



**SEAFARERS GUIDE  
UNITED KINGDOM**

# Seafarers joining ships in the UK where the 1958 convention applies.

A seaman travelling on duty, who is a visa national (including those in transit through the UK) does not need a visa if he holds a valid seaman's book issued by a country which has ratified the 1958 International Labour Organisation (ILO) seafarers identity documents convention No. 108.

The document must contain a statement confirming that it is issued under ILO108 (or convention of 1958) or ILO185, having previously ratified ILO108 (or convention of 2003).

The countries which fall under the convention are:

Algeria, Anguilla, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Bermuda, Brazil, British Virgin Isles, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, Iceland, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Moldova (Republic of), Montserrat, Morocco, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Seychelles, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Sweden, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom (including the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar), Uruguay.

The document must state that it is issued under the convention. However, the holder does not need to be a national of that country that issued the document, and can also be a stateless person in order to be considered visa exempt.

Note: The crew member will also require a valid Passport.

If the crew member is remaining on board the vessel, they are permitted to move between UK ports without a visa. However, they cannot ordinarily join a vessel that operates routinely within territorial waters. For example, a fishing vessel. If it is the case that the vessel is required to make multiple stops at UK ports throughout its voyage this is permitted within the rules pertaining to their rights as crew under the ILO.

Latest updates from UKBA can be found here:

[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/carriers/ukvisarequirements.pdf](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/documents/policyandlaw/carriers/ukvisarequirements.pdf)

For None-UK crew members, where the above applies, Inchcape Shipping will raise an 'OK To Board' form accordingly, containing vessel name, crew member information and flight details. The crew should carry this document with them when travelling to the UK, to assist with clearance through check in at the airport of departure, and through local border force / immigration upon arrival in the UK.

**Please note – Inchcape Shipping Services will not lodge the “OK To Board” in to the airline systems. This is the responsibility of the crewing operators or travel / booking agent.**

## Seafarers joining a ship in the UK where the 1958 convention does NOT apply

It is recommended, that any crew not in possession of an ILO 108 ratified seamans book – apply for a UK Visa for joining a vessel, via the UK Embassy in their home country.

Inchcape Shipping Services can assist with the Visa application by providing a Letter of Invitation, detailing the vessel and crew members details. Please enquire for further information.



## Seafarers departing a vessel from the UK.

Since the 01<sup>st</sup> January 2021, any non-British crew member repatriating from a vessel in the UK requires reporting outwards to the local border and immigration office, prior to disembarkation from the vessel.

In order to receive the permission to disembark, Inchcape Shipping will require the following:

- 1) A copy of the vessel's full arrival crew list (C97 / FAL5).
- 2) A scan copy of the departing crew members Passport and Seaman's book.
- 3) Departing crew members flight details.

This information will then be forwarded to the local border force office, in order permission to disembark be granted.

**For EU/EEA/Swiss crew** – the permission to enter will be returned by the local border force office by email, confirming the crew may disembark accordingly.

**For non EU crew members** – a repatriation clearance form will be returned from the local border force office. This form will permit the crew member 'leave to enter' for up to 7 days from disembarkation. A copy of the repatriation clearance will be passed to the vessel's captain by hand or by email prior to the departing crew members disembarkation. The departing crew member should keep a copy of this form with them.



# COVID-19 Information for Seafarers

## Quarantine

Seamen and master's as defined in section 313 of the Merchant Shipping Act travelling To / From the UK are exempt from any quarantine measures.

## Passenger Locator Form

Any crew member, of any nationality, arriving from outside of the UK to join a vessel will need to fill in the governments 'passenger locator form' online. This is applicable even though crew are exempt from the quarantine itself.

The form can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/provide-journey-contact-details-before-travel-uk>

The form must be completed within 48hrs of arrival to the UK (not any earlier). A receipt will be generated upon completion, of which the joining crew member should either keep a printed copy or have access to show the receipt on their mobile phone at border control.

## Travel Ban Update – 19/03/2021

Please note that with effect from 0400 hrs, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021, all seafarers, irrespective of nationality, will be exempted from Red List (banned) country restrictions. Most notably the mandatory hotel quarantine. Hence seafarers who have been in Red List countries in the 10 days preceding their arrival in the UK will be able to enter the UK to join their ships, take shore leave and/or return home without the need to spend 10 days in managed quarantine or be tested for Covid-19 after their arrival (subject to length of time spent in England – as per Lateral Flow Test update below).

## Lateral Flow Test Update

If arriving from an Amber or Red listed country, when in England for more than 2 days, you are required to undertake lateral flow tests (LFTs) on days 2, 5 and 8. Full guidance can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules/coronavirus-covid-19-travellers-exempt-from-uk-border-rules#seamen-and-masters-and-inspectors-and-surveyors-of-ships>

"You do not need to take a coronavirus test before you travel to England if you are a seafarer or fisherman, inspector or surveyor of ships due to work on a vessel or need to transit the UK to join or leave a vessel. You should show a valid SID if you have one.

From 6 April and when in England for more than 2 days, you are required to undertake lateral flow tests (LFTs) on days 2, 5 and 8."

