



The Anchor

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10 days from now, we will be surviving another pandemic year.

2021 remains a tough year dominated by the evolving COVID-19 situation; a continuing test of endurance, faith, resilience, spirit and will, and that of being united.

Yet 2021 is another year to feel blessed and grateful. We survived 2020 when the pandemic was at its worst. We will crossover to 2022 in a hopefully better equipped and safer state. Thanks to the medical experts for developing the COVID-19 vaccine.

Although the Philippines lagged behind other countries in the vaccination rollout, thanks to our government for having finally and successfully launched the program 2nd quarter 2021 first for priority sectors. BMI staff started receiving our vaccines from April 2021 onwards. By June 15, 2021, MARINA followed with the vaccine program for Filipino seafarers ashore and is still ongoing as of this writing. All are on stand-by to receive our booster shots as soon as called in by our respective local government units (LGU's) and by AMO-SUP-MARINA for the seafarers. On the other hand, our seafarers onboard started receiving their shots last June 2021. Thanks to the NL-KVNR, US CDC, Danish, German, and other governments' COVID-19 vaccination initiatives.

39.4 million Filipinos have already been fully vaccinated or about 36% of the country's more than 110 million population. The government aims to reach a target of 54 million fully vaccinated Filipinos by year-end of 2021.

By the 3rd Quarter when all had received their COVID-19 vaccines, BMI staff was ready and preferred to carry out an onsite (Face to Face) over the proposed (by the auditors) online ISO Audit. This gave the BV auditors an edge and conducted a process-based audit focusing on the significant aspects, risks, and objectives by interviewing each and every member of the BMI team, actually observing the activities for the 2 days audit, and physically reviewing the documen-



tation and records.

On 08.11.21 after complying with all the requirements of the standard and just 9 days before commemorating our company's 38th anniversary, BMI was finally awarded its ISO 9001:2015 certificate by Bureau Veritas.

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) in consultation with maritime stakeholders are proactive in reviewing, evaluating, and improving procedural requirements in compliance with STCW requirements while adhering to the safety of seafarers. One such latest issuance is the MARINA Advisory No.2021-49 - Guidelines on the revalidation of COPs in Basic Training, AFF, and PSCRB, where MARINA requires the submission of an Attestation Letter duly signed by the Master, attesting to the crew's participation to these onboard training. This is in lieu of seafarers physically attending refresher courses in the Training Centers. Such Advisory is very helpful to our seafarers during this pandemic as this helps minimize the exposure of the crew to COVID-19. Thanks to the Masters on board and our Principals for supporting this advisory.

Vacationing crew whether in Manila or in the provinces also get to participate in our various In-House training via webinars facilitated by our accredited In-House trainers.

Due to the ever-changing border restrictions/regulations especially with the latest Omicron variant, crew changes are still a challenge in 2021. While BMI conducted 5 crew changes in Philippine ports in 2020, 3 crew changes were carried out in the ports of Manila and Subic, Zambales this year.

Once again our special thanks to: our principals for your continuing trust and support, for making every planned crew change possible, and for every effort of bringing our crew safely home; our BMI Marinos, your Captains, Officers, and colleagues for all your sacrific-



es, your loyalty to your profession as front liners in the global supply chain; BMI employees for your continuous dedication and hard work, to our families for your love and support; the government, related agencies & maritime associations for their proactive stance in handling the pandemic; our health workers and other frontliners.

Our hearts and thoughts are with those who have been affected by Typhoon Odette in the Visayas and northern Mindanao. We pray for the souls whose lives were lost, the search for those who remain missing; the healing of the injured, the sick, and those traumatized by the destruction; prompt delivery of food and supplies; restoration of power, water, communication, and transport; a reunion of families separated; recovery of loss, repair to damages, etc. all brought about by this tragedy occurring just days before Christmas.

Though some of our crew/families in the said regions reportedly suffered minor to severe damages in their properties & houses and others still without electricity, water, and cell signals as of this writing, we are grateful enough that they are reportedly safe, families intact and that the national government and private organizations/ individuals have immediately deployed emergency relief, search and rescue operations despite challenges in logistics.

