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## **Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Food and Catering: Provision of Food and Fresh Water**

**Notice to all shipowners, masters, all seafarers and other shipboard personnel**

*This notice should be read in conjunction with Part 8 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention)(Minimum Requirements for Seafarers etc) Regulations 2014 ("the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations") and with Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1846 (M) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Food and Catering: Ship's Cooks; Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1844 (M) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Crew Accommodation: Marine Guidance Note MGN 481(M) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Crew Accommodation. This notice replaces Marine Guidance Note MGN 397 (M+F).*

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### **Summary**

- The purpose of this Merchant Shipping Notice is to set out requirements for provision of food and fresh water, in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Minimum Requirements for Seafarers etc.) Regulations ("the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations"), Part 8 and provide appropriate guidance.
- The requirements set out in this Merchant Shipping Notice must be complied with regardless of the age, size and type of vessel other than those specifically exempted.
- The shipowner and master of a ship must ensure that food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity is provided free of charge to meet the needs of those on board.
- Bacterial contamination is the most serious risk to food and fresh water safety.
- Those preparing or serving food must be properly trained and demonstrate a working knowledge of the principles and practices of food hygiene.
- Prevention using risk assessment and management approach is one of the most effective means of ensuring food and fresh water safety.
- This notice also contains supplementary non-mandatory guidance to assist industry with some practical advice on the provision of food and fresh water for all merchant ships as indicated with grey shaded text.



## Relationship with the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations

- Part 8 of the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations needs to be read together with this Merchant Shipping Notice, as this Notice sets out standards which must be met in order to comply with legal obligations under those Regulations. Failure to comply with those obligations may be a criminal offence under the Regulations.
- To assist the reader, paragraph 9 identifies the regulation in the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations which refers to this Notice and identifies the relevant paragraph of this Notice.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations, in Part 8, make provisions covering food and catering for seafarers working on merchant ships, commercially operated yachts and other sea-going vessels in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 3.2 and Standard A3.2 and where applicable Guideline B3.2 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention, 2006. Pleasure Vessels, fishing vessels, ships of traditional build, warships, naval auxiliaries and vessels which are not ordinarily engaged in commercial activities are not subject to these Regulations. Fishing vessels remain subject to the Merchant Shipping (Provisions and Water) Regulations 1989.
- 1.2 For guidance on the MCA interpretation of “seafarer”, “ship” or “shipowner” in the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations, see Marine Guidance Note 471 (M), Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Definitions.
- 1.3 Other relevant shipping and public health regulations are the:
- Food Hygiene Regulations 2006, as amended; and
  - Public Health (Ships) Regulations 1979 as amended.

### 2. General Requirements

- 2.1 In providing food and drinking water on board ship, account must be taken of factors including the duration and the nature of the voyage, the number of seafarers on board and the quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety of food. The religious requirements and cultural practices of the seafarers as they relate to food must also be taken into account.
- 2.2 For ships with a catering department, the organisation and equipment must be such as to permit the provision to the seafarers of adequate, varied and nutritious meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions.
- 2.3 Food hygiene principles must be applied regardless of the age, size and type of vessel. The information contained in this Notice, which supports ILO standards, provides a practical food hygiene guide and general food safety principles for the vast majority of vessels (such as general cargo), where catering arrangements relate more closely to a domestic environment than a food business.

### 3. Provision of food and drinking water (Regulation 34)

- 3.1 The shipowner and master must ensure that food and drinking water are provided on the ship which:



3.1.1 are suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety taking account of –

(i) the number of seafarers on board and the character, nature and duration of the voyage and

(ii) the different religious requirements and cultural practices in relation to food of the seafarers on board,

3.1.2 do not contain anything which is likely to cause sickness or injury to health or which renders any food or drinking water unpalatable, and

3.1.3 are otherwise fit for consumption.

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3.2 The shipowner and master of a ship must ensure that food and drinking water provided in accordance with 3.1 above are provided free of charge to all seafarers while they are on board.

#### **4. Organisation and equipment of the catering department (Regulation 35)**

4.1 The shipowner and the master must ensure that:

4.1.1 food and drinking water which are provided for seafarers are stored and handled; and

4.1.2 the catering department is organised and equipped

so as to permit the provision to seafarers of adequate, varied and nutritious meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions, in accordance with the requirements in this Notice.

4.2 In fulfilling these requirements the shipowner and master must take account of the guidance in Section 1 (Design, construction, equipment and maintenance of galley areas) and Section 7 (Stores) in Annex 1 of this Merchant Shipping Notice.

4.3 In fulfilling the requirements on the storage and handling of fresh water the shipowner and master must take account of the guidance in Annex 2 of this Merchant Shipping Notice.

4.4 Galleys, storerooms and sanitary rooms must be maintained in a clean and habitable condition and all equipment and installations must be maintained in good working order.

