



How Collective Agreement (CA) members can apply to receive Retirement Pay under the RPP

Procedures on applying for Retirement Pay (under the Retirement Pay Plan or RPP)

You can send a letter, fax or email to the JSU head office (Oceangoing Seafarers Department, International Affairs Bureau) to apply for retirement pay. The JSU will examine your RPP records and if we decide that you are entitled to receive retirement pay, we will send the RPP application form to your home address.

Filipinos who are applying for their retirement pay can get an application at the Philippine Seafarers' Union (PSU) offices in the Philippines or by email from the JSU office in Tokyo. The email address is retirement_pay_plan@jsu.jp

An RPP member can receive retirement pay when he/she reaches the age of 50 after retiring from sea service permanently or if the member is no longer able to work as a seafarer because of injury, illness or death.

When a member retiring due to illness, injury or has died, the member's close relative will need to submit an Official Certificate proving the relationship between the recipient and the member.

Frequently Asked Questions for JSU-PSU CA Members

Question: What documents are required when I apply to receive Retirement Pay?

Answer: Formal letter requesting to receive your retirement pay, application form, copy of the Seafarer's handbook or passport and the receipts of retirement pay contributions from the owner.

Question: I lost some of the documents, will I still be able to receive my retirement pay?

Answer: If your seafarer's handbook or passport was lost, please submit another official certificate as proof of your identity and if the RPP receipts are also lost, then you may send a letter, fax or email



Top photo: Crewmembers ask questions about the JSU-AMOSUP Provident Fund.

Bottom photo: JSU non-domiciled special union members inquire on the flow for availing the Retirement Pay Plan.

to the JSU Head Office (address: 15-26, 7-Chome, Roppongi, Minato-Ku, Tokyo, Japan; fax # 81-3-5410-8336; email: retirement_pay_plan@jsu.jp with a request to re-issue the required receipts. The JSU will send the receipts to you but it takes several weeks for this to arrive.

Question: What is the process for receiving retirement pay?

Answer: After the JSU receives a request from an RPP member,

it will examine the members' records. If the JSU concludes that the member is entitled to receive retirement pay, the union will send an application form to the member. The member should complete the application form and return it to the JSU together with all necessary documentation. After the JSU receives the application form and documents, it will examine them. If there is no problem, the JSU will produce an Instruction of Payments of Retirement Pay

and order the remittance of your retirement pay to JSS (one of the secretariats with RPP oversight). JSS remit the retirement pay to the member's bank account. The complete process usually takes two to three months.

(Note: Filipino seafarers who are covered by any JSU-AMOSUP agreements are not covered by the RPP system. They are covered by the Provident Fund and as such have to apply at AMOSUP for re-

tirement pay. They have no other retirement benefit from JSU.)

Frequently Asked Questions for JSU-AMOSUP CBA Members

Question: I am a non-Japanese working onboard vessel covered by a JSU Agreement and have been paying the monthly UNION DUES of US\$40. When I retire, do I get retirement pay from JSU?

Answer: Every non-domicile JSU member pays UNION DUES, which are used to operate the union, not for a retirement fund. A separate US\$80 for every officer and US\$50 for every rating is deducted from their monthly pay to go into your retirement fund. Retirement pay depends on the type of JSU Agreement that covered the vessels on which you served.

If your vessel were covered by the **IBFJSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA, JSU/AMOSUP Advanced CBA for Japanese Flag**, then you are a member of JSU-AMOSUP Provident Fund. Please apply to AMOSUP for your retirement pay. No other retirement benefit is available to you from JSU.

If your vessel were covered by a **JSU/PSU Advanced CA for Japanese Flag**, the US\$50 intended for retirement pay is already included in your monthly wages. No other retirement pay will be received from the JSU.

If your vessel was covered by the **IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA, IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA**, then you are a member of the JSU Retirement Pay Plan (RPP) and you may apply through the JSU (in Tokyo, Japan) for retirement pay. Filipinos may also apply at Philippine Seafarers' Union (PSU) offices in the Philippines.

