

COUNTRIES MUST BE CALLED TO ACCOUNT ON CREW CHANGE CRISIS

The scandal of the problem shipowners face making crew changes at ports and terminals continues. There is evidence of some successful crew changes starting to take place in a limited number of ports — Singapore and the Philippines have taken encouraging measures to help repatriation — but big differences remain between continents.

The World Ports Sustainability Program (WPSP) and International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) reported in their recent survey that: “On a global scale, 55% of ports in the survey reported no crew changes have taken place in week 27. In one third of the ports, a very limited number of crew changes have occurred (less than five). When comparing regions, European ports show the best picture in terms of the crew change situation, although six out of 10 European ports only recorded less than a handful of crew changes in the past week. In North America, crew changes are at a very low level, with 57% of ports indicating there have not been any crew changes in week 27. No crew changes have taken place in the 29 responding ports from Central and South America. Despite best efforts from ports, the above figures show the crew change situation remains very precarious, particularly in the Americas.”

In some cases, while authorities permit crew changes, there are no commercial flights available and crews need to hire cars to make their connections or find alternative ways to connect. Housing for crews during quarantine periods or waiting for flights is a further reported problem.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) called on all ships around the world to sound their horns when in port at 12.00 local time on 8 July to remind governments of the ongoing crew change crisis. Reiterating the scale of the problem and the attendant health and crew wellbeing aspects of the crisis, Guy Platten, ICS Secretary General also said: “Without crew to replace seafarers on board ships many may be unable to sail. Ships facilitate 90% of global trade and an inability to facilitate crew change has the potential to cause a logjam to supply chains that have proven so resilient during the covid-19 pandemic.”

He added: “The solutions do not need money or complicated negotiations. Governments must now implement these protocols. If bureaucracy continues to get in the way, what has already become a humanitarian crisis at sea, and what is fast becoming an economic one, will lead to severe consequences for an already overstretched global economy. The time for political leadership is now.”

This was the day before the UK government held the first international summit to address impact of covid-19 on crew changes. UK Shipping Minister Kelly Tolhurst MP and the summit’s Chairman UK Transport Secretary Grant Shapps MP led the calls on the international community to come together to ensure swift repatriation, bringing together regulatory, political and business leaders from across the globe. These included IMO Secretary General Kitack Lim who said ship operations and crew wellbeing should not be compromised. “The humanitarian crisis seafarers face has implications for all of us, for the world economy and for the safety of life at sea and the environment.”

There have been repeated calls to arms from the leaders of the international maritime, ports and shipping community.

SEAFARERS’ CRISIS IN SPOTLIGHT

“Get our hero seafarers home” was the plea from panel members during a webinar hosted by International Maritime Organization (IMO) on the Day of the Seafarer.

IMO, the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers Federation urged countries to implement protocols on safe crew change developed by the maritime industry and circulated by IMO. Governments have the power to solve a growing humanitarian crisis and must take action to bring seafarers home and allow their relief crews to join ships, the webinar stressed.

The 2020 Day of the Seafarer campaign highlighted the essential role of seafarers on the frontline of the global supply chain, while urging governments to grant them key worker status so they are able to travel and transit to and from ships.

Hundreds of thousands of seafarers are stranded on ships and desperate to go home. In many cases, their contracts have been extended for several months beyond the maximum time at sea permitted under international regulations.

The panel members welcomed the UK government’s initiative in calling a global summit on the issue, but warned that real action from governments everywhere was needed to solve the crisis and get seafarers home and replaced.

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Hopefully this initiative will kick start some real progress from other governments and authorities to follow the UK lead. Anyway, it is a start with the UK, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Denmark, Norway and the Philippines signing an agreement to open borders for seafarers and increase repatriation flights. Commenting before the summit, Platten certainly welcomed it: "The leadership provided by the UK to cut through this red tape is just the sort of initiative that is needed to free the thousands of seafarers who are trapped onboard ships across the world".

Regular readers of ABTONews, quarterly magazine Bulk Terminals International and attendees at our annual Bulk Terminals Conference will be familiar with the work of The Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling Technology in Chatham (part of the University of Greenwich) and its Director Professor Mike Bradley, who sits on the ABTO Members Advisory Panel. The Wolfson Centre is an international centre of excellence, specialising in solving materials handling problems – fundamental to the operations of bulk terminals. By coincidence it is located in Tolhurst's constituency.