*Merchant Shipping Regulations and gives additional guidance on standards expected on merchant ships. Detailed advice specific to galley operations is available in Chapter 14.*

*store rooms and refrigerating equipment and mess rooms is set out in Marine Guidance Note*



## **5. Training requirements for catering staff and other persons processing food in the galley (Regulation 40)**

5.1 The MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations require that the shipowner and the master of the ship must ensure that every member of catering staff is properly trained or instructed for their position, and any person processing food in the galley is properly trained or instructed in areas including food and person hygiene and handling. See MSN 1846(M) for more information.

## **6. Inspection of food and catering facilities (Regulation 36)**

6.1 The master of a ship must ensure that, not less than once a week –  
(a) the supplies of food and drinking water on board are inspected to check compliance with Regulations 34 and 35 and  
(b) the catering department and its equipment are inspected to check compliance with regulation 35.

6.2 An inspection under paragraph 6.1 must be carried out by  
(a) the master, or  
(b) a person authorised by the master,  
together with a member of the catering staff.

6.3 The master must ensure that the results of any inspection referred to in 6.1 are recorded in the official logbook of the ship.

### **GUIDANCE:**

Ships are also inspected by marine surveyors according to the MCA's inspection regime which provides for food safety and hygiene standards in accordance with the relevant merchant shipping legislation.

Environmental or Port Health Officers enforce food safety standards and issue ship sanitation certificates as required by the International Health Regulations.

A close liaison is maintained between local offices of respective organisations to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that where inspections carried out by members of one organisation reveal a situation that would clearly also be of concern to the other, appropriate actions under respective powers can be considered.

## **7. Food and Drinking water safety - Information for crew**

7.1 Information on food and drinking water safety reports should be readily available to members of the crew. The report should be written in a language that can be clearly understood by the crew and in English.

## **8. More Detailed Guidance**

8.1 In fulfilling the duties set out above, (subject to paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 above), regard should be had to:

- (i) Annex 1: Food Safety and Hygiene including advice on diet and nutrition
- (ii) Annex 2: Water including its supply, storage and distribution and advice on maintenance of water systems.



## 9. References to this Notice in the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations

9.1 The references to this Notice in the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations are identified below. This is the version of Merchant Shipping Notice 1845 (M) which is considered to be relevant until further notice.

**Regulation 35 – Organisation and equipment of the catering department.** The organisation and equipment of the catering department requirements are set out in paragraph 4 of this Notice.

### More Information

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***Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas***



## FOOD SAFETY AND HYGIENE

*This annex covers construction, design, equipment and maintenance of galley areas, health and safety, diet and nutrition and personal hygiene, preparation, cooking and food service, storage and cleaning.*

### 1. Design, construction, equipment and maintenance of galley areas.

Food areas should be designed, constructed, equipped and properly maintained to enable good hygiene and suitable health and safety standards to be maintained. Materials used should be durable, non absorbent, smooth and easy to clean with no sharp edges or corners. Decks should be anti-slip and provide adequate drainage if necessary. All spaces should be well lit.

The design and layout should enable clear access below, behind or between equipment or be properly sealed/integrated to prevent the accumulation of debris in inaccessible spaces. So far as practical, refrigeration units should not be located close to ovens or other large galley cooking units. There should be adequate working space to provide a safe working environment.

Ventilation should be adequate with suitable mechanical extraction to maintain reasonable temperatures and humidity levels. Condensation particularly on deck heads can be a problem but with suitable mechanical ventilation this can be kept under control. Supplementary ventilation should be provided for particular hot spots. Ventilation ducting should be accessible and regularly cleaned to minimise the risk of fire. An intervening air space should be provided between any WC and the galley/food preparation rooms.

Catering equipment should be adequate for the number of crew and fit for purpose. Equipment and utensils should be fixed in place or stored safely to avoid damage or injury when the ship rolls. Equipment should be stored so as to protect it against contamination.

Dedicated hand wash basins with soap and hand-drying facilities should be provided for the use of the catering staff. In addition separate dedicated sinks for food preparation and equipment washing should also be provided.

### 2. Health and Safety Issues

There are obvious hazards within the galley and store areas, such as wet and/or greasy decks, extreme temperatures and humidity, and congestion particularly around the galley range, and hot plate area. Cleaning materials, electrical appliances, fumes, knives, equipment such as deep fat fryers, brat pans and tilting kettles are also hazardous. Practical control measures should be in place to reduce the risk of injury in the catering environment, for example:

- Anyone working in the catering areas should be provided with appropriate protective clothing and specialist anti-slip, protected toe cap, footwear
- Knives and other sharp utensils should not be left in a sink or washing up bowl submerged in water
- Stowage – items should be properly secured
- Pots and pans should be secured during cooking and only filled to safe levels particularly in heavy seas
- Protective guards should be fitted on mechanical fans, food mixers and other kitchen equipment with exposed blades or other dangerous parts.