An **RPP member** can receive retirement pay when they reach the age of 50 and retires from sea service permanently or the member is no longer able to work as a seafarer because of injury, illness or death.

JSU-AMOSUP members are not included in the RPP.

For more information about Retirement Pay Plan (RPP), please email to retirement_pay_plan@jsu.jp for your inquiries.

Satellite system vulnerability still a concern

Disruptions to Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) such as GPS and the Russian GLONASS can affect the safe and efficient operation of transport that rely heavily on position, navigation and timing (PNT) resilience, attendees of the International Navigation Conference 2015 were told.

Since threats to navigation are not new, it is perhaps the increasing quantity and sophistication of intentional and unintentional interference, jamming and spoofing that could cause substantial damages, speakers emphasized.

In his keynote speech, Dr. Todd

Humphreys from the University of Texas at Austin demonstrated how straightforward it is for a strategic attacker to misdirect a vessel, for example a yacht, and manipulate its course without this being immediately obvious. “When we took over the ship, none of the navigational devices on board were complaining and setting off an alarm,” he added. His research team is working to fix these vulnerabilities.

These, and other worrying examples, such as possible jamming attacks, pose major challenges to maritime navigation that is heavily dependent on satellite navigation systems, especially vessels in coastal

waters.

ACCSEAS (Accessibility for Shipping, Efficiency Advantages and Sustainability), an EU funded project that focuses on improving maritime accessibility in the North Sea region by minimizing navigational risk, has looked particularly at resilient PNT and robust e-navigation services.

Its project manager, Dr. Alwyn Idris Williams, told conference delegates that the project “has created what we believe is the world’s first resilient PNT receiver combining GNSS, eLoran, Differential GNSS receiver, and the process to bring it all together to produce a resilient PNT solution”.

On board a P&O ferry, the team “simulated a GPS failure as the ship was coming into port and the vessel swapped seamlessly over to eLoran and the ship was able to continue unaffected”, he explained.

Extensive work has also been carried out on a GPS jamming simulator for training purposes. Although the project has now come to an end, “many questions remain to be answered and it is going to be hard work finding these answers”, he said, adding that he believes that ACCSEAS has potentially developed an innovative set of solutions for safety, accessibility, and efficiency using

e-navigation services and resilient PNT. It is now up to the users to look at what can be further achieved, he noted.

Speakers made clear that urgent solutions are needed to mitigate navigational risk. Some are already available, with others to be developed as technology evolves. The key issue is how quickly they reach the end user and at what cost.

This year’s conference, hosted by the Royal Institute of Navigation in Manchester, addressed other key themes, such as autonomous vehicles, quantum technology, indoor positioning, and human cognition and the role it plays in navigation. (*Source: Sea-web*)

ITF backs better shore leave, access in US

The International Transport Workers’ Association (ITF) has backed plans put forward by the U.S. Coast Guard to improve shore leave and access for seafarers outlined in its current consultation on seafarers’ access to maritime facilities.

In the ITF’s submission to the consultation, seafarers’ section chair Dave Heindel welcomed the Coast Guard’s move to implement a rule requiring ports to facilitate shore leave for visiting seafarers. “For too long, seafarers, especially non-U.S. crews, have been denied or restricted access to shore leave.”

While acknowledging and fully supporting the need for port security, he added that restrictions on seafarers’ access to maritime facilities affected their health, emotional security and quality of life, and might also have hampered efficient vessel operations.

The ITF submission notes that the proposed rule addresses many of the concerns of the national and international maritime seafaring community, is a favorable response to the concerns of the seafarer, and hoped that the final proposed rule would strike an equitable balance “between maritime security and the human dignity of seafarers”.

The moves in the United States come as the International Labor Organization (ILO) is seeking ways to improve ILO Convention 185, which covers identity documents for seafarers – a critical aspect of their ability to spend time on shore. By aligning these documents with e-passports, it is hoped that more ILO member states will ratify Convention 185, improving seafarer access to facilities on shore. (*Source: ITF Seafarers*)

Schools with recognized merchant marine programs listed

While the fate of Filipino seafarers remain hanging in the balance due to the ongoing audit of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) has identified schools with recognized merchant marine programs in a bid to guide students on where to enroll to obtain quality education.