You will be pleased to hear that The Wolfson Centre's laboratories have re-opened; testing has now resumed and Bradley's team of consultants are once more available to respond. I had the pleasure of visiting their industrial scale facility in March, during the Port and Terminal Operations for Bulk Cargoes short course which ABTO ran in collaboration with them. Their facility extends over 450m², and includes almost anything you can think of that is in a typical bulk solids handling process. Here, they are able to test a processing step and mock up process equipment, at near or full scale. This enables The Wolfson Centre to identify and solve problems off-line. When you translate the same process or bulk materials to your own or your customer's plant, you can be confident that it will work.

Just a reminder: ABTO Members are entitled to a discount

on any Wolfson Centre courses. Many of these short courses will continue to be offered online and particularly those concerned with pneumatic conveying systems, as well as Port and Terminal Operations for Bulk Cargoes, will be of interest to those in the bulk terminals sector. Please contact myself ce@bulkterminals.org +33 3 21 47 72 19 or Caroline Chapman wolfson-enquiries@gre.ac.uk +44 20 8331 8646.

We had been hoping to go to Riga in October for our annual Bulk Terminals conference. While Latvia itself is one of the safer parts of the world and travel restrictions internationally are being progressively eased, the danger of a second wave of covid-19 is likely to lead to their re-imposition. The comments I have received so far from past conference attendees and key speakers indicate a preference for postponement until 2021. So, the next full conference will almost certainly be in October 2021. I am working on the idea of a couple of short webinars this October dealing with topical updates to the current situation as they affect bulk terminals. Watch this space.

Finally, welcome to Garry O'Malley as Chairman of our recently established Technical Committee. Those of you who were with us in Amsterdam for last year's Bulk Terminals conference will remember his excellent and well-received case study "Redcar Bulk Terminal – life after coal and steel making", which described the ongoing transformation of a former pure bulk import terminal for iron ore and coal into a multi-user, multi-products bulk import and export port facility and the challenges faced during that journey. Garry is the ABTO representative on the ICHCA International Dry Bulk Cargoes Working Group and is joined on our Technical Committee by its Chairman Javier Quintero Saavedra. Garry can be contacted on garryomalley@hotmail.com +44 7745 990999

Keep safe.

Simon Gutteridge
Chief Executive, ABTO

OBITUARY

Dr Rob Berry

It is with great sadness we report the death of Dr Rob Berry from The Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling Technology, following a long battle with cancer.

Rob worked as a Consultant and Researcher at the University of Greenwich, in the Wolfson Centre for Bulk Solids Handling Technology, since graduating from the Wolfson Centre as a Doctor of Philosophy in 2001. His studies centred around his passion of powder flowability and he was involved in numerous cutting-edge research projects undertaken at the Centre.

During his time at the Wolfson Centre, Rob successfully supervised 15 PhD students through to graduation, presented at hundreds of conferences – including ABTO's inaugural Bulk Terminals conference – and seminars worldwide, taught on the series of Wolfson Centre short courses and within the University Engineering programmes. He won an array of awards for his work, most notably the IMechE prize for Innovation in Bulk Materials Handling, in 2012.

He will be remembered by the bulk materials handling industry for his great expertise in powder flowability, and by his friends and colleagues for his kindness, patience and humour. RIP Rob.

You can read Rob's full obituary at bulksolids.com



PORTS URGED TO LEAD THE WAY IN DECARBONISATION

As ports and their users grapple with the issue of decarbonisation, a new report by classification society DNV GL suggests that ports could be in the vanguard of change.

“Ports can be front runners of the energy transition. Ports provide a variety of avenues for decarbonisation, from the ports themselves, the vessels that use them, heavy trucks that transport goods to and from the ports, and the surrounding industrial sites, which are often co-located with ports to benefit from easy access to bulk transportation,” the report states.