- Electrical equipment, including wiring in the galley and store areas should be regularly inspected by either a qualified member of the crew or a shore side contractor.
- Burns and scalds are common injuries. A first aid box should be provided either in the galley or a suitable area convenient to the galley. The contents of the first aid box should be checked and when necessary replenished at appropriate intervals. A notice stating the action to take if someone is burned or scalded should be prominently displayed in or close by the galley.
- The use of antibacterial hand cleaners, moisturising cream and barrier creams should be encouraged to reduce the risk of skin infections particularly dermatitis.

Detailed advice specific to galley operations is available in Chapter 14 of the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seamen.

### 3. Diet and Nutrition

**The shipowner and the master of a ship must ensure that food and drinking water are suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety.**

A good variety of food provides a healthy diet. Meals should provide a balance of carbohydrates, protein, fat, fibre, vitamins and minerals. Food should be prepared and cooked with minimum levels of salt, fat and sugar. As a general guide:

**Carbohydrates** - High energy food which includes bread, potatoes, rice, pasta and breakfast cereals.

**Proteins** - include fish, meat, poultry, eggs, milk and other dairy products (check the fat content of some cheeses).

**Vitamins and minerals** are contained in fruit and vegetables, fresh, frozen, dried and canned including fruit juice.

Drinks as with food a balanced intake is important. Not too much sugar, caffeine and calories. Water, fruit juices and low fat milk are all good alternatives.

Provision should be made for any special needs because of religion, special dietary requirements, or customary dietary practices where certain rules or requirements in relation to some food or with the way food is prepared must be observed.

Catering staff should be aware of the dangers associated with food allergies. If a person with a food allergy inadvertently eats even a small amount of that food this can make them very ill or in extreme cases cause death. Some problem ingredients are:

- (i) Peanuts;
- (ii) Nuts;
- (iii) Gluten;
- (iv) Fish;
- (v) Soya;
- (vi) Celery;
- (vii) Mustard;
- (viii) Sesame seeds
- (ix) Sulphur dioxide

**NOTE - This list is illustrative only as there are likely to be other ingredients that can cause adverse reactions in persons who are sensitive to them.**



## 4. Food Hygiene

### 4.1 Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point System

In the case of companies operating large passenger/cruise ships and other vessels with a substantial crew complement, the philosophy of the International Safety Management Code is likely to have been extended already to include food and fresh water safety and hygiene issues, based on a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system. A HACCP system is a structured and documented hazard analysis system, identifying critical control points and specific actions to be taken at these points. HACCP is required under food safety legislation and is applicable to food businesses. Such systems are based on robust food safety policy and detailed procedures, all fully documented, that will extend far beyond the primary advice contained in this Merchant Shipping Notice.

### 4.2 About Food Hygiene

Traditionally the basis for food hygiene standards has been the use of clean well-maintained catering spaces and the avoidance of unsanitary conditions. Even in clean, well-maintained galleys however, food may be handled carelessly with insufficient regard to food safety. Good food hygiene is more than cleanliness; it requires food to be protected from the risk of harmful contamination by bacteria, chemicals and other foreign bodies at all stages from point of delivery to point of consumption. Bacterial contamination is the most serious risk to food safety and causes the majority of food poisoning cases but physical and chemical contamination may also occur accidentally. For example; from loose buttons, jewellery, other foreign bodies or from cleaning agents.

Good food hygiene is also about sourcing safe food. In certain circumstances unsafe food will always remain unsafe regardless of the measures taken.

### 4.3 About Bacteria

No catering environment operates without harmful bacteria being present at some time, and plenty of food is produced in environments where microbiological environmental levels are very low. A good HACCP system will prevent illness in these circumstances. Small numbers of certain bacteria such as *Salmonellae* can cause serious illness. Most pathogenic bacteria are destroyed by adequate cooking but preformed bacterial toxin, mycotoxins and algal toxins are unaffected by heat. Pathogenic bacteria also thrive in cool, dry and anaerobic conditions. Raw meat is considered to be high risk because of the likely presence of *E Coli*, *Salmonellae*, *L monocytogenes*. Depending on the source viable cysts of intestinal parasites may also exist. Good practice before cooking or processing should prevent bacteria multiplying to the extent that would cause illness of food spoilage.

Bacteria levels rise rapidly in a warm moist environment on certain foods that support their growth, such as high protein foods. However foods with high levels of sugar, salt or other preservatives do not provide favourable growth conditions.

“High risk” foods, those most commonly implicated in food poisoning cases, is considered to be food that supports bacterial growth and is ready to eat without further cook. For example:

- cooked meat, poultry and rice
- meat products such as gravy and stock





- milk, cream eggs and egg products
- shellfish and other seafood

Raw meat although a source of bacteria is not considered to be “high risk” because it is generally cooked before consumption.

