



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

## **Guidance for Vessels having difficulty in replacing Medical Stores due to COVID-19**

The MCA has put in place contingency plans to mitigate disruption to essential delivered services as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak.

**The Merchant Shipping (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995 No. 1802)** allow the below:

### ***Replenishment of dated medicines***

#### **9. Where:**

*(a) a vessel is required in pursuance of regulation 4 to have on board any medical stores in accordance with any of the categories set out in Merchant Shipping Notices M. 1607 and M. 1608; and*

*(b) any label required by regulation 7(1)(a) to be borne by any container of any such medical stores, indicates a date after which the medical store contained in it is not to be used (hereafter called "the expiry date"),*

*that medical store shall be replaced at the earliest possible date after the expiry date, and in any event within three months of the expiry date. Medical stores which have passed the expiry date shall, once replacements have been obtained, or after 3 months (whichever is the earlier), be disposed of in accordance with the Ship Captain's Medical Guide.*

### **For Medical Stores on UK vessels**

- In the event that medical stores cannot be replenished due to shortages or other restrictions between November 2020 to March 2021, the supplier should be contacted for advice on the continuing effectiveness and safety of stores carried which have passed their expiry date.
- An exception letter is available below which can be used for inspection purposes.
- Medical stores must still be replenished at the earliest opportunity.
- Where disposal of expired stores is disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions, the MCA authorises the shipowner to retain them in locked storage on board until the first opportunity for safe disposal.

Dr Sally Bell, MCA Chief Medical Advisor



Maritime &  
Coastguard  
Agency

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

Tel: +44 (0)203 8172835  
E-mail: seafarer.sh@mcga.gov.uk

Ref: COVID-19

To whom it may concern,

### **Merchant Shipping (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995**

Regulation 9 of the Merchant Shipping (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 provides that, where necessary, shipowners have three months to replace medical stores after their expiry date. Stores must however be replenished as soon as possible.

Between 1 June and 30 November 2020, in the event that stores cannot be replenished within three months due to restrictions in place due to COVID-19, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency grants an exception to the requirement to carry medical stores in accordance with this notice provided that:

- The supplier has been contacted regarding the continuing effectiveness and safety of the stores carried;
- Any stores which can be obtained have been replaced;
- All expired medical stores are replaced as soon as possible when restrictions are lifted.
- Where disposal of expired stores is disrupted due to COVID-19 restrictions, the MCA authorises the shipowner to retain them in locked storage on board until the first opportunity for safe disposal.

This letter is intended to be printed by the person in charge of medical stores for the vessel and kept on board so it can be presented for audit purposes.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Sally Bell  
MCA Chief Medical Advisor