

# Seaway Marine Transport Keeps IT Afloat with Acronis® Backup & Recovery™ 10



Seaway Marine Transport (SMT) manages the largest Canadian fleet of self-unloading vessels and gearless bulk carriers operating on the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River and the waters of eastern Canada. With carrying capacities of up to 34,000 tons per ship, SMT provides one of the most efficient marine shipping solutions within its area of operation. It creates customer loyalty through highly competitive rates and on-time deliveries.

SMT meets its IT challenges working out of a computing environment which is anything but typical – a ship that can be 700 feet long and have twin 10,000 horsepower engines – the equivalent of a moving factory on water with a built-in hotel. Because the ships lack dedicated, climate-controlled IT facilities, life aboard a vessel can be hard on computer equipment. That's why SMT uses Acronis® Backup and Recovery™ 10 to keep everything shipshape.

## Dependent on many shipboard applications

SMT uses many onboard applications to record time-sensitive data including daily work to be performed on the ship, distances sailed, estimated arrival and departure times, loading/unloading times, fuel consumption and more. Some information is time-critical, especially information for arrivals, departures and any delays. It's fed into the company's own shore-based scheduling program which helps make the most efficient use of the company's vessels while meeting customer commitments.

Applications also help manage online HR (personnel rosters often change on a voyage), make payroll and speed the task of procuring supplies. Additional applications cover training and regulatory license requirements for each ship's officers and crew, and aid officers in directing crew assignments.

### Organization:

Seaway Marine Transport  
[www.seawaymarinetransport.com](http://www.seawaymarinetransport.com)

### Sector:

Shipping

### Key Challenges:

- Keeping several business-critical applications running on a ship
- Meeting the needs of crew and customers, without the possibility of an immediate resupply of backup IT hardware.

### Environment:

#### Key Production Applications

Lawson (Financials) / Microsoft Office / ABS Nautical Systems NS5 (Shipboard Maintenance and procurement) / ShipNet (Shipboard Payroll and Personnel) / Voyage Logging System (In house shipboard app) / Scheduler (in house shore app, ship scheduling) / Citrix Access / Exchange

#### Databases and related storage

MS SQL 2005 / Lawson / DB2 / Mysql (shipboard) / MS SQL Express (Shipboard) / SANS 4TB (Data Centre each) / 140GB per ship x 24 ships

### Solution:

Acronis® Backup & Recovery™ 10

### Benefits:

- Recovery times reduced by orders of magnitude
- More reliable than the tape-based backup and recovery system it replaces
- Faster application updates and equipment upgrades during annual Winter layup

### Keeping IT above water

The loss of any one of the key production business applications – including ship’s crew payroll – throws the ships and shore personnel into a manual process that reduces the efficiency of a business that is literally on the move, according to Michael Harris, SMT LAN Administrator – Ship Systems. SMT’s strategy for managing shipboard system recovery is simple: Harris and colleague Denis Levasseur need to ensure that essential functions are maintained until systems can be brought back to port for repairs or replacement, while keeping an eye on costs.

The company was using Symantec® Backup Exec®, a tape-based system recovery solution, to recover applications to a replacement machine. But too often, tape drives or the tapes themselves wouldn’t perform properly in an industrial environment. Further, restorations took up to 12 hours, longer than the two-hour window they aspired to. This situation put the IT team at odds with the business goals of the company, which is dedicated to achieving high efficiency levels across all of its operations. Even when they installed an Iomega REV Drive disk-based tape emulation system in place of tape drives to drive down recovery times and increase reliability, they could not come close to a two-hour recovery.

*“We are confident that Acronis will help us better support our fleet and will allow us to recover systems quickly at any port the ships travel to.”*

-SMT’s Mike Harris

### Evaluating a disk imaging-based solution

Harris was aware of Acronis, with its patented disk-imaging based backup and recovery system, and decided to evaluate the company’s Acronis Backup & Recovery 10 flagship product. *“We tested the server recovery process using Acronis in the lab at our head office. We were able to recover a server in just over an hour.”* Based on the positive results of the evaluation, SMT decided to deploy Acronis on all of its ships, and the recovery process changed dramatically across the fleet.

### Quick recoveries

Not long after it was in place, Harris and Levasseur put Acronis through a real-world test when the 730-foot gearless bulk vessel M/V Tim S. Dool lost all four RAID drives, rendering the server that ran key applications useless. Recovery involved replacing the drives and booting with an Acronis boot CD and recovering all the logical drives. The process took 75 minutes to complete; well within the most optimistic timelines they had set for a recovery.

### Reducing maintenance times

Even when the ships are not in motion, Acronis helps IT function more efficiently onboard each vessel. During yearly maintenance from January to March, Harris and Levasseur move through two dozen ships as quickly as possible, applying software updates and patches, and carrying out hardware updates and maintenance. This all has to be completed in time to return of the vessels to service when the ice thaws on the Great Lakes. Harris credits Acronis with shaving off about an hour of work per vessel, or 24 hours in total over the four to six weeks the team is allotted for this activity.

### Keeping recoveries simple

Acronis has eliminated the need for lengthy reinstallations of operating systems and backup applications before data can be restored. Using a single boot and restoration of an entire server, operating system, applications and data keeps recoveries simple, allowing personnel to complete the task in a fraction of the time that it once took. As Harris says, *“We are confident that Acronis will help us better support our fleet and will allow us to recover systems quickly at any port the ships travel to.”*

## About Acronis

Acronis is a global provider of storage management software that enables corporations and individuals to move, manage and maintain digital assets. Acronis sells innovative solutions for disaster recovery, server consolidation and virtualization migration, which allow users to maintain business continuity and reduce downtime in computing environments. Acronis software products are sold in more than 180 countries and are available in 13 languages. For additional information, please visit [www.acronis.com/](http://www.acronis.com/)



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