People often harbour some types of harmful bacteria at some point – hands are particularly susceptible. Other common sources are pests such as insects, flies or rodents. Dust and waste food can also harbour bacteria.

#### **4.4 Bacterial Food Contamination**

Contaminated food looks tastes and smells completely normal unless it is so contaminated that spoilage occurs. Bacteria levels in high risk food and raw meat will rise rapidly in warm conditions. Contamination usually occurs through recklessness, ignorance and people taking short cuts, and handling or storing food carelessly.

Bacteria can pass directly from the source to high risk food, for example raw meat can contaminate cooked meat where human, animal or insect intervention occurs. Cross contamination where bacteria are transferred by some other means is a constant threat to food safety. The main “vehicles” are hands, hand and food contact, surfaces, cloths and equipment. Other “vehicles” include water, other foods and insects.

#### **4.5 10 Main Reasons for Food Poisoning**

1. Preparation of food too far in advance and stored at room temperature.
2. Cooling food too slowly prior to refrigeration.
3. Not reheating food to high enough temperatures to destroy harmful bacteria
4. Using contaminated food.
5. Undercooking.
6. Not thawing frozen for sufficient time.
7. Cross contamination from raw food to cooked food.
8. Storing hot food below 63°C.
9. Infected food handlers.
10. Improper use of leftovers.

#### **4.6 Prevention of Bacterial Food Poisoning**

Food must be protected against contamination. High standards of personal cleanliness and food safety must be observed. Any existing bacteria already in food must be prevented from growing to dangerous levels. Most bacteria can be destroyed by thorough cooking but not pre-formed toxins. To reduce the risk of food poisoning a range of control measures should be place covering:

- Personal hygiene
- Temperature control (keep food hot >63°C or cold <5°C)
- Segregation of raw and cooked foods
- Ensuring no risk of cross contamination via hands, cloths, cutting boards etc
- Thorough cooking
- Adequate and proper cleaning



- Purchasing safe supplies and ensuring safe delivery

#### **4.7 Cross contamination with Food Allergens**

It is important for catering staff to be aware of the risk of allergen cross contamination in situations where a seafarer has asked for food to be free of a certain ingredient that they are allergic or intolerant to. A number of steps can be taken to reduce the risk, including preparing the food from scratch, keeping surfaces clear of the allergen of concern, using separate utensils to prepare and serve the allergen free food, avoiding transference of crumbs or seeds from other foods and by using correctly labelled airtight containers.

### **5. Personal Hygiene**

It is essential for food handlers to strictly observe and practice high standards of personal cleanliness. They should be clean and tidy and wear suitable light coloured protective clothing.

There must be adequate wash-hand basins with soap and hand drying facilities available to the catering staff. Disposable towels or a hot air dryer is better than a traditional towel. Food handlers must wash their hands regularly and always on entering the galley, before handling any food or equipment, after smoking and/or touching hair, nose, mouth, dirty clothing etc. Hands must also be washed after visiting the WC and in between handling raw and cooked food.

Toilets with wash-hand basins should be situated near to, but separate from, the galley. Prominent signs about washing hands should be displayed.

Food handlers should avoid so far as possible direct contact between hands and food by using tongs for example. Appropriate protective gloves may be worn but they can give a false sense of security.

Cuts, spots, sores, etc should be completely covered by coloured waterproof dressings.

#### **5.1 Fitness to Work**

Anyone working with food with food poisoning symptoms, for example diarrhoea and vomiting or suspected of carrying food poisoning organisms because of close contact with a confirmed case should be immediately excluded from any job which might expose food/water to the risk of contamination. If a food handler has suffered sickness and diarrhoea they should not handle food for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have ceased. Several other conditions require infected persons to be similarly excluded for varying lengths of time according to medical advice. Secondary infections associated with boils and septic cuts, respiratory infections from heavy colds may also require the suspension of food handlers until successfully treated.

### **6. Preparation and Cooking**

Defrosting of raw meat and poultry should be carried out in controlled conditions and not simply be left to thaw at room temperatures, particularly in a warm galley. Thawing should take place in a cool, clean area, separate from other foods that may be exposed to risk of contamination from thawed liquid. The food should be covered and stored in a container on a grille so that it is not resting in the thawed liquid. If there is a food handling room within the cold stores area this may be used. It is important to check that meat or chicken etc. is thoroughly defrosted before cooking.



Bacteria thrive in warm conditions, so raw meat; poultry, fish etc should not be left out in the so called danger zone (5°C-63°C) for longer than is absolutely necessary. A general rule when handling food during and after preparation would be a single period of up to 2 hours at room temperatures. In very high temperatures the handling period should be reduced to about 1½ hours.