On this basis, any crew who will have a stay of over 48 hrs in England (between landing and joining the vessel or between leaving the vessel and flying) will require an LFT arranging. Crew would have to be taken to the nearest LFT site for testing. Please be aware this would then lead to additional transportation being required for crew.

LFT testing is not necessary if arriving from a green listed country.

Please note – the above procedure is currently in place for crew staying within England only. Scotland and Wales are yet to provide guidance with regards to LFT procedures, however it is expected they may follow a similar process in due course.

## Red List Country Update - 17/05/2021 – Cruise Vessel Crew

With regards to any crew who have been in a red list country in the 10 days before arriving in England.

If you are travelling to the UK to work on a cruise ship, or are returning to the UK from working on a cruise ship, you need to quarantine in a government approved hotel and take a COVID-19 test on day 2 and day 8.

More information regarding the government approved hotels can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/booking-and-staying-in-a-quarantine-hotel-when-you-arrive-in-england>

# COVID-19 Information for Seafarers Flight and Hotel Restrictions

## **Flight restrictions and Covid Testing**

Due to ever increasing numbers of Covid variants around the world, some nations have implemented travel bans to restrict flights arriving in their countries from the other parts of the world, including the UK.

On this basis we would suggest any offsigner's flights are checked with local travel agents, to be certain no connecting flights and/or destination flights are to be cancelled, or additional measures are requested by the airlines prior to boarding (such as PCR / Covid testing).

If a PCR / COVID test is required prior to departing, we can try and source these for disembarking crew.

As per UK Government announcement, the intention is that travelers arriving into the UK will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test taken up to 72 hours prior to departure.

Seamen and Masters, Inspectors and Surveyors of vessels are exempt from testing requirements. However, some specific airlines do require this and again we would suggest that this is checked with travel agents in advance.

Please see following link for full guidance on COVID testing requirements which is now published.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-people-travelling-to-england>

## **Hotel Restrictions**

There may be challenges locating adequate hotel availability for crew members, as the number of rooms available are reduced, provided to key workers only. (Of which seafarers are considered included).

Hotel restaurants are closed in most case, bringing increasing challenges when arranging meals for crew. Where possible, take-away style meals are being arranged – with help from the hotel receptions.

However, we would recommend crewing managers advise crew to bring a means of payment with them when they travel, in order they can purchase meals via take-away services themselves, where assistance cannot be provided locally. We would also suggest that hotel stays be avoided where necessary – with crew ideally having flights that allow direct transfer between the vessel and the airport.

## Seafarers ‘visiting’ and ‘transiting’ the UK

Seafarers who are visa nationals, coming to the UK for 6 months or less for the following reasons, require a visa:

- private visits;
- travelling as passengers;
- signing on ship’s articles as supernumeraries at nominal rates of pay; or
- visiting as amateur yachtsmen.

Seafarers passing through the UK to join a ship in a port abroad must be dealt with as visitors in transit. As such, there are some stipulations regarding transit through the UK.

Crew would need valid Passport and holding a valid Seaman’s book from ILO 108 nation as well as any other documents to authenticate their seafarer status i.e. contract of employment etc.

ALL visa nationals seeking to transit the United Kingdom LANDSIDE without a visa must:

- arrive and depart by air;
- have a confirmed onward flight that departs before 23:59hrs the following day; and
- hold the correct documents for their destination (e.g. a visa for that country if required.)

As per the current government legislation, all crew entering the UK are required to complete the mandatory online passenger locator form, as outlined in the “COVID-19 Information for Seafarers” section above.

If required, Inchcape Shipping can provide a ‘Seafarer Support Letter’, to assist the crew during their transit via the UK. Please enquire for further information.



## Seafarers and work permits

Under paragraph 128 of the immigration rules, a seafarer will need a work permit to:

- join ferries operating between two UK ports, including ports in Northern Ireland, but not the Channel Islands or Isle of Man;
- join 'ro-ro' services between UK ports which carry twelve or more lorry drivers;
- join dredgers operating wholly or largely within UK waters; or
- join scheduled domestic freight services between UK ports.

Work permits are not required by the following:

- those joining ferry services to ports outside the UK, including ports in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man;
- those joining ships which will be operating out of a single UK port but where the voyage is primarily outside UK waters, for example, voyages to offshore installations, offshore dredging and dumping operations;
- entertainers, hairdressers and others not strictly crew members who are joining a ship to work on it during its voyage may be treated as contract seamen, that is, not needing work permits, provided you are satisfied that they are due to leave the UK on the ship's next sailing.

### Document History

This document will be reviewed at regular intervals and updated accordingly.  
The details of the revisions will be identified and recorded.

Revision	Details of Revision/s	By Whom	Date
Version 1.0	New document outlining current UK procedures for crew changes.	David Bennett	02/02/2021
Version 1.1	Seafarers exempt from travel ban as of the 19/03/2021	David Bennett	17/03/2021
Version 1.2	Lateral flow tests mandatory for crew members arriving in the UK.	David Bennett	08/04/2021
Version 1.3	Crew for cruise vessels required to quarantine if arriving from a red listed country. Lateral flow tests no longer required if arriving from a green listed country.	David Bennett	19/05/2021

