

Danica: Seafarer Wages Rose in 2024 While Welfare Issues Remain a Concern



Danica reports the shortage of seafarers continues to impact the job market with higher wages and more job switches (IMO photo)

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The persistent shortage of competent seafarers continues to create benefits for those working in the industry but also contributes to increases in switching employers for career advancement finds Danica Crewing Specialists in its fifth annual survey exploring the job market, salaries, and concerns for seafarers. The crewing agency reports while the shortage is resulting in continuing wage increases and seafarers being able to be more selective in their jobs, concerns also persist about welfare issues.

“The combination of a general shortage of, and a hunt for, well-competent seafarers, along with a better financial situation for most vessel owners at present, is making employers more generous with their remuneration and causing wages to continue to increase,” said Henrik Jensen, CEO of Danica Crewing Specialists.

The good news for some ranks is that this has resulted in a 10 percent increase in wages from 2023 to 2024. Danica found that the wage increases occurred on all vessel types.

The survey highlights discrepancies however noting for example that Indian senior officers on dry cargo vessels continue to receive the highest wages - some 10 percent higher than their Eastern European and Filipino peers, who are remunerated at approximately equal levels at senior ranks. However, Filipino junior officers are paid less than their Eastern European and Indian peers reports Danica. Senior ratings (Bosun, Fitter, Pumpmen, and cooks) remain in demand and also saw increasing wages.

With a surplus of job offers available, Danica says seafarers can also afford to be “more picky” – choosing positions not only on salary but also on issues such as a more convenient joining date or a fleet with younger vessels. The 2024 survey highlighted that 58 percent of seafarers reported having changed employers at least once over the previous three years. Analyzing the five years’ worth of Danica’s Seafarers’ Surveys shows that in 2019 a quarter (25 percent) of crew said they changed employer for a higher salary whereas today that figure has risen to 37 percent. Free access to the internet, newer vessels, better promotion opportunities, and pension plans/medical insurance are also key drivers to switching jobs.

Danica however also notes that there is a downsize with some owners responding to the shortage of senior officers by moving people up a rank versus their past position. Also, they report seeing a “steep increase” in fake experience listed on resumes and consultants helping to craft fake CVs and falsify experience to help applications move ahead quicker. Nearly all also said they are scanning job vacancies while they are on leave.

The survey interviewed nearly 4,900 seafarers between May and September 2024. It was mostly senior ranks but included a range of vessel types. (The [full report](#) is available online.)

Danica reports while wages continue to rise there was also a rise in crew welfare concerns. All the respondents said they have access to the Internet while at sea and 74 percent said it is free, but Danica highlights that the number of seafarers reporting a shortage of food and drinking water continues to be “alarmingly high” at 25 percent and increased from 20 percent in 2019.

Seafarers reporting they have not been paid on time remains high at 35 percent, while seven percent said they did not receive their salary in full. Although the number of seafarers not being relieved on time has fallen significantly since the pandemic, Danica says one in five seafarers still do not get home on time.

One in eight respondents reported experiencing bullying and harassment at sea, while 35 percent reported non-compliance with statutory rest hours rules. The number of seafarers who felt mentally depressed during their last contract increased from 11 percent in 2023 to 14 percent in 2024. Three percent said they have been prevented from seeing a doctor on shore.

A little over half of respondents said they have access to support if they do not feel mentally well and, of those, more made use of this facility in 2024 (30 percent) compared to 2023 (23 percent). However, the percentage of seafarers who found the offered service useful dropped from 75 to 65 percent.

Jensen says he believes the five years of data now available provides a useful resource for the industry. He points out that provides insights into trends and developments in the crew marketplace.