Most harmful bacteria can be destroyed by thorough cooking. It is however acceptable to serve a “rare” steak, or beef and lamb if it is a whole cut or joint of meat and the steak or joint has been properly sealed over a high heat to destroy any bacteria that might be on the surface. The following types of meat can have bacteria distributed throughout the mass of the meat; they must therefore be cooked thoroughly;

- Poultry
- Pork
- Burgers, sausages, kebabs
- Rolled joints using more than one cut
- Minced meat (e.g. minced lamb, minced beef)

A skewer may be used to test that poultry and meat joints are thoroughly cooked. Juices should run clear. A centre temperature of 75°C (82°C in Scotland) is usually required and may be verified using a probe thermometer. The probe should be properly disinfected before each use. Furthermore the thermometer’s manufacturer’s instructions must be followed and its accuracy verified.

Where practical, separate work surfaces should be set aside for the preparation of raw meat and should not be used for the preparation of foods that will be eaten without further cooking. If the same work surface has to be used, care must be taken to ensure it is cleaned and disinfected between handling raw and cooked meats or other ready to eat products. Separate chopping boards clearly assigned, generally, by colour may be used to maintain segregation.

### **6.1 Service**

Ideally food should be consumed as soon as it is prepared/cooked but work patterns and other unplanned factors can delay meal times. If there are significant delays, cold cuts can be stored in the fridge or chilled display unit until the crew are ready to eat. Hot food can be safely left in the pot over a very low heat so long as it is regularly stirred to maintain a safe temperature of 63°C or it can be stored in a hot press.

### **6.2 Leftovers**

Cooling of high risk food must be done quickly to avoid potential health risks. Small amounts of food should cool relatively quickly but the process can be speeded up if necessary. For example:

- if available use a larder with a lower room temperature.
- Pour liquids into shallow pans and stir frequently.
  - Split food into relatively small pieces or batches.
  - Use an iced water bath

Once cold, leftovers should be date marked and be suitably stored in a fridge and used within 2 days preferably served cold for example as part of a salad. If reheating is



absolutely necessary food should be rapidly and thoroughly reheated, but only once. Reheated leftovers must have a core temperature of 75°C.

## **7. Stores**

Ships should have adequate storage facilities for all stores. If storage spaces are limited, stock levels should be maintained by taking on smaller volumes of stores more frequently or if that is not possible, additional storage should be made available. All stock should be rotated as and when necessary.

### **7.1 Cold Stores**

Safe temperatures for cold stores are generally considered to be 5°C or colder and minus 18°C or colder for chill and freezer cabinets respectively but a slight tolerance of one or two degrees is unlikely to create any significant risk to food safety. If cabinets do not have a means of checking temperature, a suitable thermometer should be provided. Thermometers should be calibrated periodically but a simple check on a month basis, using boiling water (99°C-101°C) or melting ice (-1°C-+1°C) will verify the accuracy of the thermometer.

In freezer units, the combination of high humidity and fluctuating temperatures (warmer than minus 10°C) accelerate mould and other spoilage bacterial growth. Fluctuating temperatures may also cause an accumulation of ice deposits. Food should never be stored at the front of the cooling unit as this restricts the circulation of air. Suitable packaging is essential to avoid the loss of moisture from the surface of food which can produce a freezer burn effect on exposed meat cuts or joints.

If defrosting is not an automatic process, equipment should be defrosted regularly to maintain its efficiency.

Although fridges and freezer cabinets should be maintained according to the ship's planned maintenance system, cooks and others working in the galley should regularly check the conditions of door seals and closing devices as well as routinely monitoring temperatures.

Provided food has been maintained in a hard frozen condition from production to delivery and during storage on board ship, it may be used beyond the best before date.

Chilled raw food must always be kept apart from cooked food or milk for example that requires no further treatment before consumption. Separate refrigerators are preferred although if in the same unit, the raw food must always be placed at the bottom to avoid drip contaminating ready prepared food. Food should always be covered or wrapped to prevent drying out, cross contamination and absorption of odour.

Refrigeration compartments should be of an adequate capacity to meet the needs of the crew and the logistics of acquiring supplies.

Food stored in refrigeration compartments should be stowed in such a way as to allow for sufficient airflow and to prevent "hot-spots" occurring within the compartment.

### **7.2 Dry Food Stores**

Dry food stores should be dry, cool (where possible around 10°C), well lit and ventilated. There should be adequate shelving and pallets to avoid stowage directly on to the deck. Care should be taken to ensure stock is used in strict date rotation and that



supplies have the best possible durability date. Perishable provisions should neither be ordered nor accepted in quantities greater than can be consumed before the expiry date. Daily checks should be made on short-life perishable food such as fresh fruit and vegetables.

## **8. Cleaning**

To avoid a build up of dirt and waste a “clean as you go” routine should be applied.

Trays, knives, cutting boards, food preparation machinery and work tops etc that come into contact with food should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Mechanical dishwashers disinfect by virtue of the high rinse temperature (around 82°C) Where dishes are hand washed they should be left to dry rather than use drying cloths, so long as they are put away as soon as they are dry.

