



Risk assessment of hazards to seafarers health and well-being at sea

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Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas

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Risk assessment of hazards to seafarers health and well-being at sea

MSN 1886 (M+F)

Covers the medical examination system for :-

- Maritime Labour Convention, 2006; and
- Work in Fishing Convention, 2007

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Section 3.3 **Medical fitness standards**

3.3.1 "As a general principle the Approved Doctor should be satisfied that no disease or defect is present which could either be **aggravated by working at sea** or **represent an unacceptable risk** to the health of the candidate, the health or safety of other crew members or the safety of the ship"

3.3.3 "The Approved Doctor should be satisfied that no condition is present which is likely to **lead to problems during the voyage** and no treatment is being followed which **might cause adverse side effects**. It would be unsafe practice to allow a candidate to go to sea with any known medical condition where there was the possibility of serious exacerbation requiring expert treatment"

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When carrying out a risk assessment to assess hazards to a seafarers health and well-being at sea we need first to consider:-

What is a Hazard?

"A Hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect, on a person or persons"

So lets consider some Hazards to seafarers on board ship

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Moving around the ship



- Vessels move with the sea
- Slips, trips and falls
- Keep one hand for yourself & one hand for the ship!

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Moving around the ship




- Ladders and stairs onboard can be very steep, particularly on small vessels or in engine rooms
- Crew are often working alone

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Working at height




- Its not just climbing masts!
- Ships holds are huge and crew need to climb up and down access ladders when working cargo or cleaning holds, or when securing or checking the cargo on deck

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Response to emergencies




- Seafarers will need to be able to respond to any emergency onboard ship
- Fire, flood, collision etc.
- They will need to be fit enough to undertake drills
- & fit enough to undertake emergency training

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Response to emergencies




- Such as fire fighting training
- &
- Survival at sea training

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Effects of weather conditions




- Even the largest of vessels can be effected by storms
- Swell waves will continue long after the storm has passed
- The vessel can experience waves coming from different directions causing it to roll, pitch and corkscrew
- The vessels movement may make it hard to move around and even to do simple tasks
- It will also effect sleeping, showering etc.

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Effect of weather conditions



- During a voyage a vessel can sail through all weather conditions
- Crew may have to carry out maintenance on deck in ice or storm conditions
- A cargo watch in the extreme heat of the Arabian Gulf in summer
- Or a dreich gangway watch in a Scottish winter

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Food intolerances, allergies & cultural requirements




- The Maritime Labour Convention requires vessels with more than 10 crew to have a ships cook
- Ships cooks will have training in food intolerances, allergies and cultural requirements
- However, the ability to cater for individuals is limited and particularly difficult to ensure there is no cross contamination of foods

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Watch keeping and Changing time Zones



- Watch keeping or shift work onboard ship can interfere with the bodies natural sleep patterns
- As vessels sail across oceans, particularly from east to west or west to east, the time will be adjusted to stay at "local time"
- How could this effect seafarers who need to take medication or eat at a constant time?

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Watch keeping and Changing time Zones



- Some ships such as ferries work 12 hour shifts resulting in some crew not seeing the sun for the whole voyage
- How does lack of sunlight effect seafarers health?

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Long term exposure to hazards




- In many cases we think about short term exposure to hazards but often forget to consider the effects of long term exposure.
- Sometimes the problem is the cargo itself such as oil, gas or chemicals
- Or it could be dust from a grain cargo or pesticides on a vessel carrying timber

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Long term exposure to hazards



- Or the hazard may come from the environment such as long term exposure to the sun
- Or machinery noise damaging a seafarers hearing in an engine room
- How can long term exposure to hazards be reduced?

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Risk assessment of hazards to seafarers health and wellbeing at sea

- The Approved Doctor should be satisfied that no disease or defect is present which could either be **aggravated by working at sea** or **represent an unacceptable risk** to the health of the candidate, the health or safety of other crew members or the safety of the ship
- The Approved Doctor should be satisfied that no condition is present which is likely to lead to **problems during the voyage** and no treatment is being followed which might **cause adverse side effects**.

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