

Maritime Safety Notice for Vessels Operating in Australian Waters

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Access to Shore Leave for Seafarers at Australian Ports

1. Background

On 30 September 2026, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) issued Marine Notice 2026/02, Access to shore leave for seafarers, superseding Marine Notice 2024/07. It reminds companies, shipowners and masters of ships visiting Australian ports to provide shore leave to seafarers and clarifies that port State control (PSC) inspections should not be used as a reason to restrict shore leave.

2. Regulatory Requirements

Regulation 2.4, paragraph 2 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) requires seafarers to be granted shore leave to benefit their health and well-being, consistent with the operational requirements of their positions. This requirement is implemented in Australian law through the Navigation Act 2012 and Marine Order 11 — Living and working conditions on vessels.

3. Company Responsibilities and Shore Leave Arrangements

Companies are responsible for seafarer health, safety and well-being. Shore leave and access to shore-based welfare facilities benefit seafarers' physical and mental health and reduce fatigue risks. AMSA expects companies to give strong consideration to the benefits of shore leave for seafarer well-being and recovery when assessing the risks. Decisions on granting shore leave should not be based on financial implications.

If a shoreside authority in Australia advises a company that shore leave is not possible, the information should be provided to AMSA for investigation as the competent authority. Although communicable disease risks cannot be eliminated entirely, suitable and acceptable controls can be put in place to allow seafarers to access shore leave safely.

A list of Port Welfare Committees and Australian welfare providers is available on the [Australian Seafarers Welfare Council website](#).

4. Key Updates

1. Masters and operators must not use the possibility of an AMSA PSC inspection as a reason to delay, restrict or deny shore leave.
2. If seafarers are ashore when AMSA attends the ship for a PSC inspection, this will not, in itself, result in any adverse action against the ship.

5. Action in Cases of Non-compliance

AMSA Port State Control Officers may take action where there are clear grounds to believe that the shipowner, company or master has not complied with the shore leave requirements of the MLC, 2006 and Australian legislation. Ships visiting Australian ports and their companies are reminded to observe these requirements and provide seafarers with access to shore leave.

Reference:

1. [AMSA, Marine Notice 2026/02, Access to shore leave for seafarers \(30 September 2026\)](#)

CCS Australia Office

9 October 2026

Disclaimer:

1. This notice aims to help shipping companies keep abreast of AMSA inspection requirements and comply more accurately with the relevant requirements in Australian waters.
2. Further information is available on the AMSA website www.amsa.gov.au and the CCS website www.ccs.org.cn.
3. This notice does not replace CCS Rules, relevant conventions or any requirements of AMSA or other competent authorities.



Access to shore leave for seafarers

Marine notice 2026/02

This marine notice draws attention to the requirement to provide shore leave to seafarers for ships visiting Australian ports.

What's changed

This marine notice supersedes 2024/07. It has been updated to advise that:

- the possibility of an AMSA port State control (PSC) inspection is not a reason to delay, restrict or deny shore leave
- if crew members are ashore while AMSA conducts a PSC inspection this will not, in itself, result in any adverse action being taken against the vessel.

Guidance for

- Ship owners/operators
- Masters

Purpose

This marine notice is to remind companies, owners and masters of ships of the requirement under the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC, 2006) for shore leave, which states that, '*Seafarers shall be granted shore leave to benefit their health and well-being and consistent with the operational requirements of their positions*' (MLC, 2006, Regulation 2.4.2).

This requirement is implemented in Australian law in the Navigation Act 2012 and Marine Order 11 – Living and working conditions on vessels.

Company responsibilities

Companies are responsible for seafarer health, safety, and wellbeing. Shore leave and access to shore-based welfare facilities are key to seafarer physical and mental health and reduce the risk of fatigue.

AMSA expects that companies strongly consider the benefits to seafarer wellbeing and recovery when assessing the risks of allowing shore leave. AMSA reminds companies that the decision to grant shore leave should not be based on financial implications.

Shore leave

If a company is advised that shore leave is not possible by a shoreside authority in Australia, this information should be provided to AMSA to investigate as the competent authority.



Whilst it is recognised that there are risks with communicable diseases that cannot be eliminated entirely, there are suitable and acceptable controls that can be put in place to allow seafarers to access shore leave safely.

A list of Port Welfare Committees and Australian welfare providers can be found on the [Australian Seafarers Welfare Council website](#).

Non-compliance

Masters and operators should not use port State control (PSC) inspections as a reason to delay, restrict, or deny shore leave. Should AMSA attend a ship to conduct a PSC inspection while seafarers are ashore, this will not, in itself, result in any adverse action being taken against the ship.

AMSA port State control officers may take action where there are clear grounds to believe that the shipowner, company or master has not complied with the requirements relating to seafarer's access to shore leave under the MLC, 2006 and Australian legislation.