



Maritime &
Coastguard
Agency

Safer lives,
safer ships,
cleaner seas

Occupational Health for Seagoing Operations

A regulator's perspective

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What is a seafarer?

Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) states:

A seafarer is any person, including a master, who is employed or engaged or works in any capacity on board a ship and whose normal place of work is on a ship.

Many different jobs, many different working places



Many different types of ship



Working and Living Environment

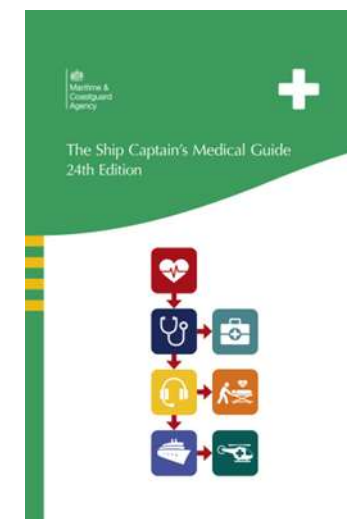
Routine and Emergency Duties



Medical care on board

Training, medicine chest, medical guide, TMAS

- IMO STCW model courses adapted to national training curriculum, standard of training varies hugely
- No internationally agreed requirements for medications or equipments to be carried on board
- Medical guide must be carried on board, International Medical Guide for Ships (IMGS) or equivalent
- Access to remote telemedical advice service (TMAS) – variable in training of doctors, service provided



When a higher level of medical care is needed

Evacuation

- Helicopter, fast boat, diversion or early arrival
- Not always available – distance, weather, availability
- Risks to all options



When a higher level of medical care is needed

Care ashore

- Medical care
- Equipment and capability
- Language
- Nursing care
- Communication



Lifestyle risks



Occupational risks

- Different cargoes
- Heat and cold
- Confined spaces
- Noise
- Motion sickness
- Fatigue
- And more.....



Regulation

Medical standards and their application

- Healthy seafarers working in healthy environments
- MSN 1886 outlines the UK statutory standards for fitness to work at sea
- Generic standards interpreted in context of seafarer's routine and emergency duties and sailing area
- Some similarities with DVLA Grp 2 requirements, also with CAA and OEUK
- Medical fitness in line with standards v physical capability to perform required tasks on board
- Aim to allow people to work at sea, safely.
- Not an occupational health assessment



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MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE

MSN 1886 (M+F)

MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION, 2006
WORK IN FISHING CONVENTION, 2007 (ILO No. 188)
Medical Examination System:

Appointment of Approved Doctors and
Medical and Eyesight Standards

International perspective

- MSN 1886 based on International Labour Organisation and International Maritime Organisation Guidelines on Medical Examination for Seafarers
- Guidelines last updated in 2010, review process currently underway
- Are consensus Guidelines agreed on tripartite basis
- Minimum standard for seafarer fitness
- Much research needed into illness and injury patterns amongst seafarers
- Sharing of knowledge on biannual basis at International Symposium of Maritime Health June 11 – 14th 2025 (www.ismh17.org)

