

27/04/2021

All,

I am writing this to hopefully provide some clarity and updates.

Last week one of the members contacted me asking for an update and requesting more information.

In short, I will try and summarise

First, we totally understand your frustration and agree that this has been ongoing for a long time. The underlying issue of course is covid 19 and it has us all under its constraints, as the union we are only one part of the cog, there are three bodies that are all trying their best to get us through this epidemic from the Government, Employer and the Union.

Sadly, it is yourselves as employees that are enduring the most of quarantine and restrictions.

I'm not going to get into anything with regards Safe or Industri Energi, as they are facing the exact same issues.

Only difference between the two, as a part of Lo we have additional channels into Government but we are all fighting the same problems and here and now is not the time to point score who is doing better it's a time when we are all trying our hardest to get everyone through this pandemic alive, fit and healthy.

Communication

We agree that communication should be better and going forward we will try and ensure a regular update as has been stated even just to inform the discussions are still progressing but there is no further update at present is often better to hear than nothing at all

It is something that has been taken onboard and for us keeping members in the loop is one of our important responsibilities so going forward we will look to give more regular updates

Quarantine

has been as you can imagine the point causing the highest anxiety and resentment. Sadly, this is often through bad decisions made at the start up period or mis-information.

With the Swedish, The Government when quarantine started, there were Norwegian and Swedish that live on the border and travel across each day for work so they allowed travel from Sweden without restriction, I don't think they took into account those travelling further across Norway, Since then though and this has always been dependant on the R number and levels of government enforced quarantine etc there has been Scandinavians, Swedish and Danes put into Quarantine.

As part of their own EFTA group they do have different restrictions placed upon them at times.

Regarding payment for quarantine my understanding is there is a payment from Mærsk and Aker BP the Mærsk payment is based upon quarantine when it has not been government enforced, If it is enforced then there is no payment. Whilst that is an issue it does put us back in the court case we are building as we have some that are not being paid whether it was government or operator enforced etc.

Compensation/ Court action

With regards, the compensation the lawyers have reviewed, and the last meeting was to decide on whether this case should be taken to labour court or into civil court.

Labour court is purely in regards what provision the tariff provides and one of the hardest tasks we have faced trying to discuss several points with the employers organisations is the tariff was never written for a pandemic like this so there is a lot that is not agreed between our organisations in that regard.

Labour court is of course a full and final decision, so we have to weigh up the pros and cons if we lose there is no appeal.

Civil court there is of course a route of appeal which is open to both sides but then there is the added risk it can be appealed all the way to supreme court and would then have added delays waiting on each appeal.

From the lawyers input they have had to take time to really research and dig into details as this is unlike other cases where the law suit is simply drawn up and there is on file previous court cases to reference towards for the judges in court.

All of that has taken additional time, but we need to make sure we do this correctly there is always a risk of losing any case and this case is no different.

We of course want to present the best case, so the percentages are higher in our favour. Whilst I know there is frustration we view this as required and are sure all members would rather we take the time to give the best chance in court than throw a law suit at the employers side and go into court under prepared and lose.

Tariff and Pandemic

The only provision in the tariff is for unforeseen natural disasters, which is within layoffs where the notice period can be reduced owing to a requirement to stop work immediately major storms tsunami etc, we argued from the beginning that Covid would not fall under that provision as it was not unforeseen when it came to laying off any crews the pandemic had been ongoing for months so everyone was aware of the issues.

The points within the tariff that are not written with a quarantine in mind are issues along with giving up your actual leave to stay in quarantine, or even when a relative passes away etc you get the seven days leave paid but then there is issue as you cannot simply get back to work as before as you need to enter quarantine, these are issues we are trying to address etc.

Mental Health

Long term we have a huge concern towards mental health as there is real concern we do however in this regard require the employers to also look towards this issue, provide additional support, and ensure there is people that are trained with regards dealing with the emotional and physical strain placed on each one of their employees.

Where there is an option to make appointments and talk openly with them, whilst we are always hear to listen and talk things through when we have a real concern about an individual wellbeing this would be where a professionally trained individual would be required.

We do also understand that better communication from ourselves can also be beneficial towards those struggling knowing we are still here and working on sololutions

I understand Mærsk have two possibilities in place for the employees one was Lyseblå which the company will allow it needs to be organised through your local manager offshore, and there was a priest provided in quarantine. I am not sure if these have been communicated well possibly, we should highlight them, so the crews are aware.

I know you spoke about others not employed in Mærsk, if they are not sure they should ask at source if there is a service available. It would be good to highlight as it is often not the person that is requiring the assistance that will go and look for help they may talk with a colleague at work etc, for those colleagues it would be an advantage to them knowing what is available.

Please take some comfort knowing we are working on these points and they are ongoing and we will continue to take them on your behalf.

If there are any points of concern don't sit quiet please ask your question the club locally will try and resolve and if not possible then someone centrally will assist and get the answers for you.

Yours

Fraser Knox
Forhandler/ National officer