



Demurrage Management: From Claims Processing to Commercial Intelligence

How the answers your business needs are already inside
your claims data, and what it takes to surface them.



Introduction

The claims team holds vital intelligence that the rest of the business needs; why demurrage is being incurred, where it is concentrated, which clauses to fix before the next fixture.

Fragmented workflows and heavily manual processes bury that intelligence inside the claim. They also prevent highly trained professionals from doing the work they were hired to do. This guide is about breaking that cycle.

It draws on Marcura's experience processing more than 20,000 claims annually across dry bulk, tankers, chemicals and project cargo.

The goal is not to replace expert judgement. It is to stop burying expertise under data entry.



The scale of the challenge

Dry bulk alone sees an estimated **\$8–10 billion** in demurrage fees annually. That figure represents roughly **6–8%** of total freight spend.

Port congestion, weather, terminal delays. These are genuine operational realities, and a meaningful share of demurrage exposure flows from conditions no team can control. But a meaningful share stems from how claims are managed after the vessel sails

Which portion is operational and which is avoidable depends on data the current process rarely produces

Most claims teams use tools never designed for today's volume or complexity

Claims live across disconnected spreadsheets. Operational detail stays on SOFs rather than in systems. Knowledge about counterparties, clause history and port behaviour sits with individual analysts rather than in a shared record.

All of this is not a failure of capability. It is what the current tools make possible.

Current state indicators



99%

of SOFs processed manually



3+ hrs

per claim on average



12m

hours per year spent
on SOF processing

Where expert time actually goes

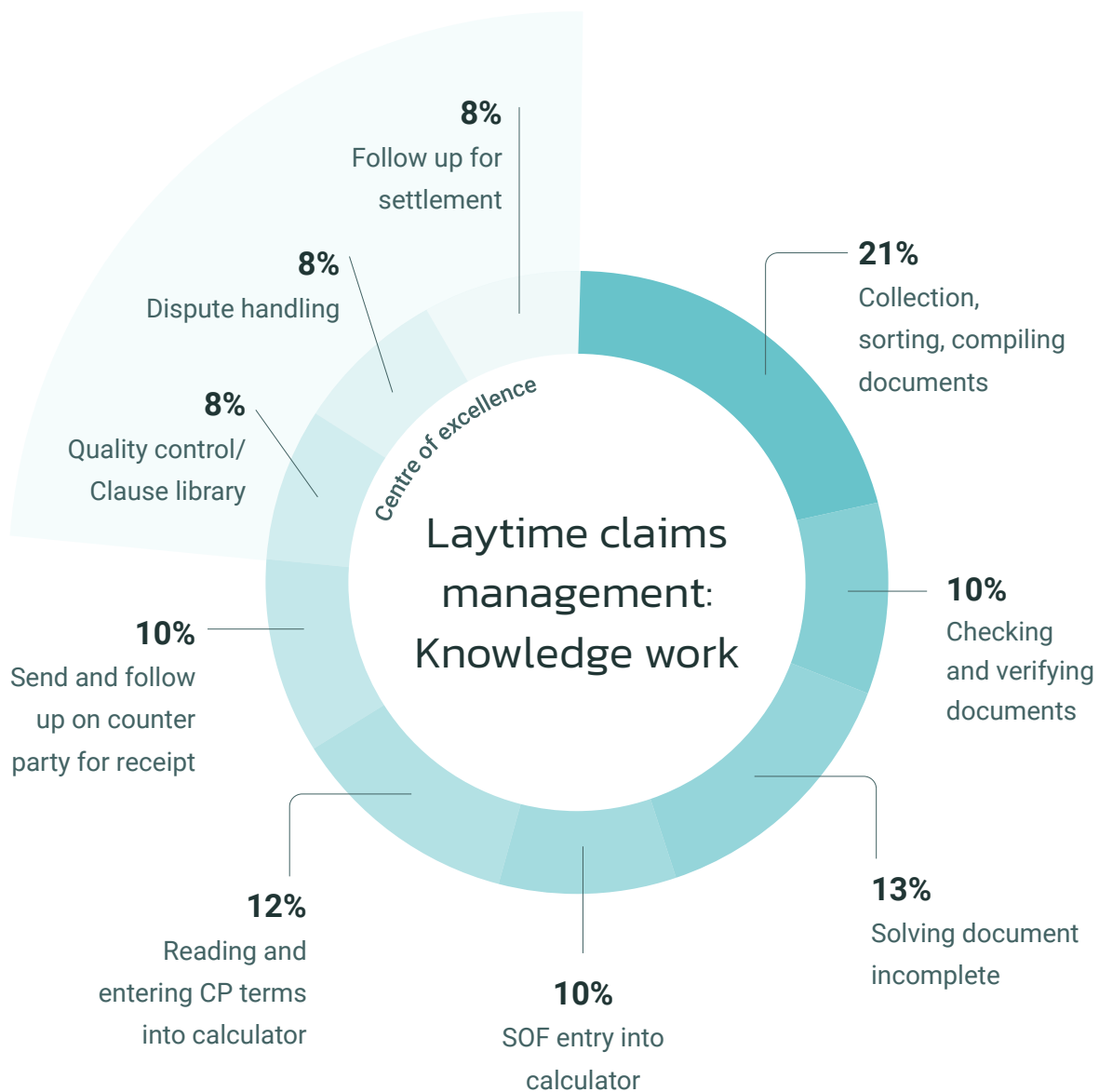
A single demurrage claim involves roughly 45 discrete steps; most are process tasks: document collection, data entry, chasing, formatting, filing.

