

PIL hopes to entice LNG-capable seafarers

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Goh Chung Hun / Credit: Martina Li

Singapore-based liner operator Pacific International Lines (PIL) will need to headhunt seafarers who are experienced with manning LNG dual-fuelled ships or LNG carriers.

PIL has eight LNG dual-fuelled newbuildings on order, comprising 14,000 TEU vessels and 8,000 TEU ships that are being constructed at Jiangnan Shipyard and Yangzijiang Shipbuilding in China. The newbuildings will be delivered from 2024 to 2025.

Speaking at the Marine Fuels 360 conference in Singapore on 28 November, PIL's General Manager (Fleet) Goh Chung Hun said, "These will be the first LNG dual-fuelled vessels in its fleet when the ships hit the water. We're all very excited but we do have the challenge of having (able) crew. I think this is a challenge that many of our peers face as well."

Goh pointed out that PIL's current crew has limited know-how relating to LNG propulsion.

He continued, "There're a few aspects that we're actively and aggressively working on. One is the training of our existing crew, especially the selected ones from our existing pool. There's the academic training, theoretical training by the academic institutions. And of course, there has to be the physical attendance at the bunkering.

"There's of course, the recruitment part, trying to recruit crew with experience on LNG dual-fuelled ships or who have sailed on gas carriers, including LPG carriers. I'll be honest here...on that aspect, it's a zero-sum game because.....I pinch from you, you pinch from me.....there's just this pool of crew going around. We need to kickstart and having said that, in terms of retention, today, we're 12 months away from the delivery of our first (LNG dual-fuelled) ship."

Goh went on to say, "We have identified a number of our better performing crew and we've started training them. We also have to put in effort to ensure that when the ships are delivered, they're still with us. Otherwise, we'd have trained them for six months and they go and join other shipping companies. So these are the real-life concerns and considerations with regards to preparing crew to take delivery of our LNG dual-fuelled ships."

Martina Li
Asia Correspondent