We continue to, pray to our almighty "ANCHOR" for the healing of our families, our country, and the whole world from this pandemic and from natural calamities.

Wishing everyone a blessed Christmas, a joyous welcome of the new year, and another prosperous, safer 2022.

BEATING STRESS AND KEEPING YOU MOTIVATED AT WORK

Being away from families is really a tough thing to experience especially with this Covid19 global pandemic that we are facing up to now and sad to say it's not even over yet. As of this writing, cases are surging here in Europe as another variant, the "Omicron" is spreading again. Governments are implementing lockdowns anew.

Many of us working in the seafaring industry is really affected by this especially those working in the Cruise industry that is why we in the Merchant Shipping specifically (crew of BMI-Global Crewmanagement-Navis Shipmanagement) for our part is very thankful because despite the pandemic that we are facing up to now, we are still working continuously and by that we are still able to provide the needs of our families back home. Though it has been very difficult and stressful to be working away from our families, we really need to be motivated to do our job well so we could achieve each of our goals.

Over the past 16 years of my career working onboard ships, I have learned that one should know how to beat stress and do things to keep us motivated. In this article, I will list down the things which I usually do to beat stress and things that keep me motivated at work hoping I may inspire others to do the same.

1. **Listening to Music** - listening to music has a positive impact on the mind and body and is a great way of staying motivated and relaxed. Listening to your favorite music and artists gives you a relaxing and peaceful mind.

2. **Reading a Book** - reading a book is one way of beating stress. Reading can be very relaxing and is the perfect recipe for good quality sleep. It can also prove to be very motivating especially if you are reading about people's struggles and eventual success. It can motivate you to go the extra mile.

3. **Browsing the Internet** - internet is surely one way of taking out the stress you have especially nowadays that there are plenty of social media platforms that you can check like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok and even Youtube.. This can put a smile on your face or give you a hearty laugh thus removing the stress you have felt the entire day of work. It also keeps you updated with what is go-

ing on in the world through the news sites that you can check in social media.

4. **Social Relationship with Colleagues** - everyone must share a unique relationship with the people they work with. It is to the best interest to have friendly and at the same time respectful relations with everyone onboard. It is also important to have someone onboard that you can share your ups and downs. Talking about your inner feelings always helps. Having someone to share your ideas and thoughts can be a great way to stay motivated.

5. **Communicate with your Family** - for me, the most important way to beat the stress and keep me motivated is regularly communicating with my family. After all, they are the reason why we are doing all of these sacrifices to work far away from them, so we need to talk to them to inspire us to perform our job well and safely. We are lucky because we have internet onboard and we are able to stay in touch with our families more often. I make it a point to get in touch with my family every single day and this daily ritual of connecting with my loved ones can go a long way in keeping my mind at peace.

6. **Pray** - Prayer is the most powerful way of beating stress. It has a very solemn influence on our beings. It gives us the right perspective and keeps our mind at peace. Even a short prayer after waking up can be a great way to start a day.

For some, they watch movies. Watching movies reduces anxiety and stress levels. It is also a great way to relax your mind.

These ways work for me and some people but maybe doesn't work for others because I know each one of us has a different way in dealing with stressful situations.

This article doesn't necessarily tell you to do everything I have written but instead it is only a guide. At the end of the day, it is you who knows yourself better and you must follow the desires of your heart. We need to keep ourselves motivated at work to reach our goals in life and for the family we love.

By: Bsn Melvin Duetes- MV Eems Duisburg



Health at Work in Covid times

As the world comes to a halt because of COVID-19, the looming scenario brought about by the pandemic has left both employers and employees of various organizations with uncertainties on how to keep their businesses afloat.

Blue Manila, Inc. belongs to the industries considered as essential and allowed to operate at a reduced capacity during the pandemic. While working from home (WFH) would be an ideal situation to ensure the safety of its employees, it cannot be helped that employees also need to be physically present at the workplace to ensure that operations remain continuous during the pandemic.

Therefore, the BMI management has initiated guidelines and strictly implemented health and safety measures to preserve the physical and mental health and well-being of each employee.

Parallel to the above, everyone is expected to be disciplined and responsible in observing these measures.