High value work, including Analysis, dispute handling, clause interpretation and negotiation, becomes a footnote. Analysis shows roughly 75% of analyst time is absorbed by process tasks.



75%

of time is spent
on admin work



Four ways manual workflows leave money on the table

The manual claims process creates four structural points where recoverable entitlement goes unclaimed. The following patterns recur across organisations of every size and commodity type.



Rates and calculations: entitlement left unclaimed

When volume is high and analysts are under time pressure, selective transcription becomes the norm. Errors and skipped deductions are common. At demurrage rates of \$15,000–30,000 per day, each unrecovered detail compounds across the portfolio.



Time bars: no recovery

Miss a time bar and the claim is gone. When time bars live in analysts' heads or beside a spreadsheet, one absence or busy period can erase recoverable entitlement. One real portfolio documented \$450,000 in time bar failures in a single year.



Reporting: answers that take weeks

Leadership questions that should be queries become multi-week projects because the data wasn't captured in a way that makes them answerable.



Key-person risk: when expertise walks out the door

When a senior analyst leaves, the loss is not just a headcount. It is the knowledge of how a specific counterparty negotiates, the history of a disputed clause, the context behind decisions that were never written down.



The resource question

Typical Industry benchmarks: a grains shipowner typically runs 16–20 FTE on claims. A tanker operator runs 13. A charterer runs 15. Across all of them, a meaningful share of that capacity is absorbed by the process, SOF transcription, document chasing, manual time bar tracking, rather than the analysis and negotiation those teams were built for.

Where the ambiguity lives

Beyond the administrative burden of manual workflows, there is a second category of leakage that receives less attention: the cost of ambiguous, incomplete or silent charter party terms.

The clause problem

Charter party terms are rarely clean. Rider clauses added by traders in email threads. Holiday clauses that reference only BIMCO-defined holidays. STS clauses missing laytime start and end details. Early loading clauses with ambiguous language around laycan periods.

Ambiguities in charter party terms account for 5–10% of total demurrage write-downs across the industry and can delay claim submission by 20-30 days.

Daylight and documentation clause



CP silent on daylight restrictions.
No documentation clause applied.

Impact per port call: ~\$7,000

Early loading clause - ambiguous



Laytime may only commence from agreed laycan, even if loading begins earlier.

Impact per port call: ~\$70,000

Vessel on demurrage - clause incomplete



CP could have excluded daylight restrictions once vessel is on demurrage.

Impact per port call: ~\$20,000

STS clause - missing details



Shifting from, laytime start and end details absent from STS clause.

Impact per port call: ~\$20,000

Real world story:

The holiday clause

One organisation had a holiday clause in their standard terms, but it referenced BIMCO holidays specifically. When the vessel called at a port observing a local public holiday not on the BIMCO list, the charterer was on the hook for a day and a half of demurrage the clause should have covered.

The fix on renewal was one word: remove 'BIMCO', so any recognised holiday is excluded from laytime. But identifying the problem required someone to cross-reference operational data against the clause. Without structured data, that connection either never gets made or takes weeks to surface.

The same logic applies across clause types, COAs up for renewal, fixtures where you know the port conditions.

