

Before You Join

THE CREW CHECKLIST

Questions for a calmer start at sea.



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FREE / CHECKLIST | READER EDITION 1.0

A calmer start to your next contract

Use this free checklist before accepting an offer and again before travelling. It helps you identify unanswered questions; it does not certify an employer, an offer or a contract as safe or lawful.

If something is unclear, write down the question, who will answer it and the date you need the answer. Do not tick a box because somebody says the detail can be sorted out after you arrive.

1. Verify the route

- ☐ I found the employer's official careers page independently.
- ☐ I checked any hiring partner through the employer's published route and any applicable regulator.
- ☐ I know the full legal name of the employer in the agreement.
- ☐ I understand every requested payment, who receives it and the stated basis.
- ☐ I will not share passwords, one-time codes or unnecessary identity documents.

2. Understand the offer

- ☐ I have the complete agreement and documents it incorporates.
- ☐ I understand guaranteed pay, variable pay, deductions and payment dates.
- ☐ I know my role, contract duration, joining arrangements and how extensions are handled.
- ☐ I have asked about rest, leave, medical arrangements and repatriation.
- ☐ I have identified terms I need explained before signing.

3. Prepare for travel

- ☐ I checked passport, visa, medical and role-document requirements through the relevant official routes.
- ☐ I have the itinerary, joining instructions and an independently verified travel contact.
- ☐ I know what to do if a flight changes or I cannot find the joining agent.
- ☐ I have discussed medication, prescriptions or health questions with an appropriate clinician.
- ☐ I saved essential documents securely and can reach them without relying only on a work account.

4. Set up support

- ☐ A trusted person knows my travel plan and how to contact me.
- ☐ I will obtain the onboard emergency and complaint procedures after joining.
- ☐ I know where to find official welfare, union and legal-help routes.
- ☐ I have a simple plan for recording pay, work and rest, appointments and unresolved questions.
- ☐ I have kept sensitive documents private and shared only what is necessary.

ONE USEFUL HABIT

Before paying, signing or travelling, pause and check the detail against an independent source. A logo, a forwarded message or a confident promise is not verification.

My joining record

Role / employer / ship / flag if known

Joining date / itinerary / official travel contact

Question 1 / who will answer / by when

Question 2 / who will answer / by when

Question 3 / who will answer / by when

Where to find help

For urgent illness, injury or danger, use the ship's emergency arrangements or appropriate local emergency services ashore. Do not wait for a website inbox to respond.

ITF Seafarers: official contact and inspector routes.

<https://www.itfseafarers.org/en/contact-us>

ISWAN SeafarerHelp: general welfare support for seafarers and families.

<https://www.iswan.org.uk/seafarerhelp/>

Seafarers' Rights International: a starting point for finding a lawyer; independently verify suitability and registration.

<https://www.seafarersrights.org/networking-lawyers>

ILO: the Maritime Labour Convention framework and official resources.

<https://www.ilo.org/mlc>

Links checked 20 October 2026. Eligibility and services vary. These organisations do not endorse this checklist.

About this resource

Before You Join: The Crew Checklist is a free Crew Rights Compass resource by Dr. Ezekiel Aluda Osolika, a Kenyan physician with shipboard, expedition, emergency and aeromedical experience.

Version 1.0, 20 October 2026. General preparation information, not legal or medical advice, recruitment placement or a guarantee of employment. Seek qualified advice for your circumstances and deadlines. Independent maritime legal review has not been completed.

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