contact again within a short period and support them in the initial call.
- Recognise that they may be shocked and unable to absorb the conversation. Suggest that they might like to prepare questions for your next contact.

The Family Liaison Representative should:

- Make the promised phone call at the time agreed. This is important to demonstrate promises will be honoured and to establish trust.
- Allow the Family Contact time for preparation of questions.
- Encourage questions and try to answer these as openly and honestly as the incident permits. Any questions that cannot be answered

should be identified as such and an appropriate response given.

- Write down any queries or anxieties expressed by the Family Contact.
- Listen with empathy.
- Thoroughly note what was discussed during the call/visit
- It is advisable to have several designated Family Liaison Representatives involved per case. This means that if one is unavailable when the Family Contact calls, a second Representative can take the call, advise the family and deal with issues. The second Representative should be identified to the Family Contact from the start and be kept fully appraised 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 contacts. Both Liaison Representatives should keep accurate records of all calls and update each other to ensure that both are fully aware of the latest discussions with the family.
- Recognise that affected families may well be communicating with each other and consider the value of facilitating such communications.
- Regular contact with the Family Contact should be established and maintained. At the start of an incident daily contact may be essential. If there is a prolonged period of trauma then appropriately agreed timed contact periods should be established. Research suggests continuity of contact is best to control rumour and relieve additional stress. Family members involved in past incidents have advised that being told why there is no progress is easier to accept if explanations are given.
- Regular contact is valued even if a message is not positive
- The Company may become the focus of increased anger from the family and the seafarer, if the seafarer is unable to make contact with home.
- The Family Liaison Representative may be able to support the family with anxieties over illness or when other distressing incidents occur.
- Family members should be reminded to include children, if age appropriate, in information given about the situation that is occurring.
- Behavioural problems with children could be discussed with the Family Liaison Representative. Often a sympathetic ear can help as can accessing specialist help for the family if appropriate.

## **9 Role of the Family Liaison Representative at the Time of Repatriation**

When the seafarer is due to return home the Family Liaison Representative should ensure that the family contact is notified

- Every effort should be made to allow a repatriating seafarer to phone their family as soon as possible. Families should be advised that further contact

will be made by them, or the Company, when more arrangements are established as to where, when and how repatriation will take place.

- The Family Liaison Representative should be fully involved as the link with the family throughout this period. Trust gained in the 'difficult times' will be important.
- The Family Liaison Representative should endeavour to discuss with the Family Contact how to handle the actual homecoming and the possible psychological reactions for the seafarer.
- Family members should be reminded to include children, if appropriate, in preparations for the homecoming and at the actual time of reunion.
- The Family Liaison Representative should be available for continued contact but respect the family's need for space to reconnect.
- The Family Liaison Representative should discuss with Company senior management any potential on-going support in the way of financial, medical, and legal advice. They should also discuss if their role as Family Liaison Representative will be continued and if so for how long.
- The Family Liaison Representative can provide a valuable link to the family with the arrangements for a medical examination and other support.

Good practice does not end when an incident ends. It is useful to make a full report of the incident and note what the Company has learnt from the experience. This should be shared within the Company and used to adjust future incident plans. It is worthwhile to encourage the family to provide feedback as well.

Should there be a need for advice at a later stage, confidential support can be gained through 'Seafarerhelp' contact numbers available at [www.seafarerhelp.org](http://www.seafarerhelp.org)

## **Appendix 1**

a- The Three R's

Resistance - the form of psychological/behavioural immunity to the impact of distress

Resilience - the ability of an individual, a group, an organisation 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 R's of Resistance, Resilience and Recovery can help in thinking through the issues. It also identifies that in the pre-deployment stage some preparation, and the supply of relevant information, can help build

resilience to traumatic stress, if required, during an incident. The ability to be more resilient to stresses during an incident can enhance ability to recover from an incident in the aftermath. The three R's are applicable to both seafarers and their family members. Identifying the three R's whilst defining the continuum of reactions helps integrate the two concepts.

#### b - Maslow Hierarchy of Needs (adapted)

This identifies the factors which motivate human beings and contribute to their sense of mental well-being. Maslow suggests that the most important issues form the base of this 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 that of Safety with the features of security, stability and freedom from fear.

The further levels indicate higher levels of motivation which could be described as quality motivators. These are desirable but not essential for basic survival. These may form part of deprivation experienced.