Structured claims data tells you which clauses have historically cost you and what changes are worth pushing for at the next negotiation

New Claims

27

+3  on last week



Awaiting Missing Documents

50

+3  on last week



Owner	Counterparty	Status	Last action
 Eagle Shippin... Owner	Salzgitter Flachstahl Charterer	Awaiting Missing... 	Today by
 G2 Ocean Owner	Suzano Pulp & paper... Charterer	Calculation Created  	3 days ago
 Baffinland Iro... Owner	Suzano S.A. Charterer	Returned by Customer 	3 days ago

How Marcura Claims Works

Marcura Claims combines technology, AI and a specialist operations team to give teams the accuracy, visibility and analytical depth to negotiate with confidence and make better decisions at every stage of the voyage. From full managed support to self-service capabilities that embed into existing workflows, Marcura Claims is built to adapt to how your team operates.

Shipping Port Agency & Freight with Shipping				
Active MER Number: E16IAG2020 Canada				
Key Management 12				
INDIVIDUAL NAME	POSITION	RELATED ORGANIZATION NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	NATIONALITY
Hans-Christian Apel Mordhorst	Director	Marcura Equities FZE	Sep 15, 1990	Germany
Guido Xhindoli	Director	Marcura Platform Solutions FZE	Sep 15, 1990	Italy
Andre Braga	Founder	Marcura Holding Limited	Sep 15, 1990	Portugal
John Smith	Founder	Seamont Brokerage & Transport Ltd		United Kingdom

Marcura Claims — why is it different?

Marcura Claims is NOT just another laytime calculator



Typical functionalities for a laytime calculator



Data-driven and AI **validation checks** for increased accuracy



Everything **digitized and connected**, from CPs to SOFs



Reporting and insights, feeding into the learning loop



Version control and detailed comparators for increased **transparency** and **auditability**



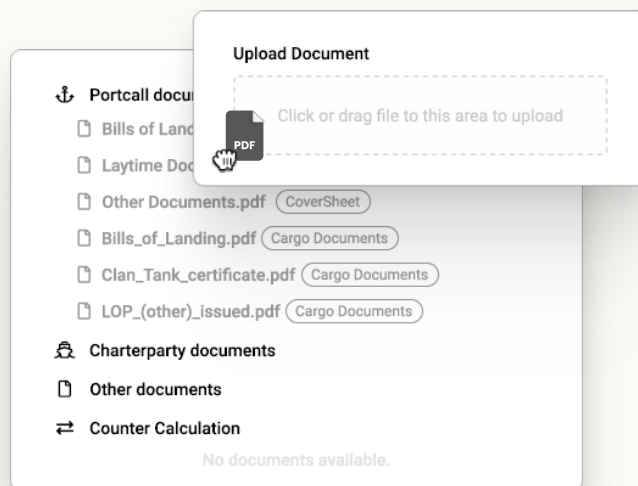
Access to a wide **network** of counterparties enabling a **faster** claims settlement process

Document collection

Marcura's Port Document Management Service (PDMS) tracks port calls using AIS data and initiates document collection automatically when a vessel sails. The PDMS team follows up with agents until it receives a complete, verified bundle with stamps, signatures and NOR count reconciled against the SOFs.

Document list

- ✓ Notice of readiness
- ✓ Statement of facts – vessel
- ✓ Statement of facts – Agent
- ✓ Statement of facts – Terminal
- ✓ Statement of facts – Surveyor
- ✓ Key transfer meeting
- ✓ OBQ / Ullage report(s)
- ✓ Letter of Protest – Issued and received
- ✓ Empty tank / Clean tank certificate
- ✓ Bills of lading – Loading calls only
- ✓ Pumping Logs – Discharge calls only



SOF digitisation and normalisation

OCR extracts the raw text. A large language model trained on more than 600,000 SOFs interprets event sequences across terminals and agents. A specialist QA team then reviews and corrects the output before it enters the calculator. The result is normalised, structured event data, every event captured, not just the ones selected for the calculation.

PORT CALL PATTERN	NATURE OF CLAUSE	EST IMPACT PER PORT	EST IMPACT
Discharging Wheat, Oran	Claim was silent	\$14,375	\$175,520
Loading Wheat, Rouen	Claim was ambiguous	\$200	\$2,400
Loading Percoke, Benecia	Claim was missing	\$1,710	\$20,520
Loading Percoke, Benecia	Claim was incomplete	\$395	\$4,750

Laytime calculation

With events in the system, Marcura produces a draft calculation. The calculator handles SHINC, SHEX, weather working days, notice time, turn time, shifting time, STS operations. For straightforward claim types, more than 80% is complete before customer review.

Edit Adjustment

Activity *

LOADING PREPARATION

AWAITING HOSE DISCONNE...

