

A photograph of two large ships at sea during sunset. The ship on the left is a green and white offshore vessel, and the ship on the right is a grey naval ship. They are connected by a thick black cable. The sky is orange and yellow with scattered clouds.

National Academies Study- Alcohol at Sea- Open Session- December 9, 2024

Who is U.S. Marine Management LLC (USMMI)?



- USMMI is a ship owner/operator.
- Currently we own/operate six U.S flag ships on both long- and short-term charter to the U.S. Navy. All but one are tankers. All operate overseas.
- We have been operating U.S. flag ships since 1983.
- We were previously part of the Maersk organization until last year when we were sold to a U.S. firm (Maritime Partners).
- The mariners working aboard our ships are all members of a union. AMO for Officers; SIU for unlicensed mariners. All hold USCG certificates.
- We operate in the Deep-Sea segment of the industry.
- Our mariners normally work aboard our ships on assignments ranging from 90-120 days at a time.

What workplace factors may contribute to the misuse of alcohol by crewmembers in the Deep-Sea sector?



- Long periods of isolation from friends/family.
- Lack of leisure time.
- Very few opportunities to go ashore.
- Company management only interacts with crewmembers when assigned to ships, no observation of them when they are on vacation that would assist in identifying personnel who may have alcohol abuse issues.
- Crewmembers may have been disciplined for alcohol abuse by other employers, but we have no visibility into that.



What are the contributing roles of alcohol and other intoxicants to abusive and dangerous behaviors in the maritime workplace?



- There is no doubt that historically alcohol abuse has been involved in accidents, injuries, safety violations and onboard disciplinary issues including allegations of sexual harassment and sexual assault.
- These types of incidents also occur without the involvement of alcohol but clearly when alcohol is involved bad things happen. This is not different from any other workplace at sea or ashore.
- Alcohol abuse is a societal issue not just an issue for maritime workplaces, but the impact can be significant given the potential for the risks involved.
- Current regulations do require alcohol testing when accidents occur, but it is not uncommon for this testing not to happen until after medical treatment, which can make results difficult to obtain.

- We have very few incidents of misuse of alcohol aboard our ships.
- We don't like to admit it, but it is possible there are incidents of misuse that never are reported to shoreside management.
- The combination of federal regulations and company policies have been effective in deterring misuse of alcohol but there are still opportunities for misuse.
- We do conduct random alcohol tests.
- If this research project is trying to identify possible new regulatory requirements, it's not clear that any changes can eliminate all possible alcohol abuse.
- I'm aware that there are some advocates of allowing alcohol use aboard ships at sea. That seems to be a formula for abuse and will not enhance safety at sea.

Best Practices



- The best method of eliminating alcohol abuse at sea is the development of an onboard culture that strongly discourages alcohol as part of the shipboard employment experience.
- As younger crewmembers join the industry, especially in senior positions this culture is being enforced.
- When senior onboard leaders model behavior consistent with the company's alcohol policy the likelihood of abuse is greatly reduced.
- All crewmembers sign a statement confirming they are aware of the company's Drug and Alcohol use policy upon reporting aboard.
- Zero tolerance is enforced consistently so crewmember know that their continued employment is dependent on not abusing alcohol.
- Violators of the company's policy have their employment terminated which serves as a good deterrent.