
Emergency Information for Passengers on Passenger Ships of Classes III, IV, V, VI AND VI(A)

Notice to Owners, Operators, Builders, Masters, Officers and Ratings of Passenger Ships of Classes III to VI(A).

This Notice should be read in conjunction with Notice No. M.1409.

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the Formal Investigation into the loss of the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, Merchant Shipping Notice No. M.1316* was issued. That Notice drew attention to legislation dealing with the emergency information which must be provided for passengers and applicable to passenger ships of Classes II, II(A) and III. It also gave guidance on how the legislation could be implemented. The Notice was intended primarily for passenger ships of Classes II and II(A) and although some of the recommendations were also considered to be appropriate for certain ships of Classes III to VI(A)† a need was identified for recommendations more relevant to smaller ships of these Classes. The purpose of this Notice, therefore, is to fill this need for the smaller ships of these latter Classes. The recent sinking of the Class V passenger ship *Marchioness* with heavy loss of life has underlined this need.

1.2 The content of passenger emergency instructions notices and announcements will depend on the size and type of ship concerned. For example, a Class III or IV ship which can carry 1000 passengers will need more information displayed and broadcast than a small Class VI(A) ship carrying 20 passengers. It may be found that, in the case of the former, the guidance given in M.1409 is applicable in full whereas, in the case of the latter, a few words from the person in charge and a simple notice will suffice.

2. Statutory Requirements

2.1 Statutory requirements relating to the provision of emergency information for passengers on ships of Classes III to IV(A) are as follows;

2.1.1 Regulation 4 of the MS (Emergency Information for Passengers) Regulations 1990 requires that on ships of Classes III to VI(A)

carrying more than 20 passengers be provided with a public address system. In ships of Classes IV to VI(A) carrying not more than 50 passengers in which the passengers have access to only one passenger compartment or space a portable loud hailer may be carried in lieu of providing a public address system.

2.1.2 Regulations 4(9) and 4(10) of the MS (Muster and Training) Regulations 1986 require that on all ships of Class III, (a) clear instructions to be followed in the event of an emergency be provided for every person on board, and (b) instructions on muster stations, essential actions to be taken in an emergency, and the method of donning a lifejacket be conspicuously displayed at muster stations and other passenger spaces.

2.1.3 Regulation 6(3) of the MS (Muster and Training) Regulations 1986 requires that on all ships of Class III where a muster of the passengers is not held on departure, the attention of the passengers be drawn to the emergency instructions required by regulation 4(9) and 4(10) referred to above.

2.1.4 Regulation 5(2) of the MS (Emergency Information for Passengers) Regulations 1990 requires that on ships of Classes IV to VI(A) passengers shall be given emergency information at the commencement of each voyage and that emergency instructions notices be displayed in each passenger compartment.

2.1.5 Regulation 6 of the MS (Emergency Information for Passengers) Regulations 1990 requires that on ships of Classes III to VI(A), other than open or partially decked ships of Classes V to VI(A), all doors used for exits to open decks and all emergency escapes be clearly marked to indicate their purpose.

* This Notice has been revised and reissued as M.1409.

† Passenger ships of Classes III to VI(A) are defined in the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Regulations 1984.

3. Public Address System

3.1 When a public address system or portable loud hailer is provided such means should be used to inform the passengers of the action they should take in the event of an emergency which could lead to the ship being abandoned. This information, detailed in section 6, should be given either prior to or immediately on leaving the berth. An example of such an announcement is given at Annex 2 to this Notice. In the case of ships of Classes IV, V and VI which operate a waterbus or regular ferry service of short duration where compliance with regulation 5(2) of the MS (Emergency Information for Passengers) Regulations 1990 would result in very frequent broadcasting of the safety message, or where passengers are regular users of the service, other arrangements will be considered by the Department. For example, drawing attention on the public address system or by other means to safety notices displayed on the back of seats where all the passengers are seated, or to safety notices widely displayed in the passenger spaces where passengers are not seated.

3.2 The speakers in the public address system must be so located that broadcasts will be audible in all public spaces, including open decks, to which passengers have access.

3.3 A public address system should be powered from the main source of electrical power and from an alternative source of electrical power situated in a location remote from the main source.

3.4 Where a public address system or loud hailer is not provided the emergency information should be given by portable loud hailer.

4. Marking of Exits and Emergency Escapes

4.1 All doors leading from passenger spaces to open decks and all emergency escapes must be clearly marked with a sign using the word "EXIT" or the words "EMERGENCY ESCAPE DOOR/WINDOW" as appropriate. These signs should be legible at all times by means of the main or artificial lighting. In ro/ro passenger ships of Classes III to VI(A) the signs should be legible under supplementary lighting conditions.