In an unprecedented move, Marina issued last month a list of maritime higher education institutions (HEIs) with recognized programs for Marine Engineering and Marine Transportation programs. The list is viewable online at www.marina.gov.ph

According to Marina Administrator Maximo Mejia, only 23 out of 90 schools across the country were accredited for their Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering program for school year 2015-2016 as well as 23 out of 90 schools nationwide for their Bachelor of Science in Marine Transportation program.

Mejia urged students and their parents to refer to the list before enrolling, since enrollment in HEIs with recognized programs will now be a prerequisite for the Standards of Training, Certifica-

tion and Watchkeeping (STCW) certification.

“It is important for students and parents to know what is their purpose for pursuing maritime education, is it to become an officer or a rating? If the purpose is to become an officer, you have to make sure that you enroll in one of the schools that is recognized for officer training because if you do not, you will not be entitled to take the license exams at Marina,” Mejia said, referring to the STCW exam, which Marina administers.

“This is because assessment of competence already begins with the officer candidate education. Recognized officer education is a prerequisite for taking the STCW exam because basic competencies required of merchant marine officers are provided at the start of their education,” he explained.

Mejia added that HEIs with recognized programs will be under Marina’s strict monitoring if the infrastructure, systems, faculty, equipments and facilities are adequate to provide the students with the required knowledge and competency.

“We conducted monitoring exercise of schools and depending on

a number of parameters, we determined which schools continue to be recognized to deliver officer candidate programs,” he said, adding that the “reclassification will be an annual exercise. As and when schools qualify to the list or they drop out of the list, we will update it.”

STATUS QUO

Despite this reform, Mejia assured Filipino seafarers that their STCW certification is still recognized by European-flagged vessels pending the result of the EMSA audit.

“The audit is still ongoing. We are still exchanging reports, inspection findings and corrective actions of the Philippine government with the EMSA,” he said, referring to the status of the audit exercise.

The last EMSA audit activity was conducted in October and while there is no schedule yet for the next audit, Mejia said there is no withdrawal of recognition on Filipinos’ STCW certificates.

“Our STCW certificates are still recognized. The audit exercise is not yet finished so recognition can probably continue for another 12 months. So if all goes well, the EMSA audit will be finished in the

next 12 months,” Mejia added.

In the meantime, Mejia said, they have to “make sure that the systems we put in place continue for the rest of the year and at the same time introduce improvements. And EMSA will check again. The next time they will come and check, it will be for final determination.”

The EMSA audit of the Philippines’ compliance to the 1978 International Convention on STCW dates back in 2006. The result of the EMSA audit will be the basis of the European Commission in deciding whether or not to continue recognition of Filipino seafarers’ STCW certificates.

What is at stake at the EMSA audit findings is the Filipinos’ opportunities to work for European shipping lines. Based on government records, at least 80,000 Filipino seafarers are currently working under European Union-flagged vessels, aside from some 14,000 Filipino officers.

A non-favorable EMSA audit could put at least 100,000 Filipino seafarers out of work and could likewise leave European ships with serious crew shortage. (*Source: Manila Bulletin*)

European shipping jobs up 25% from 2004-2013

The number of people directly employed by the European shipping industry increased by 25% between 2004 and 2013, a study has found.

Carried out on behalf of the European Communities Shipowners’ Associations (ECSA) by Oxford Economics, the study found that the industry’s directly employed workforce stood at 615,000 in 2013.

Of those directly employed in the industry, 80% are seafarers, 44% of whom are European Union (EU) or European Economic Area nationals, according to the study, which

also estimated that, taking account of direct and indirect employment, the number of people relying on shipping for their livelihoods was 2.2 million.

Shipping’s contribution to EU GDP in 2013 was EUR147 billion (USD164.5 billion) but the study found that for every EUR1 million it contributed to GDP directly, it generated a further EUR1.6 million in other areas of the EU economy.