BUNKERING

CONNECTING HOSE

DETENTION

Time Used

03h 12m

Counting *

100

Time Taken

100%

03h 12m

CANCEL

SUBMIT

Reporting and analytics

Because every SOF event is captured and normalised, reporting becomes a query rather than a project. Four categories of intelligence become available.

- Demurrage/despatch trends for portfolio visibility
- Port performance data to identify terminals and activities that drive outliers
- Clause analysis to surface costly terms for renegotiation
- Counterparty performance to reveal negotiation patterns and leverage

That last category changes the negotiation dynamic directly.

When a counterparty knows your claims are consistently accurate, the cycle shortens. When the data shows how that counterparty has behaved across a broad population of claims, the analyst entering the negotiation has an edge no individual team's memory can replicate.



A note on AI in demurrage

LLMs aren't perfect. Document quality, scan angle, handwriting legibility all affect output. The QA layer exists because automation alone is not sufficient.

A pattern emerges among teams using AI-only claims tools: the workload does not disappear, it relocates. Someone is still chasing the stamped

original, still filling data gaps, still handling the exceptions the algorithm flagged but could not resolve.

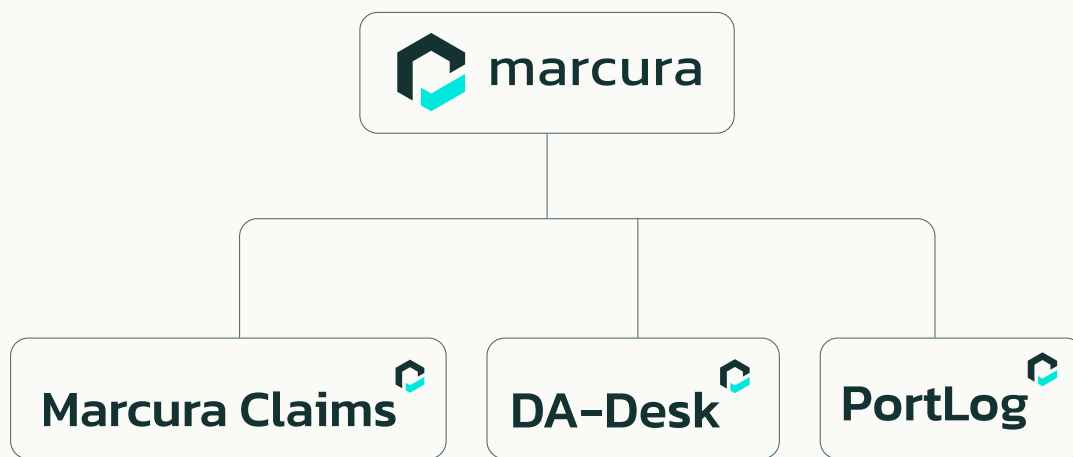
The best outcomes combine automation with expert review so outputs are accurate and defensible.

Claim tracking and time bar management

Every open claim, its status, time bar, document package and correspondence history, sits in one place, visible to the whole team. Time bars are flagged automatically. Caseloads are transparent. When an analyst leaves, the claim does not go with them.

Published outcomes

- ▼ 50% reduction in processing time
- ▼ 7–8% reduction in demurrage spend
- ▲ 20% FTE productivity improvement
- ▼ 60% negotiation time reduction



Part of a connected ecosystem

Marcura Claims sits within the Marcura group alongside DA-Desk, PortLog and other maritime operations capabilities. For organisations already running DA-Desk, activating Marcura Claims is straightforward: when a port call closes, the data flows directly into the claims pipeline. No manual handoff, no email chase for documents.

The information is already in the ecosystem. Adding claims is a matter of turning it on.