Some of the recommendations include:

- Stimulating standardisation of shore power and further electrification of port-connected activities for early movers.
- Funding research, development and innovation and facilitating environmentally friendly investments.
- European co-ordination to establish environmental-friendly incentives and fees for maritime through ports.
- Facilitating and supporting stakeholders’ dialogue and enabling ports to continue to facilitate the interaction between dispatchable and renewable power generation.
- Supporting the initial investments in hydrogen production through electrolysis at ports and implementing a fair way to share benefits.
- Mandating port authorities, in co-ordination with DSOs, to facilitate the development of a port energy infrastructure across multiple energy carriers.
- Developing and implementing a structured way of solving inconsistencies in legislation and tax-regulation.

ABP CONTINUES GREEN PUSH

Building sustainable supply chains has been a key feature of Associated British Ports’ activities in the last year, as the port authority outlined in its recently released annual review.

Henrik Pedersen, ABP’s chief executive, says: “I am proud of our entire organisation and our customers, as we have worked with industry partners and government to support the UK economy and limit supply chain disruption.

“Our ports remain an integral part of international supply chains, connecting businesses to global markets. In order to fulfil this essential role in international trade and the UK economy, we work together with our customers, with whom we share a commitment to safety, sustainability and environmental protection, and we continue to make great strides in these areas.”

ABP is continuing to transform its ports and terminals into low carbon, resilient hubs, which can help build the sustainable supply chains of the future. Currently, 17 out of ABP’s 21 ports have renewable energy generation projects providing clean power for ABP, its customers and the National Grid.

In addition, ABP has invested over £50m in green technologies since 2011, including renewable energy projects, electric vehicles, electric port equipment and fuel efficient pilot vessels.

CALL FOR SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS TO SUSTAINABILITY

Decreasing the carbon footprint was also up for debate at a recent conference, which stressed that accelerating decarbonisation initiatives would position shipping ahead of the regulatory curve.

According to Captain Rajesh Unni, chief executive of ship manager Synergy Group, shipping should urgently implement a range of short-term efficiency gains to reduce carbon emissions while also embracing more radical long-term sustainability.

Speaking recently during Capital Link Operational Excellence in Shipping Forum, Captain Unni said that in the short-term there were ample, achievable “low hanging fruit” efficiency gains that would make shipping more sustainable.

Improvements in Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI) plans and in vessel Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plans (SEEMP) offer the potential to reduce emissions in the

short-term, while also creating opportunities for those partners with the technical expertise to help ship owners navigate the technological and regulatory challenges.

Captain Unni said achieving the IMO aim of cutting carbon emissions by 40% by 2030 with an Aframax tanker currently burning heavy fuel oil left few alternatives, aside from using LNG as a fuel alongside some means of exhaust gas recovery and/or carbon capture.

“I feel carbon capture is an inevitable short-term solution, but IMO needs to come up with a more credible plan before 2023 in the short term,” he told delegates. Shipping was likely to come under increasing pressure to take radical steps towards the sustainable energy solution and needed to look at ship designs and construction, port operation efficiencies and digitalisation in this respect.

“Decarbonisation is a huge challenge and opportunity,” he said. “I am very positive about it as a ship manager and, personally, because I genuinely think this is the right thing to do. If we do it right, we’ll get there.”

SUPERIOR POWERS UP

Bulk handling supplier Superior Industries has recently introduced a standard new set of TeleStacker conveyor models with onboard power.

These self-contained, radial, telescoping conveyors are equipped with a 96kW Cat 4.4 Tier 4 Final engine. The most popular applications for the new models will be remote quarrying and mining sites, where access to permanent electrical power transmission is not practical.

Currently, self-contained TeleStacker Conveyors are designed in 36-in belt widths and fully-extended operating lengths of 110, 130 and 150ft. Superior says its engineering team will collaborate with bulk handlers requiring custom widths and lengths.

Other standard features include XTP swing axles, hydraulic drives for the main and stinger conveyors, idlers and pulleys, plus an onboard counterweight.

RISK MANAGEMENT TOPS KEY ISSUES SURVEY

Digitalisation has been a key word in the past few months as ports and operators seek to automate systems during the coronavirus outbreak. According to a new global ports survey, port managers are now looking to tighten up on risk management and improve digital processes.

The 2020 iSpec Ports Industry Survey was undertaken in the second quarter of 2020 by contract management specialist Remy InfoSource, which is behind iSpec, a web- and mobile-based software procurement tool for buyers of capital intensive projects, including ports.

