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## Telemedical Advice Service (TMAS) For Ships At Sea

**Notice to all Shipowners, Ship Operators and Managers, Masters, Skippers of Fishing Vessels and Pleasure Vessels and all Seafarers**

*This Marine Guidance Note replaces MGN 225 (M+F), as amended.*

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### Summary

This Marine Guidance Note provides information on how to obtain telemedical advice (previously Radio Medical Advice) when a medical incident or medical emergency arises at sea. It explains that contact should first be made with HM Coastguard, who will then put the caller in touch with one of the UK's designated TMAS providers.

1. European legislation on minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels (Council Directive 92/29/EEC) requires Member States to designate one or more centres to provide telemedical advice to ships. For the UK, the officially designated providers are at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth and at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.
2. Telemedical advice is available free of charge to provide support in cases where an individual suffers either illness or an accident at sea. The advice is intended to supplement the first aid training of the ship's crew and the written guidance that is available, such as the Ship's Captain's Medical Guide (SCMG), and may also be necessary to support the person in charge of medical care on board the vessel through a medical procedure.
3. The SCMG includes guidance on the information to provide to the TMAS provider with a proforma to collect it. It is sometimes useful to supplement this information with photographs.
4. To obtain telemedical advice Masters and Skippers should first contact HM Coastguard. Contact should be made on either MF DSC, VHF DSC or VHF Channel 16. GMDSS compliant satellite voice communications systems, or mobile phones, can be used for medical advice or assistance, but should not be relied upon as the only means of



communication. The telephone numbers to contact HM Coastguard are +44 344 3820026 and +44 208 3127386.

Urgent calls for assistance may be broadcast using the normal Urgency prowords "PAN PAN " as follows :

"PAN PAN" x3  
"All Stations" x3 OR Individual Coastguard / Coast Station x3 (If name known)  
"This is [ship name]" x3  
"Call Sign ....."  
"MMSI ....."  
"I require medical advice"  
"Over"

5. The Coastguard or Coast Station will direct the caller to a working frequency and is obliged to seek basic details, including brief details of the casualty's illness or injury, type of vessel, next port of call or nearest at which the casualty could be landed, confirmation of position, and if mid-ocean, to discuss with Coastguard when likely to be in helicopter range. The Coastguard will then put the caller through to a TMAS doctor. Medical Staff who deal with telemedical advice calls have some familiarisation training so should be aware of the special circumstances and limited facilities likely to be available at sea. Depending on the circumstances and the advice of the doctor, the Coastguard may assist in arranging evacuation either by helicopter or lifeboat.
6. Any enquiries about this Notice should be addressed to:

### More Information

Seafarer Safety & Health Branch  
Maritime and Coastguard Agency  
Bay 2/19  
Spring Place  
105 Commercial Road  
Southampton  
SO15 1EG

Tel : +44 (0) 203 81 72835  
e-mail: seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk

Website Address: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/maritime-and-coastguard-agency)

General Enquiries: [infoline@mcga.gov.uk](mailto:infoline@mcga.gov.uk)

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