Growth in employment in the industry between 2004 and 2013 was matched by even stronger growth in the capacity of the EU controlled fleet, which increased by 74% to

450 million gt, even if the number of vessels in the fleet rose at a slower rate to reach a total of 23,000.

The study, which updates an earlier one, was published to coincide with the first European Shipping Week (ESW), which is being sponsored by ECSA. The main event of the week will be a one-day conference on EU shipping policy that is taking place in Brussels tomorrow.

At another ESW event, shipping companies and other parties interested in the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a marine fuel were presented with another European Commission study.

It found that the shipping industry was convinced about the environmental advantages of using LNG as a marine fuel but still had to be convinced that a clear business case had been made in its favour.

“For many companies, and especially shipping companies, LNG does not offer a profitable business model yet,” the commission said. “The higher equipment costs for engines and tanks are not offset by savings in fuel or operating expenses. Also, the lack of existing bunkering infrastructure for LNG is another quite important barrier.” (*Source: Fairplay*)

VOICES from SEAFARERS



Capt. Odelon Z. Abagatnan & Crew of MV MIHO

The ratification and implementation of the MLC 2006 has gained praise from among the seafarers. We hope those governing bodies to be transparent in implementing the regulations in consideration of the seafarers' welfare.



Capt. & Crew of MV KEN MEI

We appreciate the initiative of the JSU staff in disseminating important updates of our agreements. Now that the 3-year salary increase was already included in the agreements, we wish our employment will continue to improve and produce positive benefits.



Capt. Antonio D. Lubay & Crew of MV JP AZURE

Due to the transition period, processing of documents for Filipino seafarers with MARINA had become complicated. If it is possible, may we ask the JSU/ITF to interfere for the sake of its members' welfares and to avoid the delay of their ship-embarkation.



Capt. Jacinto S. Celerian Jr. & Crew of MV HONEST SKY

The JSU should provide an enhanced training program for its members. Each course should meet the requirements of the STCW '78 and may soon comply with the governing bodies' provisions. We hope this would be realized and thanks in advance.



Capt. Rolando Casas Basilio & Crew of MV KM IMABARI

We've known JSU/ITF had contributed a lot on its members' rights and welfares. We are hoping the JSU would lead us to the right path of upgrading courses and documentations that abides to the regulations required by the government.



Capt. Fortunato Maniba Mingote & Crew of MV ATLANTIC ERICA

The JSU members, especially the non-domiciled members, would be pleased if there would be a center that will cater to their needs in upgrading courses, documentations and certification that is situated in one place. We wish these would come into reality for the comfort and convenience of everybody.



Capt. Celso V. Ison & Crew of MV SOLAR AFRICA

We are happy to know from the JSU staff that the Retirement Pay Plan/Provident Fund of every member is based on the agreements of the vessels where they have served. Thanks for the information!!!



Capt. Belcesar C. Eroy & Crew of MV CAPE UNIVERSE

It would be good for the members if the JSU will lend support to the upgrading of the members' STCW training courses. These will help lessen their burden in processing documents for embarkation.



Capt. Epifanio B. Saguil & Crew of MV OCEAN COBALT

Sport is a part of our recreation on board. It keeps our mind and body to be alert at all times. The JSU should introduce training programs which are relevant to its members' health and activities onboard.



Capt. Dube Anand Ramashankar & Crew of MV ALTAIR DREAM

First of all, we are thankful for the incorporation of our agreement to the JSU agreements. Hopefully, this will serve as a guide in pursuit of the seafarers' rights.



Capt. Ashwani Kumar & Crew of MV ATLAS LEADER

As one of the best car carrier of the NYK fleet, we are grateful to the discussion being held about the JSU retirement system for the non-domiciled special members as well as the medical benefits based on our agreement. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the JSU.



Capt. Eric Gacho Dancel & Crew of MV IKAN KEDEWAS

The JSU staff visited our ship, though the place was quite secluded to the other berth, they still managed to reach us. The information and souvenir goods that were distributed came up useful for the members concerned. Thank you JSU!!!

Japan escorts 3,522 ships in Gulf of Aden

The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) vessels escorted a total of 3,522 commercial ships in the waters of the Gulf of Aden between July 28, 2009 and February 28, 2015 to protect them against pirate attacks, the Japanese Transport Ministry said on March 13.