COVID-19 testing became part of the mandatory regimen.

Employees have been provided with health insurance to ensure that medical assistance will be available when needed. Flu and pneumococcal vaccinations were administered as additional immunity boosters. Measures to reduce the transmission of the virus at the

workplace like wearing masks and face shields, sanitizing with alcohol, thermal screening for all employees and visitors, became mandatory. Employees are instructed to follow strict guidelines on hygiene, disinfection and sanitation practices. Social distancing has been strictly in place. Employees who experience covid-19 like symptoms are required to stay at home to observe and monitor until the symptoms resolve. Decontamination of the workplace is carried out daily. Attending to crew and visitors are limited as much as possible and when necessary, protected by acrylic barriers. strict observance of physical distancing is enforced. Debriefing procedures for signing-off crew are also carried out remotely via telephone or other online means only. Physical reporting of lined-up is restricted for essential purposes.

With the support and assurance from the management that physical and mental safety and well-being of the employees is of top priority, the Work-From-Home (WFH) and Working on-site scheme became manageable.

Management continues to monitor though the evolving Covid-19 situation and will effect changes or improvements as the situation warrants.

By: T. Millar

Covid-19 Vaccination

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has started its vaccine roll out for priority sectors in the 2nd quarter of 2021. On the other hand, Vaccination roll out for seafarers started in June 2021.

Blue Manila Inc. is 100% full support of the government's vaccination program. 80% of BMI crew have been fully vaccinated while the rest are still on board and those newly arrived are just waiting for their appointment schedules from their LGU's or from the MARINA.

The BMI office staff is 100% fully vaccinated with some receiving their booster shots already.

MARINA requires manning agencies to submit the total number of seafarers who had their vaccination for more than three (3) months already so they can be scheduled for booster.

An interim guidelines for the issuance of International Certificate of Vaccination (ICV) against COVID-19 for travelers was released by the National COVID-19 Vaccination Operations Center. Those who

are fully vaccinated can secure the International Certificate of Vaccination (ICV). This is when the Certificate of Vaccination Record is on the portal and it is ready for downloading. The ICV, sometimes called yellow card or yellow book, is for travelers who are fully-vaccinated in the Philippines and will be travelling out to countries that require proof of vaccination. It is issued by the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and is being recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO). But not all countries accept ICV. For security reason, you may get one in case the country you are going to requires you to present ICV.

How to get ICV? Initially, the seafarer should apply for an online appointment to the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) and when getting the ICV, they should present their vaccination card. Finally, after presenting their vaccination card, they will be issued their ICV.

Whatever type of vaccine is available, everyone must secure one so as to protect themselves from the virus and we can go back to the usual and normal way of living.

By: L. Sotto

BMI MARINOS AND OFFICE STAFF BEING VACCINATED



My Life On board as a Fisherman



My name is Jove Rañon Balanquet, 38 years old and presently employed as a Fisherman. Prior to my seafaring career, I worked as a Janitorial staff for a leading drugstore in the Philippines. I also worked as a skilled welder. In 2011, I was grateful to have been given an opportunity to work as Fisherman on board Korean and Taiwanese flagged fishing vessels, with up to 13-17 months long contracts on board.

Finally in 2019, I was able to sail on my first European flag fishing vessel. Like the regular merchant seafarer, a Fisherman's job is a very hard, tough and sometimes dangerous job. But I am a Filipino and am proud to be one. Filipinos have the patience, diligence and care for both our work and our colleagues and we appreciate our work. Filipinos are flexible and we are

able to endure, we learn and continue to improve our work. Because of these Filipino qualities, we are able to earn the trust of our superiors and co-sailors, may they be of other nationalities. I am proud working as a Fisherman because this is how I provide for my family and able to help others. It maybe a difficult job but I am happy because I love my job as a Fisherman.

In dealing with difficult situations on board, I put in my mind that I must carry on with what I have to do and do not think of it as a hardship but instead I think of my family and my dreams for them and most important of all, I pray to the Lord who keeps me strong and stable.

To all the seafarers, let us continue to work with diligence, patience, confidence and care for our work and especially for our colleagues. This will surely help achieve our dreams and goals in life.