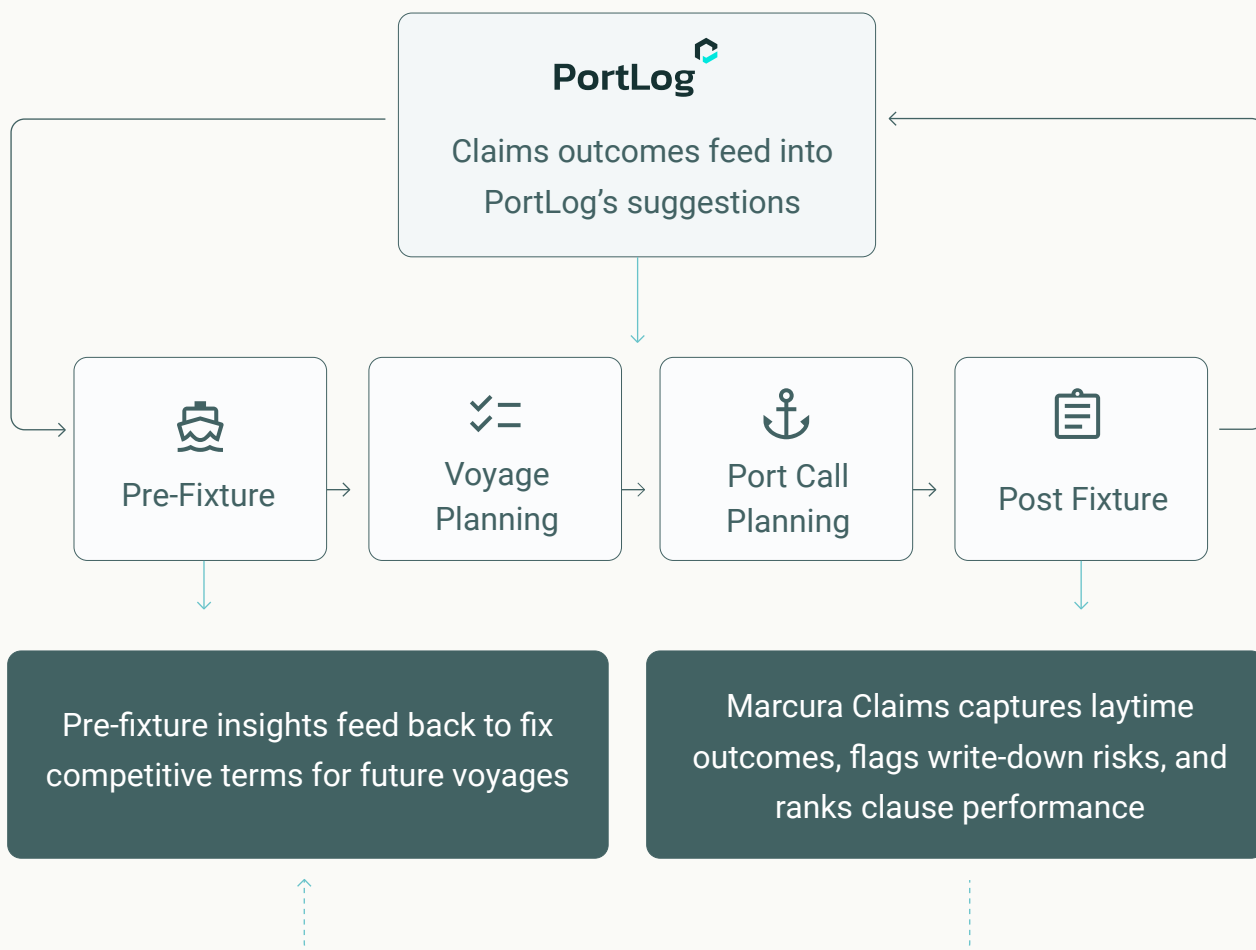
IMOS integration pulls voyage and fixture data inbound, keeping the claims record aligned with the voyage record without duplicate entry.

Learning loop

Claims outcomes feed into port performance data that chartering teams use to estimate voyage costs and berth order. That means their models are informed by deterministic outcomes from real claims rather than industry averages.

Clause patterns inform the next fixture negotiation. The claims team's work feeds forward into commercial decisions it would otherwise never reach.

The logical next step is charter party risk analysis, using accumulated claims patterns to review new charter parties before they are signed, flagging clause types that have historically generated disputes and quantifying the exposure in advance.



What the claims team can be

“Marcura Claims helped us move from manual processing to a streamlined, insight-driven model. It has directly improved our decision-making and operational efficiency.”

—

Kristian Helt,
Director (Chartering)

Pacific Basin

The claims team already holds what the business needs, the knowledge of which counterparties to watch, which clauses create exposure, which ports carry the highest risk of disputed time.

What changes with structured data and the right platform is how much of that knowledge reaches the decisions where it matters.

The goal is not to automate the claims function. The goal is to stop burying expertise under tasks that should not require it and to focus expertise on decisions that drive commercial impact.

The path starts with the SOF. Capture everything. Build the data layer. The rest follows.

New Claims

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+3 ▲ on last week



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**Your claims data already holds the answers.
Let's talk about how to surface them.**

Speak to the Marcura Claims team about what structured demurrage management could mean for your portfolio.

marcura.com/process-claims