Cloths and towels are a perfect breeding ground for bacteria so they must be washed regularly or discarded. Mops and waste bins should also be regularly washed and stowed in designated places.

Galley spaces should be cleaned at the end of each working day. Time should be set aside to do a regular systematic thorough clean of all areas including cupboards, store rooms, the deck and bulk heads, extractor fans and canopies. Greasy ventilation ducting is a serious fire hazard and should therefore be cleaned regularly. The frequency of cleaning should be determined using a risk assessment process.

Care should be taken to protect food and equipment during cleaning operations. Cleaning products and equipment should be safely stored away, preferably in designated locker.

Garbage and food waste segregation and disposal arrangements should maintain operational health and safety standards and be in accordance with the ship's garbage management plan. It should be noted that lids on waste bins can increase the risk of cross contamination.

## **9. Pests**

Good housekeeping obviously minimises the risk of infestation and it is important to ensure that areas, particularly refuse areas are kept in a clean and tidy condition. Waste bins should be emptied regularly and lids should always be fitted unless they are being used. They should also be washed after emptying.

Flies, cockroaches and rodents present a serious risk hazard. Food suspected of being contaminated by rodents, flies or cockroaches must be destroyed.



***This annex covers fresh water loading and supply arrangements, disinfection, storage, distribution systems and maintenance***

## **1. Introduction**

The MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations require the supply of drinking and fresh water to be such as to prevent any risk of contamination.

Improperly managed water is an established infectious disease transmission route on ships. Outbreaks of illness have been associated with contaminated bunkered water, cross connections between potable and non-potable water, improper loading procedures, poor design and construction of potable water storage tanks and inadequate disinfection. Evidence from outbreaks indicates that sewage is one of the more common sources of the pathogens that cause waterborne disease outbreaks on ships.

The most effective means of ensuring the safety of the fresh water supply is through the use of a risk assessment and management approach that covers the whole process from loading to delivery at the tap and includes a planned maintenance system. All of the information gathered should be used to develop a Fresh Water Safety Plan (FWSP), particularly for ships with a complex system, which could be incorporated into the ship's planned maintenance system. A FWSP should be based on the following format.

- System assessment and hazard analysis (including an assessment of source water loaded on to the ship);
- Management plan and control measures, (the selection and operation of appropriate treatment processes);
- Monitoring and corrective action system in accordance with the FWSP (the prevention of contamination/re-contamination during storage and distribution.)

Control measures (treatments) will be influenced by the quality of the source water. In the event of potable water becoming unfit for human consumption then the tank(s) and distribution system should be drained, super-chlorinated and flushed in accordance with section 7 (Maintenance of water systems) below.

In addition to the above the ship should consider requesting water samples from the supplier prior to bunkering.

## **2. Fresh Water Loading and Supply Arrangements**

Fresh water obtained from shore mains supply or water barge should be transferred by a designated fresh water hose. Hoses should be durable, with a smooth, impervious lining, and equipped with fittings, including adapters, to permit connection to the shore potable water hydrants and filling connections to prevent their use for loading other liquids. Hoses should be:

- clearly marked (generally coloured blue);
- stowed in a locker clear of the deck;
- drained and capped at both ends after use;
- flushed through and discharged to waste before loading



Often ships use quayside hoses, in which case a designated crewmember should ensure that such hoses are in good condition and that they are routinely disinfected, safely stowed and capped in a clean environment.

Every potable water tank should have a filling line to which a hose can be attached. This line should not be cross contaminated by connection to any line of a non-potable water system. Each line should be clearly identified as such and painted blue with a screw cap or plug fastened by a short chain so that the cap does not touch the deck when hanging free.

### **3. Disinfection**

There should be no facility for by-passing primary automatic disinfection systems. Automatic disinfection systems should have a fail safe control arrangement with an audible/visual automatic alarm to prevent the passage of water in the event of any malfunction. The power supply required to operate the alarm should be independent of the disinfection unit power supply.

#### **3.1 Chlorination**

The UK generally accepts chlorine as a disinfectant which requires around 20 minutes contact time to react. It can be the case that shore mains water only contains low concentrations of free chlorine which may be further decreased within the ship environment. Although there is no requirement to do so, and control measures will be influenced by the quality of the source water, it is considered good practice to add chlorine as a routine when loading fresh water to a level that produces 0.2mg/L (ppm) residual free chlorine or 1.0mg/L (ppm) chloramine when chloraminated water is supplied. Chlorine should preferably be applied as a hypochlorite solution, using a commercial hypochlorinator designed for the purpose or by using an automatic chlorination unit in the ship's deck filling line. The concentration may also be achieved by the manual method using the formula contained in the "WHO's Guide to Ship Sanitation". A commercial test kit should be used to check the free chlorine or chloramine levels.

Some other treatments available include:

#### **3.2 Silver-coated Filter Candles**

These filters retain suspended matter and they have a bacterial effect. Treatment is instantaneous without any addition of chemicals.