I salute all the seafarers and all the Fisherman around the world. Mabuhay po tayong lahat!!



CREW AT WORK





CREW CHANGE DURING PANDEMIC

COVID 19 took over the world in 2020 by surprise.

Crew changes were badly hit and became a great challenge for the shipping industry until these days.

In the Philippines, The Inter Agency Task Force (IATF), the mandated Government agency for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases to prevent or minimize the entry of suspected or confirmed patients with emerging infectious diseases in the country are continuously updating the protocols for crew changes and travel restrictions in coordination with the different Government agencies.

Following an increase in coronavirus cases and the new Covid 19 variant, the Omicron which was first detected in Botswana followed by South Africa, United States and some other European countries, the IATF announced a travel ban to the Red List countries until 31 December 2021.

AS per IATF Res. 154-C, Passengers who have been to the above Red list countries within fourteen (14) days immediately preceding arrival in the Philippines, shall not be allowed regardless of vaccination status.

Only Filipinos returning to the country via government-initiated repatriation, non-government-initiated repatriation, and Bayanihan Flights may be allowed entry.

The testing and quarantine protocols of returning Filipinos allowed entry, via government-initiated repatriation, non-government-initiated repatriation, and Bayanihan Flights, from "Red List" countries/territories/jurisdictions shall be as follows:

1. For fully vaccinated individuals: International arriving passengers shall be required to present a negative RT-PCR test taken within seventy-two hours (72hrs) prior to departure from the country of origin. Additionally, they shall be required to undergo facility-based quarantine with an RT-PCR test taken on the seventh (7th) day. They may be discharged from the facility upon the release of a negative RT-PCR result but shall observe home quarantine until the fourteenth (14th) day of arrival with the day of arrival being the first day.

2. For individuals who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or whose vaccination status cannot be independently validated: International arriving passengers shall be required to present a negative RT-PCR test taken within

seventy-two hours (72hrs) prior to departure from the country of origin. Additionally, they shall be required to undergo a mandatory ten (10) day facility-based quarantine with RT-PCR testing on the seventh (7th) day. They may be discharged only upon the completion of a 10-day facility-based quarantine, regardless of a negative RT-PCR result, and shall observe home quarantine until the fourteenth (14th) day of arrival with the day of arrival being the first day.

Passengers merely transiting through Red List countries/territories/jurisdictions shall not be deemed as having come from or having been to said country/territory/jurisdiction if they stayed in the airport the whole time and were not cleared for entry into such country/territory/jurisdiction by its immigration authorities. Upon arrival in the Philippines, passengers who merely transited through a Red List country/territory/jurisdiction shall comply with existing testing and quarantine protocols.

Other countries have their own entry/ exit restrictions too. Thus, the difficulties in carrying crew changes due to different country's border restrictions, limited to no flight available, Covid-19 vaccine, testing and quarantine requirements led to crew change cancellation/postponements or other crew staying onboard beyond their contract duration.

Ship owners, Principals and Manning agencies recognize crew's positive dispositions in these trying times by promoting health protocols onboard and continuously exhausting all possible means to effect crew changes soonest.

But of course, let's not also take for granted the relievers who are also waiting for the ease of

travel restrictions in order to join the vessel despite of the risk brought by the Covid-19, just to ensure that their families will have food to eat and money for emergency situations as nowadays, staying at home to wait for the world to come back to its normal life is like a vast sea with seamless ending.

Extending financial assistance by means of cash advances, timely updates, scheduling for Covid 19 vaccination, assistance in their documentations and continuous reminders to observance of health protocols to prevent having the Covid 19 disease are among what we can do for our modern day heroes. Frankly speaking, waiting for the finally confirmed crew change schedule is not yet the crucial part for the on-signers but the anticipation of the result of the RT PCR test to be taken 1 day before departure.

There is Hope we can overcome this pandemic.

Let's keep fighting and pray for the world's healing.

Source IATF Res. 154-C

By: G. Sibbaluca



Crew Change in Subic, Zambales, November 2021



5 joining crew— Crew Change -Port of Manila Bay, February 2021