



Maritime Labour Convention, 2006: Medical Care Ship's Doctors

Notice to all shipowners, ship operators and ship managers; employers of seafarers; masters, officers and seafarers on sea-going ships ordinarily engaged in commercial operations

This notice should be read with Part 9 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention)(Minimum Requirements for Seafarers etc.) Regulations 2014 ("the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations") and MGN 482(M) and replaces MSN 1627(M).

Summary

- A medical practitioner, referred to in this notice as a "ship's doctor", must be carried on any ship carrying 100 or more persons on an international voyage of 72 hours duration or longer.
- This notice set the qualifying criteria for a medical practitioner to work as a ship's doctor on a UK ship, as specified under regulation 44 and regulation 47 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Minimum Requirements for Seafarers etc.) Regulations 2014.

1. Introduction

1.1 Part 9 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Minimum Requirements for Seafarers etc.) Regulations 2014 ("the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations") implements for the UK the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 Standard A4.1.4(b) on ship's doctors.

1.2 They also implement Article 2.4 of Council Directive 92/29/EC on the minimum safety and health requirements for improved medical treatment on board vessels.

1.3 The Merchant Shipping (Ship's Doctors) Regulations 1995 are revoked.

1.4 The regulations apply to UK sea-going ships other than –

- pleasure vessels;
- fishing vessels;
- ships of traditional build;



- warships and naval auxiliaries; or
- ships which are not ordinarily engaged in commercial activities.

2. Requirement to carry a medical practitioner on a ship

- 2.1 Any ship carrying 100 or more persons on an international voyage of 72 hours duration or longer must carry a medical practitioner (referred to in this notice as a “ship’s doctor”).
- 2.2 There is no provision for the granting of exemptions from the requirement to carry a ship’s doctor.

3. Qualifying criteria for ship’s doctor on a UK ship

- 3.1 This paragraph sets out the criteria referred to in the definition of “medical practitioner” for the purposes of regulation 47 of the MLC Minimum Requirements Regulations, both as regards practitioners ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom, and those not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom. It is the shipowner’s responsibility to satisfy themselves that any doctor working as a ship’s doctor on their ships complies with these criteria.
- 3.2 To work as a ship’s doctor on a UK ship, a medical practitioner who is ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom must be fully registered with the General Medical Council, and either
- 3.2.1 the doctor must hold a licence to practise; or
- 3.2.2 the doctor must
- (a) have a good command of the English language; and
 - (b) participate in a revalidation programme that ensures maintenance of their medical skills (see paragraph 3.5)
- 3.3 To work as a ship’s doctor on a UK ship, a medical practitioner who is not ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom must be fully qualified to practice in the country where they are ordinarily resident, and in addition the doctor must –
- 3.3.1 be qualified from one of the medical schools listed in the Avicenna Directory;
- 3.3.2 have a good command of the English language; and
- 3.3.3 participate in a revalidation programme that ensures maintenance of their medical skills (see paragraph 3.5)
- 3.4 A link to the Avicenna Directory is available from the WHO website – <http://www.who.int/hrh/wdms/en/>
- 3.5 Medical skills may be maintained by a wide variety of routes, normally by participation in an established framework for medical appraisal and re-licensing provided by the person’s statutory medical registration body. Where such a framework does not exist, maintenance of medical skills can be demonstrated by:
- 3.5.1 taking part in an audited programme of Continuous Professional Development that is recognised by a relevant medical body, or
- 3.5.2 in a company endorsed system for audit that includes externally quality assured peer assessment of standards of clinical practice.



More Information

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