#### **3.3 Electro-silver Ionisation**

Electro-silver ionisation may be used for the automatic disinfection of fresh water produced on board ships. Units should be set up by the manufacturer to ensure a minimum concentration of 0.1ppm to be added to the water under maximum flow conditions. The minimum time required for the silver to take effect is 4 hours after passing through the unit. This should ensure a maximum 0.08ppm in the system.

#### **3.4 Ultra-Violet Sterilisation**

Although the sterilisation process is instantaneous, ultra-violet steriliser units have no dispersal or residual properties. For this reason UK treatment is generally used only as a supplementary system, fitted downstream of the water tank or supply pump. UV units may however be effective in certain cases where service lines are relatively short. They should be installed so that the direction of flow is vertical to keep the deposits in the tubes to a minimum. The water should be continuously circulated in the system through the UV unit. There should be a means to measure the intensity of UV radiation, and a switch-off mechanism with an alarm should be



fitted in the event of UV radiation being too weak. The performance of the tubes should be regularly monitored.

### **3.5 Thermal Disinfection (Calefaction)**

Potable water supply lines contaminated with legionellae may not be reliably disinfected by means of chemical agents. Heating the flowing water **throughout the distribution system** (legionella tends to grow in dead legs and low use areas) to a temperature of at least 60°C and maintaining this temperature for 30 minutes is another established method used to destroy the legionella bacteria. If the water temperature is increased the period for maintaining the temperature will be proportionately reduced. This method may be used in conjunction with chemical treatments.

## **4. Fresh Water from Water Making Plant**

Sea water that is to be treated on ships should be taken from areas relatively free from pollution, including air pollution. Twenty miles from land is generally considered to be a safe distance but it may be in excess of the twenty miles in some cases. Judgment should be used based on a risk assessment which should include consideration of the possible effect that ship operations might have on the quality of the water intake.

The seawater inlets (sea chests) should be located forward and if possible on the opposite side of the ship from the overboard waste water and ballast tanks discharge outlets. Sea water should pass through suitable filters before entering the water making equipment.

The manufacturers' operating instructions should be clearly posted in the plant room and strictly followed.

By-passes should not be installed around treatment units except where necessary as part of the treatment process. There should be an adequate store of spare replacement parts particularly for any vital or fragile parts. Distillation units should indicate low range salinity levels, operational temperature levels and have an automatic discharge to waste. They should also have an alarm with trip setting or equivalent.

Any chemicals used in an injection system to a sea suction intended to prevent the growth of organisms in the ship's piping system serving water making plant should be suitable for that purpose.

High pressure distillation and reverse osmosis plants are highly effective in removing micro-organisms and chemical constituents. They can therefore be employed as a single treatment so long as they remain effective. There is therefore a need for highly reliable on-line monitoring linked to rapid management intervention. They can however be combined with the application of a low level of residual chlorine or other equivalent disinfectant. Because low pressure evaporators operate at lower temperatures, this type of plant should be fitted with an automatic disinfecting unit, generally chlorine is used, before it is pumped to the storage tanks.

Desalinated water effectively demineralises the seawater which makes it corrosive with the potential damage to lines, tanks etc. Also the taste of desalinated water is bland and may be considered unpalatable. Appropriate stabilising and mineralising chemical treatments should therefore be applied before the water is passed into the storage tank.

## **5. Filtration**

Filters should be used only where necessary as part of a purification system that includes disinfection. Terminal or tap filters often collect bacteria and accelerate its growth and for this reason their use should be discouraged unless they can be disinfected or replacement





cartridges are used. Filters should be maintained or replaced according to manufacturers' instructions.

## **6. Water Storage and Distribution Arrangements**

### **6.1 Potable Water Storage Tanks**

Storage tanks should normally be sited above the inner bottom and independent of the hull and not adjacent to tanks containing oil. They should be sited and be of such dimensions that they are readily accessible to facilitate inspection, cleaning and coating.

Tanks should be clearly marked "Potable Water". They should be used in regular rotation to avoid stagnation.

Storage should normally never be less than a 2 day supply. Consideration should be given to the size of the ship's complement of officers and crew, the maximum number of passengers, the time and distance between ports of call and the availability of water suitable for treatment with facilities aboard. Storage may be decreased if the water supply can be supplemented by water produced by water making plants, but only to the amount that can be reliably supplied by the water making plant.

Coating systems other than cement should be specially developed for use in potable water tanks. Manufacturer's recommendations for application and drying or curing of the coating must be followed. All items that penetrate the tank, for example bolts, pipes, pipe flanges should be coated with the same product.

### **6.2 Distribution Systems**

The freshwater distribution pumps should not be capable of being connected to any other service. The suction lines of the pumps should not be cross-connected with the piping or storage tank of any non-potable water system. Lines should not be submerged in bilge water, or pass through tanks storing non-potable liquids. Overflows, vents and drains from tanks, and drains from the distribution system (including any treatment plant) should not be connected directly to sewage drains.

