



Merchant Marine **Notice**

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

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(DCCM)
V.04

Safety and Health on board- Responsibilities of the Shipowners and Operating Companies.

No: **MMN-08/2021**

1. Purpose

The General Directorate of Merchant Marine provides to shipowners and operating companies these guidelines in order to minimize the risk of accidents on board of the Panamanian Flag Vessel's.

2. Scope

The shipowners or operating companies should develop provisions on the detrimental effect on their health and well-being of the abuse of alcohol and drugs and other potentially harmful substances, and the risk and concerns relating HIV/AIDS and of other health risk related activities on board.

3. Drug and alcohol abuse and dependency.

Alcohol may impair judgment and increase the risk of accidents. In the long term, alcohol abuse may lead to ill health and, in extreme cases, death.

The maximum limit of alcohol concentration in the blood will be 0.05% (milligrams per deciliter) or 0.25% (micrograms per deciliter) of alcohol in the breath,

Drug abuse is a serious hazard to the crew members, other persons on board, and the security of the vessel.

The shipowners or operating companies should ensure that:

- adopt policies and procedures to prevent drug and alcohol abuse on ships;
- educate seafarers on the harmful effects and consequences of the unauthorized possession and abuse of drugs and of alcohol;
- provide guidance to seafarers on safe and sensible alcohol consumption;

- identify at an early stage seafarers who may be abusing drugs or have an alcohol-related problem;
- eliminate the presence of unauthorized drugs on ships;
- provide confidential advice, support and assistance to any seafarers known to have drug- or alcohol-related problems; and
- provide instructions to seafarers and the shore-based employees responsible for implementing the drug and alcohol policy.

4. Fatigue

The shipowners or operating companies will pay special attention to the Guidance on Fatigue Mitigation and Management (MSC/Circ.1014), revised at its 100th session (MSC.1/Circ.1598), and others that may arise.

For the purpose of the IMO Guidelines the following definition for fatigue is used: "A state of physical and/or mental impairment resulting from factors such as inadequate sleep, extended wakefulness, work/rest requirements out of sync with circadian rhythms and physical, mental or emotional exertion that can impair alertness and the ability to safely operate a ship or perform safety-related duties."

These guidelines outline mechanisms that may be used to combat fatigue in order to reduce associated health problems and prevent fatigue-related accidents.

These guidelines should be taken into consideration when:

- developing, implementing and maintaining safety management systems under the ISM Code;
- promoting fatigue mitigation and management;
- promoting awareness of the causes and consequences of fatigue and developing and delivering training programmes and courses;
- conducting casualty or accident/incident investigations; and
- preparing applications for minimum safe manning documents or when determining minimum safe manning levels for ships.

The shipowner or operating companies must take into account the short- and long-term physical and mental health effects on seafarers.

Lack of sleep may lead to adverse health effects including but not limited to:

- poor concentration;
- increased risk of error and slower reaction times, which can mean that incidents are not averted in time;
- reduced ability to handle duties safely and to perform tasks optimally; and

- damaging health effects over a long period of time.

The IMO Guidelines on fatigue outline mechanisms that may be used to combat fatigue in order to reduce associated health problems and prevent fatigue-related accidents.

5. HIV and AIDS

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) continues to be a major global public health issue. It weakens the body's natural defences against illness, leaving an affected individual susceptible to infections and some forms of cancer. The most advanced stage of HIV infection is Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

The shipowners or operating companies should ensure that:

- provide and support health promotion and behavioral change programmes on HIV and AIDS;
- eliminate prejudice and discrimination against seafarers living with HIV;
- provide support in confidence for any seafarers known to be living with HIV;
- provide up-to-date information, materials and advice on HIV and AIDS to all employees, both sea- and shore-based, through induction programmes and ongoing training programmes;
- provide a kit for protection against blood-transmitted diseases in accordance with national specifications for carriage on ships;
- make condoms available to seafarers on all ships; and
- maintain confidentiality concerning the status of any seafarer who may be living with HIV.

6. Dangerous cargo and ballast

The shipowners or operating companies consider the relevant conventions, codes and practices, as they are set out in the requirements for the safe transport, stowage, segregation, loading, unloading and securing of cargoes, and regulations in relation to ballast water, and should also ensure that associated risks and hazards are identified and preventive measures are implemented.

The shipowner or operating companies must pay special attention to the SOLAS Chapter VII (Carriage of Dangerous Goods); International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL); and Accident Prevention on board ship at sea and in port, ILO.

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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Notice or any other request should be forward to:

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