According to the survey, just over half (51%) of port executive respondents now identify risk management as the key area they would like to improve in the future, up from 32% in the survey published two years' ago, when the key areas were shorter lead times and more standardisation.

In the latest survey, risk management was considered to be the most problematic issue when managing outsourced projects as against tracking project compliance and delivery in the 2018 survey.

Pieter Boshoff, chief of Remy InfoSource, comments: "Disruption to supply chains has increased across the globe causing operational and investment uncertainty and, with social distancing rules, also changing the way we all conduct our business.

"Managing that risk has become a major challenge at ports, particularly when it comes to managing outsourced equipment tender and procurement projects that are often complex in nature and frequently involve multiple vendors."

Some 71% of the respondents to the 2020 survey were port operators, with more than two thirds of respondents responsible for the procurement of quay cranes, reach stackers and trailers.

Some 41% of global respondents said the pandemic had required a shift to more digital collaboration, 49% said more projects were now on hold, while 62% said they were now working from home more often.

"No matter what the business, the spread of coronavirus has forced executives to find new ways of conducting business and for the most part this means turning to digital solutions," says Boshoff.

"There is no doubt in my mind that this is a trend that will accelerate in the future. It is becoming abundantly clear that for many businesses there are benefits and efficiencies in the new online and outsourced methods they have developed during the pandemic. I think many of the work processes adopted during lockdowns, particularly around communication, will outlast the coronavirus crisis and become part of our normal way of working."

CAMERA CAPTURES BODY HEAT

JRC/Alphatron Marine's has introduced a body heat camera for the maritime industry. The AlphaFeverCamera body temperature measurement camera is able to measure the object's temperature at a high accuracy in real time, with accuracy up to +/-0.5°C.

As businesses begin to reopen after the covid-19 crisis, safeguarding employees, customers and facilities is critical and the device helps organisations identify at-risk individuals before they interact with customers and employees.

With a response time of one second, the camera can capture multiple targets at a time to ensure that everyone is checked, with an alarm system to notify operators if someone poses a risk.

The company says using the camera means officials can be more discreet, efficient and effective in identifying individuals who need further screening with virus-specific tests.

The camera is capable of discovering and tracking people with higher body temperature among crowded public areas and it can be widely used in places such as office buildings, terminals, customs, airports, schools and hospitals to do a first inspection.

ROTTERDAM PARTNERS UP

Following a digital “shakedown” event in June, the Port of Rotterdam Authority has signed a partnership agreement with two companies and expressed an interest in exploring concrete partnership options with three others.

One of the initiatives in which the port will be taking part is a pilot project set up by T-Mining, which will be launching a project in the port focusing on using blockchain technology to improve transport security.

Working in partnership with Portbase, the port authority will also be embarking on a pilot project with InnoTractor. The aim is to see whether InnoTractor’s solution contributes to a reliable and manageable form of data exchange between parties in the chain.

A clearer overview of freight flows via the port of Rotterdam will allow users to make targeted decisions – based on trend information and co-ordinated planning – to improve cargo handling in the port.

The port will also be working with Evertracker, which offers an online platform that allows users to connect logistics links within their worldwide production chain, as well as enabling the cargo owner to direct operations – all from a single location.

Macomi will be helping the port understand and analyse the complex rail network connecting the port and its hinterland, in support of its ambition to achieve a more efficient distribution of cargo flows across the various modes of transport.

Meanwhile, BioRaiser’s OilSorbio product was developed to help clean up oil leakages and spillages.

PAPER SETS OUT PORTS’ PANDEMIC PRIORITIES

Insurers TT Club, an associate member of the British Ports Association (BPA), has prepared a short paper for UK ports and terminals to consider as part of their risk assessment and management plans during the covid-19 outbreak.

UK ports have demonstrated their resilience by continuing to facilitate 95% of the UK’s trade throughout the lockdown period, which includes half of the country’s food imports, along with medicines, energy and fuel. Those port workers responsible for making it happen have been identified as key workers’ by the government and continue to need support as the lockdown now starts to be gradually lifted.

The TT Club paper is part of the British Ports Association Port Futures Programme, which considers emerging and innovative trends in the ports sector.