4.2 Where possible the sign should be located over the door, window or escape. Where a door is not readily visible from within the space it serves a further sign should be provided to indicate the direction in which the door lies. Signs should not be on doors except in cases where a door is never in the open position when the ship is in service. Signs should be composed of white or light coloured letters on a green background

and on ships not provided with supplementary emergency lighting the signs should be made of a photoluminescent material.

5. Passenger Emergency Instructions Notices

5.1 Such notices are required to be displayed in each passenger compartment. The number to be displayed will depend on the layout of the compartments and the service the ship is engaged in (see paragraph 3.1). On some services it may also be appropriate to provide notices in terminals or waiting rooms. The information provided in a notice should include:

5.1.1 the method to be used to inform passengers that an emergency has occurred;

5.1.2 the action they will be required to take;

5.1.3 and how to use the life-saving equipment; and

5.1.4 how to don a lifejacket where lifejackets are carried.

5.2 Lifejacket donning information may be given separately and on ships with a small crew donning information should be provided in the form of posters located at the lifejacket stowage positions. Where lifejackets are stowed beneath the seats donning information should be provided on the backs of the seats.

5.3 An example of a passenger emergency instructions notice is given in Annex 1 to this Notice.

6. Passenger Emergency Instructions Announcement

6.1 The announcement required to be made at the commencement of each voyage should contain as a minimum:

6.1.1 the method to be used to inform passengers that an emergency has occurred;

6.1.2 the type of life-saving appliances on board;

6.1.3 action to take in event of an emergency;

6.1.4 how to use the life-saving appliances.

6.2 Announcements should be made in a clear and simple manner bearing in mind that in some services a significant number of foreign tourists may be carried on occasions. Announcements should be brief compatible with the need to convey sufficient information to assist all concerned in the event of an emergency leading to abandonment. Announcements should be

prefaced by a special signal followed by a request for everyone's attention. It should be ensured that no other announcement or music is allowed to be broadcast while the passenger emergency instructions announcement is being made.

6.3 An example of such an announcement is given in Annex 2 to this Notice.

7. General

7.1 Operators of ships of Classes III to VI(A) should consider each of their ships individually and determine whether the guidance in this Notice or M.1409 is appropriate. They should also determine what information should be displayed and announced (see section 5 and 6). Guidance on this matter should be sought from a Department Surveyor when a ship is being surveyed for the issue of its passenger certificate.

7.2 In the case of passenger ships of Classes III to VI(A) the number of crew members is often small and it is important that this point is taken into account by

operators of these ships when emergency procedures are being considered. In some cases this may involve active participation of some of the able bodied passengers under the direction of crew members, particularly at the abandon ship stage. The need for crew members to be readily recognisable in an emergency is important and consideration should be given to the provision of some distinguishing clothing, headwear, distinctive marking on lifejackets, loose covers worn over clothing or lifejackets, armbands, etc. Operators should also keep in mind the problems associated with disco and party cruises where an excessive consumption of alcohol may affect the ability of some of the passengers to help themselves in the event of a serious emergency occurring.

7.3 In-water support equipment, i.e. lifebuoys and buoyant apparatus, should be conspicuous and care taken that the primary function of buoyant apparatus is clearly apparent, i.e. that its use as lifesaving equipment is as apparent as or more apparent than its use as seating. Where lifejackets are carried, lifejacket lockers should be conspicuously marked.

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EXAMPLE

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PASSENGERS

Please Read and Take Careful Note of the Contents of This Notice

1. In the event of an emergency you will be informed over the public address system*/by means of a signal on the ship's whistle*/by sounding of the alarm bells*/by the person in charge*. The signal on the whistle and/or the alarm bells will be;

Seven or more short blasts followed by one prolonged blast.



Remain calm and follow instructions.

2. In the event of the ship having to be abandoned you will be instructed by the Master to leave the compartment in which you are located using the nearest accessible exit which is clearly marked. Enter the water.

3. When in the water hold one of the grablines on a life buoy/buoyant apparatus* Each lifebuoy can support two persons and each buoyant apparatus can support []† persons.

* As Appropriate.

† Insert appropriate number.

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE OF EMERGENCY INSTRUCTION BROADCAST

1. **Special Signal**
2. Ladies and gentlemen, please listen very carefully to the following safety announcement.
3. In the event of an emergency you will be informed by means of an announcement*/a signal consisting of seven or more short blasts followed by one prolonged blast on the ship's whistle and/or the alarm bells*/by a crew member*.
4. The vessel is equipped with buoyant apparatus and lifebuoys which can be manually launched or will float-free in the event of the vessel sinking.
5. In the event of an emergency requiring evacuation you will be instructed by the Master to proceed to the nearest accessible exit and to enter the water. All exits are clearly marked.
6. When in the water take hold of one of the grablines on a lifebuoy or buoyant apparatus. Each lifebuoy will support two persons and each buoyant apparatus []* persons.
7. Thank you for your attention.

* As appropriate.