



September 29, 2021

## **MESSAGE FROM MARITIME LABOR**

COVID-19 is here to stay. Our members aboard vessels remain in grave danger with the Delta variant on the loose. Many of our organizations have lost members to ravages of the disease; including some who have lost their lives while aboard ship. Several ships have had serious outbreaks over the last 18+ months, even as recently as this month.

Our advocacy for a consistent, reliable, and rapid testing regimen for mariners proved to be worthwhile and effective. Now, with the supply chain and military security of the country at risk, we ask that all of our members educate themselves on the vaccines and choose to get vaccinated. This is primarily for the safety of our shipmates and family members, but also to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the industry. It is a matter of future industry stability and mariner job security.

As we stated in our July 2020 letter, each shipowner/operator has established their own diverging policies and protocol, and they vary greatly from employer to employer, even from ship to ship, depending on shipboard culture. In the absence of a uniform and government-enforced protocol during vessel in-port time, critical evolutions such as cargo operations, vendor/contractor access and shipyard repairs remain essentially unregulated and haphazard. This is an unacceptable situation that is beyond the control of ship's personnel and is a reason to be fully vaccinated at the earliest opportunity.

We must continue taking every precaution against the Coronavirus as recommended by company protocols and by applicable CDC guidelines, including vaccination. Masks, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing have now become routine, but the best additional precaution for shipmates and families includes becoming vaccinated.

Labor is working together and using every advantage to both protect your health and safeguard your rights. With infection rates spiking due to the Delta variant, we must maintain vigilance and discipline. Employers may intervene with reasonable or ineffective workplace policy; either way we will let them know that our contract rights remain in place. We understand the stress and anxiety of working in persistent and intensified danger and so we support fair and common-sense safety practices ashore and at sea. Your dedication, professionalism and perseverance are recognized, and your efforts are best honored by ensuring your own safety and the safety of others aboard ship by getting vaccinated. Please continue to notify your Union if you have concerns regarding potential or actual COVID-19 exposure or the safety of your vessel.

Wishing all health, safety, and fraternity,



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