

▶ AUTONOMOUS VESSELS

The Shipowners' Club is the leading global insurer for small and specialist vessels. Having provided ship owners with comprehensive liability protection, on a mutual basis, since 1855. Since our conception, the Club has bared witness to the seemingly infinite evolution of the shipping industry and has always endeavoured to remain at the forefront of developments.

In recent times, the Club has noted the decrease in the number of crew on board vessels as advancements in technology have made way for previously manned functions to be streamlined or handled remotely ashore.

Increased investment has resulted in exponential advancements in autonomous vessel technology. Such developments are no more evident than in the case of the C-Worker 7, the first autonomous vessel to be signed the UK Ship Register. The C-Worker 7 was built by ASV Global, a leading supplier of unmanned and autonomous marine systems. The vessel has the capability to be operated under direct control, semi-manned or completely unmanned and will be used for subsea positioning, surveying and to undertake crucial environmental monitoring work.

With the Club's expertise in insuring specialist vessels, we understand that when choosing new vessels to expand their fleet Members will be beginning to consider both designing and acquiring vessels which will incorporate some level of autonomy.

With this in mind, the Club has developed a series of articles which aims to equip Members with information and advice on the operation of autonomous vessels, by providing insight into both the opportunities and risks, and by addressing key conversations on legal liabilities and emerging cover requirements. We hope these articles will both challenge and assist Members and their brokers during this fascinating period of revolutionary change in the industry.