The pyramid can also apply to the needs of a seafarers' families. Methods of support provided to both Seafarers and their family members should aim to re-establish all the motivators identified in the Maslow Triangle.

#### c - 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 as they may carry a sense of guilt of survival when others may have died. This reaction may be hard to understand for those people, such as family members, not directly involved in the situation where deaths may have occurred. Survivor Syndrome phenomenon has occurred in relation to groups such as Holocaust survivors, returning Vietnam veterans and survivors from disasters.

If fatalities result, survivors may experience death guilt. This can manifest itself in such questions as 'Why did I survive when x died?'. Survivors may have difficulty dealing with relatives of the deceased 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 rationalise any actions taken or not taken. Did the survivor's own rescue mean others were sacrificed?

Charles Figley in, Stress disorders among Vietnam veterans (1978) states these questions relate to a sense of organic social balance: 'That image of exchange of one life for another is perhaps the survivor's greatest psychological burden.' He also noted deep distrust by the survivor of anyone offering help. Survivors felt set apart from others by a sort of 'death taint'. Even where survivors recognised a need for help, they rejected 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 the survivors seeking help and reassurance from others involved. Self-help through contact with other seafarers involved in the same incident 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 key where there have been fatalities. The possibility of this syndrome indicates the benefit of keeping the crew together for a short period of time 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 multi-national nature of crews and dispersal to different countries to travel home. An understanding of this by those involved in support may assist in the overall recovery of the person involved.

#### **d Crisis Management Techniques**

Many crisis intervention technique models exist and it is important that users fully understand the method, the underlying theoretical basis for the technique and possible impact of such models on seafarers and their family members made emotionally vulnerable by a traumatic incident.

Specific needs dictate the type of intervention required. These can range from active listening, information sharing and various methods of psychological first aid through to 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 being conducted. Practitioners using such techniques which address psychological reactions must be well trained in the appropriate model and adhere strictly to prescribed protocols. Those assisting should understand the 'normal' reactions expected following such an incident. Such reactions 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 level of competence and limitations. Understanding of these issues should ensure a Seafarer has access to appropriate help.

#### **Appendix 2 - Family Leaflet**

Back page A5 leaflet Your local contact person is:  
Other useful numbers:

Front cover A5 leaflet FAMILY SUPPORT Relevant Company Logo

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- \* ISWAN
- Mission to Seafarers
- \* Apostleship of the Sea
- \* Sailors Society

SeafarerHelp...the lifeline for seafarers FREE HELP | CONFIDENTIALMULTI-LINGUAL | 24x7 [www.seafarerhelp.org](http://www.seafarerhelp.org) +44 (0) 7624 818 405 [help@seafarerhelp.org](mailto:help@seafarerhelp.org)  
+44 207 323 2737(request call back)  
[www.seafarerhelp.org](http://www.seafarerhelp.org) SMS Email FreePhone Live Chat

Appendices | Appendix 2

Left centre page A5 leaflet SOMEONE TO TALK TO .....

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

**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.
- Reawakening other situations of stress experienced in the past.
- A sense of being overwhelmed by your reactions, by those around you or the media.
- An inability to 'unwind' and relax 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' nomination of Family Contact Person**

Nomination of a Family Contact In Case Of Emergency

Please insert the name and contact details for your nominated person that 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, eg. 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

ORGANISATIONCONTACT PERSON

(TEL)

SUPPORT

AVAILABLE WHEN AND POSSIBLE DURATION Seafarers Mission23 Pier Road

The PortFather JoeCentre 03212121Mobile 09121212Home 032212121Sister MaryMobile 096565656

Counselling by Sister Mary,

contact with international seafarers' agencies24 hours a day

O.ce 9 -5pm

On holiday Aug 10th -20th

**Appendix 5 - Family Liaison Representative, first call script**

FIRST CALL/ VISIT

Is that \_\_\_\_\_ speaking? (check name)

Are you \_\_\_\_\_ ? (check basic detail)

I am \_\_\_\_\_ (state name and organisation clearly)

I am contacting you on behalf of \_\_\_\_\_ (Company or named person)

We have just been told that your

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I can advise that we are working hard 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.

**Appendix 6 - Family Liaison Representative, second call script**

## SECOND CALL/VISIT

Is that \_\_\_\_\_ speaking? (check name)

This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling again (state 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 7 - Letter templates**

Below are two templates for letters which could be used in liaison work with a family involved in an incident.