Commenting on the paper, Sara Walsh, corporate services manager at the BPA, comments: “During this rather unusual and challenging time, all UK ports are under a lot of pressure. They are having to make difficult decisions about how best to maintain their workforce so critical tasks are performed and legal duties met, while also supporting staff who are working at home or are self-isolating.

“We are pleased to be working with TT Club to produce this

short paper that addresses some of the key things UK ports and terminals must continue to prioritise when managing their workforce during Covid-19 and its immediate aftermath. The maritime sector is like no other and has worked together during this unprecedented time to overcome the challenges faced as best it can while still ensuring food, medicines, energy, fuel and other products continue to flow into the country.”

TT Club’s managing director for loss prevention Michael Yarwood, says: “Like many other sectors that have key workers, those who work at UK ports and terminals are in a unique position as the vast majority of roles cannot be performed at home.

“We have compiled a list of factors operators should consider as part of their risk assessments and management plans during the covid-19 outbreak. From social distancing, cleaning facilities, personal protective equipment, shift patterns, communications to remote working and health and well-being, ports must continue to support their staff and ensure all risks are managed as best they can be.”

In further support of the ports sector during the pandemic, Port Skills and Safety, the industry body for port health and safety with which BPA works closely is developing a “Gazetteer” document that will signpost the various government and industry guidance documents available.

RADIO FIRMS EXTEND LINKS

Radio Zeeland DMP and Radio Holland have extended their partnership for inland shipping equipment for another five years.

In the partnership, Radio Zeeland DMP is responsible for development and production of navigation equipment for inland vessels. The extensive dealer network of Radio Holland, in combination with its own offices, offers sales and service for these products along the main European waterways.

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PERFECT FOR COAL STORAGE

Hard coal is temporarily stored in stockpiles and then continuously fed to be processed, as needed. The design of the depositories must ensure constant filling and reliable emptying. The required capacity is determined based on the incoming and outgoing conveying flow. Different stacking and reclaiming options as well as various layouts for the stockpiles are also needed. BEUMER Group provides the engineering for handling stockpiles and offers the required components to coal mine operators, such as stackers and reclaimers.

BEUMER Group offers a comprehensive product and system solutions portfolio to customers from the coal mining industry. Conveying technology includes closed Pipe Conveyors and open troughed belt conveyors that can be adjusted to the respective situation. As a system supplier, BEUMER Group also provides extensive know-how and the necessary components for storing hard coal, e.g. stackers and bridge reclaimers. "We support our customers immediately from the design phase," says Andrea Prevedello, system technology global sales director, BEUMER Group, Germany. Drone technology is used more and more frequently during project planning, implementation and documentation to optimise the design phase. The recorded aerial photos are rectified with regard to their perspective and evaluated photogrammetrically. The software calculates a point cloud in order to generate 3D models from the two-dimensional views, i.e. digital terrain models. Stockpiles can now be greenfield and brownfield developments.

"We have some major customers with very interesting projects in this sector," explains Prevedello. This most certainly includes Prairie Eagle Mine in Illinois, the largest coal mine of Knight Hawk Coal. This is one of the most efficient underground mining plants in the US. It produces approximately five million tons of coal annually, of which more than 80% is processed and delivered in Prairie Eagle.

Management was looking for a more sustainable operating solution. "We provided an overland conveyor that transports the coal from the mine to the main processing plant," says Prevedello. "Our conveyor helps the company to considerably reduce its ecological footprint. With this technology, Knight Hawk can significantly reduce its long-term environmental impact compared to using truck transportation." BEUMER Group not only supplied the conveying solution. As a system supplier, the company also supported the mining group in building a stockpile for hard coal. "The requirements for storing coal are obviously very different from other materials," explains Prevedello. Some of the important requirements are changing if the stockpile is covered and if explosion-proof specific equipment is needed. Hard coal is very susceptible to spontaneous combustion, which is why the height of the stockpile must be in certain cases limited.

The Prairie Eagle Mine in Illinois is the largest coal mine of Knight Hawk Coal. It produces approximately five million tons of coal annually, of which more than 80 % is processed and delivered in Prairie Eagle. Photo credit: BEUMER Group GmbH & Co. KG



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