Of the 3,522 commercial ships escorted by the JSDF vessels on 593 occasions under Japan's Anti-Piracy Law, only 16 were Japan-registered and the remaining 3,506 were foreign-registered.

Of the 3,506 foreign-registered ships, 643 were operated by Japanese shipping firms, while the remaining 2,863 were

operated by foreign shipping companies, including 123 vessels indirectly related to Japanese companies.

From July 28, 2009 to February 28, 2015, the JSDF vessels escorted 1,718 oil tankers, 1,365 general cargo ships, 150 special cargo vessels, 107 LPG carriers, 79 container ships, 67 automobile

carriers, 24 passenger vessels, and 12 LNG carriers.

The Anti-Piracy Law, which was enacted in Japan's Diet on June 19, 2009 and took effect on July 24 that year, allows the JSDF to escort foreign commercial ships and fire at pirate vessels if they ignore warning signals and approach merchant ships.

Japan's post-World War Two pacifist constitution imposes strict restrictions on the JSDF's activities abroad. The JSDF had previously been allowed to escort only Japan-related ships, such as Japan-registered and Japan-operated vessels, and its use of weapons had been limited to acts of legitimate self-defense. (Source: Sea-web)

Australia extends ban on dredge disposal at sea

The Australian government announced on March 16 that disposal of capital dredge sediment at sea would be banned along the entire World Heritage-listed Great Barrier Reef, including port areas.

Under a proposed federal government legislation, the ban will cover the 345,000 km² Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Under Queensland state legislation, this will extend a further 3,000 km², including areas not in the marine park.

The decision is designed to appease the United Nation's environment and heritage body, UNESCO, which is deciding this

year whether to list the Great Barrier Reef as endangered. UNESCO was critical of an earlier plan to place dredge sediment from the Abbot Point port expansion at sea. This will now be deposited in the port area.

Environmental groups such as the World Wildlife Fund welcomed the announcement on the same day, saying it protects the reef's waters. However, industry figures have expressed alarm.

Speaking with IHS Maritime, Ports Australia CEO David Anderson said the policy to extend the ban from the marine park to the whole World Heritage area, including ports, was unsustain-

able. It did not take into account the important operations activity the channels play in the supply chain, he said.

"Our objective now is to see that maintenance dredging is not restricted," Anderson told IHS Maritime. "If that happens, it could start to close the whole show down. We've got our work cut out."

A 20-page draft regulation impact statement posted on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website defines capital dredge material as more than 15,000 m³. Maintenance dredging for now is not affected.

The draft regulation notes that the worldwide trend towards lon-

ger, deeper draft ships is creating demand for wider, deeper channels and the "associated need for dredging and infrastructure driven principally by growth in the resources sector". However, it notes, these demands have been declining in Queensland in recent times.

Information about the proposed change to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park regulations will be out for comment for two weeks until March 27.

Details on the proposal and how to make a submission can be found on the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority website at www.gbrmpa.gov.au. (Source: Sea-web)

Piracy hits five-year low in February

Singapore-headquartered anti-piracy watchdog ReCAAP Information Sharing Center (ReCAAP ISC) reported 11 cases of piracy and armed robbery against ships in February, compared with 14 cases in the corresponding period last year.

Among these one was a piracy incident, while 10 were armed robberies against ships. No attempted incidents were reported in February.

The total number of incidents in February marked a five-year low, compared with corresponding period during 2011-14.

Two of the reported incidents in February belonged to Category 1 or very significant, another two cases were classified as Category 3 or less significant, and the remaining seven cases were petty thefts.

Six incidents occurred on board ships while under way in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, while four incidents occurred on board ships anchored at ports and anchorages in Vietnam and one on board a ship anchored in the South China Sea.