Template 1 is to be used at the time of notification of an incident.

Template 2 is to be used at the time of repatriation of a seafarer.

The contents of these documents may be adapted to match the particular situation. Companies are encouraged to try to personalise these by inserting the appropriate names of the seafarer, the family and the Family Liaison Representative.

The letters should be prepared as separate documents to enable them to be used at the appropriate time.

Template 1 - Letter to be used at time of notification of an incident

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

PRINTED ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD

Dear x

Insert a paragraph expressing the concerns of the CO of the Company and how much the Company regrets what has happened. Assure the family of the Company's support. Personalise this paragraph by including the seafarer's name.

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 you have identified the Family Liaison Representative refer to them by name in the rest of the letter and in any future correspondence e.g. you should telephone Sheila.

As has already been explained to you during the phone call or visit (delete as appropriate), we will try to keep you informed whenever there is any verified news. In the initial stages of an incident contact can be sporadic and limited. We are all at the beginning of what can be a prolonged process. It is not unusual in these situations for there to be periods of time when there is little news to be shared.

It would help us if you nominate one family member, the Family Contact, who should be the point of contact for the Family Liaison Representative. The Family Contact can then pass the information on to other family members and friends which will allow the information to pass quickly. Please advise the Family Liaison Representative as to who this shall be. Please do not believe rumours that you may hear from colleagues, other families, contact us directly and we will try to help.

You will undoubtedly think of many questions you need to ask us. Please write them down and when you next speak to the Family Liaison Representative they will try to answer these questions.

Based on the experiences of other families who have found themselves in a similar situation please bear in mind the following:

After the initial news of an incident there can be a period when there is little news. This can be a time of great uncertainty and anxiety for both the seafarer and their family.

What can you do to help?

- Trust your Family Liaison Representative,
- Tell key people in your family what has happened.
- Appoint someone as the Family Contact who will be the first point of contact for the Family Liaison Representative. If you don't wish to do this yourself appoint a family member whom you trust. 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 on the situation.
- Maintain your daily routine where possible. Eat regular meals and maintain sleep patterns to preserve the health of you and your family.
- Keep hope alive but maintain realistic expectations of when you will hear news so that they are brought up-to-date with family news. Young children may enjoy drawing a weekly picture of their activities to share.
- It might assist to record people you have spoken to and a list of contacts made. This also can be shared with insert your seafarer on their return.

- 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.
- Contact with any trusted friends or other source of support such as your faith community or union representative.

Template 2 - Letter to be used to contact the family of a seafarer advising when they will be able to return home to support the family.

PRINTED ON COMPANY LETTERHEAD

Dear personal names,

Insert a paragraph confirming the release of the vessel and the obvious relief it is to the Company and express thanks to the family members for their support through this difficult time. Personalise this paragraph by including the seafarer's name.

Explain what will happen to seafarers before arrive home:

- that they are sailing to x
- assure the families that you will arrange for a short telephone contact from the crew members to the family as quickly as is possible
- explain that arrangements for repatriation will be shared with the family as soon as they are confirmed
- give assurance that the Family Liaison Representative is available for advice

What you can do to prepare for the homecoming

- Make sure that accurate information is verified by the Company.
- Listen carefully to the arrangements which have been made for the repatriation of the seafarers. It may help to write them down.
- Efforts will be made to provide the seafarers with phones to try to contact you as soon as possible. The initial calls may be limited in time so that all crew members have a chance to call their families.
- While we are sure that a seafarer and family members will be relieved to be together again, it is not unusual for a person who has experienced a frightening experience to need some time to relax and to realise that 'it is over' and 'they are safe'.
- Do not be surprised if the seafarer seems a little withdrawn from all the celebrations and needs some quiet time alone or just with close family. This time is necessary in order to adjust to the situation and to think through past experiences

- The seafarers may choose to tell you all about their experiences but do not be surprised if they keep some things from you. This is not because they do not trust you but that they may have some memories which are painful for them and they do not want to add to your stress at this time.
- Please try to understand that x does not love you less but may need time to get back to normal after his/her experiences. This can be especially difficult for children to understand and they may need special consideration by you during this time.
- Returning to normal life may take time but if you feel it is a problem which needs some further support discuss it with the Family Liaison Representative who may be able to get additional support for you.
- Do not feel that if anyone needs additional support at this difficult time that this is proof of mental illness. Given the extraordinary experience everyone experienced it is not unusual to have some reactions. Getting appropriate help early will make transition easier to cope with.
- Any medical problems should be dealt with so keep in touch with the Family Liaison Representative if you need any on-going advice.
- Every effort will be made to restore you and your family to your normal way of life and for insert name of seafarer to resume their work pattern following a period of rest and time to readjust.
- If you have any legal or financial problems, the Family Liaison Rep will be able to guide you towards sources of appropriate advice. You may also think of contacting your union official for their support with these issues.