Potable water piping should be painted or hatched blue. If the direction of the flow is important, this should be shown by means of an arrow pointing in the respective direction. Potable water outlets should be labelled **POTABLE WATER**. All non-potable outlets should be labelled **UNFIT FOR DRINKING**. If hot water piping and cold water piping run adjacent to one another, appropriate thermal insulation should be carried out.

Calorifiers and pressure tanks should be fitted with efficient circulation, avoiding dead legs and optimum conditions for bacterial growth (15°C-50°C). The risk increases where sections of the system are not kept in continuous use. To minimise the risk a ring main system with circulation pumps in hot and cold water lines should be considered for large scale demand such as passenger ships for example.

Corrosion and scale inhibitors if used should be suitable for use in fresh water systems.

### **6.3 Taps and Other Fixtures**

Fixtures should be resistant to the corrosive effects of salt water and saline atmosphere and fit for use with fresh water systems. They should be easy to clean and so designed to function easily and efficiently. Approved mixer taps should be fitted to showers and it is recommended that wash-hand basins should have hot and cold mixer taps.



## 7. Maintenance of Water Systems

All elements of the freshwater production, treatment and delivery system including filters, pumps, calorifiers, pressure tanks etc should be inspected, cleaned, flushed out or items replaced where appropriate, according to the manufacturers instructions and the planned maintenance system. The following maintenance is recommended.

| <b>FRESH WATER STORAGE TANKS</b>  |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Persons inspecting or working in freshwater tanks should wear clean protective clothing and footwear which has not been used for any other work area and they should not be suffering from any skin infection or communicable disease.</b>                                     |                                     |  |
| <b>ACTIONS</b>  | <b>INTERVALS</b>                    |  |
| To be thoroughly pumped out and where necessary hosed prior to refilling  | 6 monthly                           |  |
| To be opened up, emptied, ventilated and inspected thoroughly cleaned, recoated as necessary, aired and refilled with clean freshwater chlorinated to a concentration of 0.2ppm free chlorine. The cleaning process should include disinfection with a solution of 50ppm chlorine | 12 monthly                          |  |
| The system (from machinery space to furthest outlets should be charged with super-chlorinated freshwater at a concentration of 50ppm for a period of 12 hours then completely flushed out and refilled at 0.2ppm residual free chlorine   | Re-fit or drydock                   |  |
| Pressure tests on all FW tanks. After the pressure test, the system to be thoroughly flushed with potable water.  | Intervals not greater than 5 years. |  |
| <b>DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS MAINTENANCE</b>   |                                     |  |
| <b>PARTS</b>  | <b>ACTIONS</b>                      | <b>INTERVALS</b>                                   |
| Filters   | Clean<br><br>Change                 | Monthly or according to manufacturers instructions |



|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| UV exposure area | Clean   | According to manufacturers instructions                   |
| Calorifiers      | To be opened up, inspected, scaled and cleaned. Before draining temperatures should be raised to 70°C for at least an hour to ensure destruction of bacteria which may have colonised the lower and cooler zone of the unit | Periodically (General recommendation – annual inspection) |
| Shower heads     | Particularly in accommodation that has been out of use for an extended period. Clean in a 50ppm chlorine solution   | 3 monthly   |
| FW Hoses         | Flush and fill with 50ppm chlorine solution and allow to stand for at least an hour before emptying and stowage.  | 6 monthly or more frequent if required.                   |

### Health and Safety

Adequate care should be taken when handling chemicals or biological agents, for example chemicals, corrosion inhibitors, filters etc. Suitable risk assessments and control measures should be applied.

The rules for classification and construction of seagoing ships stated by the relevant classification societies should be observed. Reference should also be made to the following British Standards in relation to sanitary design and construction of ship water supplies obtainable from ISO. See <http://www.iso.org/iso/home/standards.htm>

- ISO 15748-1: 2002 – Ships and marine technology – Potable water supply on ships and marine structures – Part 1: Planning and design.
- ISO 15748-2: 2002 – Ships and marine technology – Potable water supply on ships and marine structures – Part 2: Method of calculation.

### The WHO Guide to Ship Sanitation

This Guide provides advice on a number of topics, including the management of swimming pools and spas on board ships, and is available on the internet as a draft at: [www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/hygiene/ships/shipsanitation/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/hygiene/ships/shipsanitation/en/)

### The Health and Safety Executive's approved Code of Practice and Guidance for the Control of Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems

This guide provides practical advice for the control of legionella bacteria in any undertaking involving a work activity and to premises controlled in connection with a trade, business or other undertaking where there is a reasonably foreseeable risk of exposure to legionella bacteria. Although the Code of Practice is not specific to a marine environment, it does provide advice about prevention or controlling exposure to the bacteria and treatment and control programmes. The Code of Practice may be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive – [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

