

DGS Order XX of 2025

Subject: Revision of Seafarers' Welfare Fund (SWFS) Contribution under Rule 6 sub-rule (4) of Merchant Shipping Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers (RPS) Rules, 2016 - reg.

1. Whereas the Seafarer's Welfare Fund Society (SWFS) is a Central Organization established for the welfare of Indian seafarers and their families. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1960, and as a Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950. The SWFS falls under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW). It was established with the primary objective of ensuring the welfare and social security of Indian seafarers and their families. SWFS administers a wide range of schemes and benefits, including medical support, pensions, ex-gratia relief, legal assistance, and rehabilitation of distressed seafarers.

2. And whereas, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (3) of section 95 and section 457 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 (44 of 1958), the Merchant Shipping (Recruitment & Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2016 (hereinafter referred to as "RPSL Rules") came into force from 15.02.2016.

3. Whereas, pursuant to Rule 6, the welfare contribution for the seafarer's welfare is required to be credited to Seafarers Welfare Fund Society (SWFS). The Recruitment and Placement Service (RPS) agencies shall, for promoting the welfare of seafarers, contribute to the Seafarers Welfare Fund Society, Mumbai, a welfare fund contribution of Indian Rupees Six Thousand (INR 6000/-) per seafarer per annum / pro-rata basis, for every seafarer excluding trainees, engaged on board foreign flag vessels, on the basis of the actual period of the seafarers employed onboard the said vessels.

4. Over the past decade, the maritime industry has witnessed substantial growth, driven by globalization, expanded trade routes and advancements in shipping technology. This growth has significantly contributed to an increase in the number of Indian seafarers employed across the globe. Notably, there has been a marked rise in the deployment of Indian seafarers onboard both Indian-flagged vessels and foreign-flagged ships.

5. This upsurge has brought with it a corresponding need for enhanced monitoring, oversight and welfare support to safeguard the rights and well-being of seafarers. As a result, maritime authorities, including the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), have strengthened their regulatory and welfare frameworks to ensure the safety, security and dignity of Indian seafarers worldwide.

6. One of the critical areas of focus has been the timely support and intervention in cases involving abandoned seafarers. Incidents of abandonment where seafarers are left without pay, proper legal support, provisions or means of repatriation have highlighted the importance of a robust welfare mechanism. The DG Shipping, in coordination with Indian missions abroad, international maritime organizations and seafarer welfare bodies, has

implemented effective measures for swift redressal and repatriation of affected personnel.

7. Key welfare mechanisms now include measures such as centralized comprehensive grievance redressal system for seafarers and their families, strengthened coordination with port State authorities and ship registries to address abandonment, emergency financial assistance and legal aid support for abandoned seafarers and proactive monitoring of manning agencies to ensure compliance with MLC (Maritime Labour Convention) standards.

8. Whereas, despite the above pressures, the INR 6,000/- contribution rate has not been revised in over 9 years. Since 2016, the All-India Consumer Price Index (CPI) has registered a cumulative increase of over 60%. The CPI in 2016 stood at an average of 125, whereas as of 2025, it has risen to over 200 (base year 2012 = 100). This steep rise reflects an overall increase in the cost of goods, services, and essential welfare components such as healthcare, transport, and accommodation..

9. As the maritime sector continues to expand, the Government of India remains committed to not only enhancing employment opportunities for Indian seafarers but also reinforcing the safety net that protects their rights and welfare across international waters.

10. Whereas, the Director General of Shipping, being the competent authority is entrusted with authority to revise the SWFS contribution amount, as stipulated in Rule 6 sub-rule (4) of the aforementioned MS RPS Rules 2016. Now, after careful review and analysis of the subject matter, the decision has been taken to revise contribution amount to meet the increasing expenses associated with providing welfare facilities to seafarers.

11. It has now been deemed necessary to enhance the contribution amount to ensure adequate funding for the continued implementation and expansion of welfare measures for seafarers. Further, the enhancement will support a wide range of welfare initiatives, including but not limited to welfare schemes, medical support, insurance coverage, pension provisions and other essential social security measures.

12. In exercise of the powers conferred under Rule 6, sub-rule (4) of the RPSL Rules, the Director-General of Shipping hereby orders an increase in the welfare fund contribution amount to address the growing demand for welfare facilities for seafarers. Accordingly, Recruitment and Placement Service (RPS) companies are directed to pay a contribution of **Indian Rupees Ten Thousand (INR 10,000/-) per seafarer per annum or pro-rata basis** to the Seafarers Welfare Fund Society, Mumbai. This contribution applies to seafarers engaged on board foreign flag ships and is to be calculated based on the actual period of employment on such vessels.

13. The increased contributions will also help strengthen the Directorate's latest welfare initiatives, such as ensuring full compliance with DG Shipping Crew Branch Circular 10 of 2024 dated 22.04.2024, which mandates all Indian ports to provide adequate and standardized welfare facilities for seafarers visiting Indian ports as these steps are critical to safeguarding the dignity, health and well-being of seafarers, both ashore and at sea.

14. The revised contribution will be applicable with **effective from 1st April 2026**. The revised contribution structure is as follow:

Entity	Existing Contribution	Revised Contribution
RPSL	Rs.6,000/- per annum or pro-rata basis	Rs.10,000/- per annum or pro-rata basis

The Contributions may be crossed cheque drawn in Seafarers Welfare Fund Society, Mumbai and delivered/mailed or online account details

Seafarers Welfare Fund Society, Mumbai Nau Bhavan, Ground Floor, R. Kamani Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai - 400001.

Or

By **NEFT / RTGS** to the following bank account:

Account Name: *Seafarer's Welfare Fund Society*

Bank Name: *Canara bank.*

Account No.: *0239101003092*

Account Type.: *Savings*

Branch Address: *Fort (Main) Branch, Warden House, Sir P.M. Road Fort, Mumbai-400 001.*

IFSC Code: *CNRB0000108*

15. Receipts for the payments shall be issued directly by SWFS to the remitting party.

Non-compliance with the revised contribution requirements will attract appropriate action, including imposition of penalties by the Directorate as deemed necessary.

16. This directive shall come into force **with effect from 01.04.2026.**

(Shyam Jagannathan)
Director General of Shipping

To,

1. All stake holders through DGS website
2. SWFS, Mumbai
3. All MMDs
4. All DSEOs
5. All SMs
6. Computer Cell
7. Hindi Cell