**Appendix 8 - Log of call made to Family Contact**

LOG OF CALL MADE

Date: Call to:  
 Time:  
 Relationship to seafarer? Call by:  
 Content of call:  
 Questions raised by relative:  
 Date and time of next call arranged for:

Actions to be taken:

General observations on level of distress, coping, etc.

Comments re. family or support being utilised:

**9. Further information**

ISWAN and the various missions will coordinate the response effort and liaise with maritime medics, ministers, those on the ground etc. Details of all seafarer centres can be found online at the ICMA and ISWAN websites.

1. The missions are all being encouraged to make free access available to phone cards, internet etc for Filipino seafarers worried about families at home.
2. All chaplains around the world will be mobilised to offer a friendly ear and to talk to concerned seafarers who are worried about their family and friends.
3. Amosup and the NSA are sending their training vessel over the coming months with UN aid and will be seconded to take further aid for the next few months. ITF will find out what assistance they may need in this regard.
4. The NSA Training Centre is co-ordinating efforts on the ground and we will be finding out if there is any practical support being officially requested.
5. Please do not send people or funds immediately to help unless a specific request is sent for specific skills or personnel. We will try to coordinate this as a central group. Until the Filipino authorities know themselves what is needed and how best this can be achieved we should wait.
6. ICMA will coordinate amongst themselves to organise fundraising and which agencies will be best capable of delivering this on the ground.
7. If you hear of any seafarers who need to talk please encourage them to contact either the ISWAN helpline 0080073232737 or to contact the missions in the respective ports who will do all they can to offer practical assistance.
8. We understand many seafarers and seafarers families have been badly affected losing their homes, schools and livelihoods. We also understand some training schools have been devastated.
9. List of casualties (dead, injured, missing) from Government of Philippines <http://www.gov.ph/crisis-response/updates-typhoon-yolanda/casualties/>
10. KVH are providing free calls for Filipino seafarers via sat phones onboard
11. Companies wishing to donate to the Seafarers Emergency Fund to provide free communications for Filipino seafarers away from home can email [iswan@iswan.org.uk](mailto:iswan@iswan.org.uk) or phone +44 (0) 300 012 4279.
12. Individuals wanting to donate can do so via the Mission to Seafarers, Sailors Society, or Apostleship of the Sea websites
13. The World Health Organisation have advised us that there is no specific medical advice for seafarers who may be asked to provide relief support to the affected areas that is unique to this situation. However, being up to date with vaccinations is always key.

The following online resources are available for those who need further information:

- \* People finder service via Google - <http://google.org/personfinder/2013-yolanda/>
- \* Free telephone calls to landlines/mobiles from the Philippines with viber <http://viber.com/typhoon>
- \* Reliable sources of news - <http://mashable.com/2013/11/09/typhoon-haiyan-philippines-2/>
- \* Crisis map of the disaster - <http://google.org/crisismap/a/gmail.com/TyphoonYolanda>
- \* Philippine Red Cross family tracing service - +63 (0)9179519711, + 63 (0)9154940415

Other websites

SeafarerHelp [www.seafarerhelp.org](http://www.seafarerhelp.org)  
 Mission to Seafarers [www.missiontoseafarers.org](http://www.missiontoseafarers.org)  
 Sailors Society [www.sailors-society.org/](http://www.sailors-society.org/)

Apostleship to the Sea [www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk](http://www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk)  
International Maritime Health Association [www.imha.net](http://www.imha.net)

Updated information will appear on the ISWAN website at  
[www.seafarerswelfare.org](http://www.seafarerswelfare.org)

For further information contact Roger Harris at ISWAN on  
roger.harris@iswan.org.uk tel +44 (0)7785 275204 or Natalie Shaw at ISF/ICS  
at [natalie.shaw@ics-shipping.org](mailto:natalie.shaw@ics-shipping.org).