ReCAAP ISC remains concerned about boarding incidents of ships anchored north of Vietnam at Haiphong and Hongai in February. The anti-piracy watchdog highlighted some common links among the incidents; close proximity of the incidents and its occurrences within a five day period of 10-14 February 2015 supports the possibility that the same group of perpetrators might be involved. (Source: Sea-web)

US Coast Guard issues safety alert on fuel switching

Making the required switch from conventional to ultra low sulfur fuel oil before operating within Emission Control Areas is causing headaches, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) said, adding that recently there have been several reported incidents involving substantial machinery space fuel leakages while vessels were switching fuel oil and that, though the leakages were contained, fuel releases of any kind may result in pollution, injury or death of personnel and shipboard engine room fires. Additionally, many losses of propulsion have occurred in different ports and have been associated with changeover processes and procedures.

In response to these reports, the USCG has issued a Marine Safety Alert (Safety Alert 2-15) as a reminder to vessel owners and operators about the importance of establishing effective fuel oil changeover procedures.

The following has been taken from the text of the report:

On January 1, 2015, the new fuel oil sulfur limit authorized by MARPOL Annex VI, Regulation 14.3.4 came into effect, lowering fuel sulfur content from 1.0% to 0.10%. The 0.10% fuel sulfur content must be used the entire time the vessel is operating in the North American and U.S. Caribbean Sea Emission Control Areas (ECA). As a result, vessels using

higher sulfur content fuels must change to ultra low sulfur (ULS) fuel oil to comply.

The vessels must use the ULS fuel oil on inbound and outbound transits, at the dock, and anytime within the ECA.

Meeting this requirement requires planning and analysis before any changeover from higher sulfur content fuel oil to ECA compliant fuel oil and vice-versa. Each ship which uses higher sulfur content fuel oil is required to develop and implement changeover procedures for switching between residual and distillate fuels in accordance with MARPOL Annex VI, Regulation 14.6.

In some cases vessels may require fuel oil service or day tank modifications and fuel oil service piping modifications to facilitate safe procedures and compliant fuel operations within the ECAs.

The management and oversight of any fuel oil mixing that may be part of a changeover process including, proper control and reduction of the operating temperature of fuel supplied, varying ratios of the mixed fuels and control of mixed fuel viscosity to the engines must take place before the vessel enters the ECAs or after the vessel leaves the ECAs.

The amounts of ULS fuel oil onboard must be enough to satisfy the vessel's fuel demand at all times while the vessel operates

within the ECAs or efforts should be made to take on additional ULSF while in port.

There are many other important technical issues associated with the use of ultra low sulfur fuel oils and fuel oil switching addressed in documents produced by class societies, insurers, engine manufacturers and industry associations.

The USCG strongly recommends that vessel owners and operators:

- Ensure fuel oil switching is accomplished outside of busy traffic lanes and the ECA. Generally the ECA is 200 nm from the North American Coast and 50 miles from the U.S. Caribbean coast (e.g., the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands);

- Utilize their technical resources to develop safe operations and maintain full compliance with emission requirements;

- Consult with engine and boiler manufacturers for fuel oil changeover guidance and to determine if system modifications or additional safeguards are necessary;

- Consult fuel suppliers for proper fuel selection;

- Ensure all sensors, controls and alarms – pressure, temperature, viscosity, differential pressure, flow indicators, etc., are operational and function as de-

signed;

- Ensure system piping, seals, gaskets, flanges, fittings, brackets, etc., are maintained;

- Ensure detailed system schematics are available;

- Review and update fuel oil changeover procedures as needed;

- Establish a fuel oil system inspection and maintenance schedule;

- Review and update fuel changeover procedures based on lessons learned;

- Provide initial and periodic crew training for accomplishing safe, effective and leak-free fuel switching;

- Remember that the energy content of a given volume of ULS fuel oil may differ from residual fuel, such that existing throttle settings may not give the desired propeller shaft RPM or generator loads and performance/speed trials on ULS fuel oil may need to be conducted and;

- Anticipate that there may be many technical challenges for operators when beginning to use ULS fuel oil as a matter of routine and compliance. These range from excessive leakages of fuel system components, increased wear and tear on these components, lack of lubricity of the fuels and the need for possible changes in maintenance schedules, operational methods, etc. (Source: MarineLog)

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