

WORLD MARITIME SEAFARER PROFILES



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JOB TITLE: **CHIEF OFFICER**

Have you or your colleagues been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic - if so how?

The COVID pandemic has had a major detrimental effect on life at sea. As we have a third or fourth wave, we are again seeing seafarers stuck on board or in hotels, not being able to fly home. The most important part of being at sea is looking forward to the day when you get home. But if that is uncertain, it detrimentally affects the mental health of every person. Countries, along with the cargo that they allow us to import, should also allow us to get off and go home. We are at sea for long periods and have zero interaction with most people these days - so there is nothing which is exposing us to possible infection.

Is there an environmental issue that you feel passionate about?

The world looks at shipping as one of the most polluting industries - but we account for just a small percentage of pollution. We had been using the dirtiest fuels till 2020, but now there is a solid attempt to clean that up. I can see that some companies are resorting to LNG and other such fuels, which is a good thing. I believe that even in small ways, we can impact positively on the environment. But this effort must be done by everyone, and scrutiny must not only focus on the maritime industry.

What would you like to see the shipping industry do to be more environmentally friendly?

The shipping industry is making a conscious effort in going carbon neutral. In my opinion, wind and solar energy would go a long way in replacing the fossil fuels in the future. There is an abundance of wind at sea and solar energy is unlimited, so they are ideal. As a recreational open water diver, the marine environment is very dear to me. And the shipping industry could do a lot to prevent polluting this. As vessel crew, we should do our utmost to prevent pollution of the environment, such that we can sustain the future.

What does a "fair future" for seafarers look like for you, as a seafarer, and for shipping in general?

Shipping is going to probably move to autonomous ships in the future - which means probably no more seafarers. But I don't see that turning out too well. The seas are not like the air where you can just put autopilot and go. They can be extremely calm, but they can be extremely ruthless as well as we have seen from recent incidents and accidents. So, we need to learn from the past that seafarers are important people, even though we just work quietly in the background. There has to be due understanding, and effort should be made to make seafarers' jobs and lives a lot more comfortable at sea.

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