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▶ PHILIPPINES – SEAFARERS PROTECTION ACT SIGNED INTO LAW

05 February 2016

To all Members,

This circular highlights the recent developments in the law in the Philippines that will have a positive impact on all Filipino seafarers and all Members employing Filipino crew.

On 26 November 2015, a new act entitled '*ANGKLA Seafarers Protection Act*' (Republic Act No. 10706) was signed into law by the President of the Philippines.

The purpose of the Act is to protect Filipino seafarers seeking compensation following work related personal injury or death. Currently it is common practice in the Philippines for claimant's lawyers to charge exorbitant fees and it is not uncommon for them to retain, as legal fees, between 30% and 60% of any compensation awarded by the NLRC or NCMB to the seafarer or their heirs. This act will restrict the amount any claimant's lawyer can charge to a maximum of 10% of the total compensation or benefit awarded to the seafarer or his heirs.

Any person who violates Section 3 of the Act (Prohibition on Ambulance Chasing) will be fined between PHP 50,000.00 and PHP 100,000 and possibly face imprisonment of between 1 and 2 years.

The Act is likely to become effective in the Philippines in early 2016 and a further update will be issued on the Club's website when this occurs. In the meantime it is important that Filipino seafarers are made aware of this new law for their protection, and that of their families. Members are encouraged to discuss this new Act with their local manning agents in the Philippines to ensure that all Filipino crew are aware of their rights and remedies under the national law.

You can read the full text of the Act [here](#).