



Application of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/1802) as amended

Notice to all Shipowners, Agents, Masters, Skippers of Fishing Vessels and all Seafarers

This notice should be read with Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1768 (M+F).

Summary

This notice provides interim guidance supplementing the guidance in sections 3 and Annex 7 of Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1768 (M+F).

It further explains on the relationship between the mandatory treatments which must be carried on board vessels operating commercially, and the non-mandatory medicines and quantities listed in Annex to the MSN.

It also gives guidance on the role of risk assessment in determining the category of medical stores to be carried.

MSN 1768 (M+F) will be amended in 2020 to reflect progress in and availability of treatments and the guidance in this notice will be reviewed and incorporated at that time.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 set out the minimum standards for the medical stores to be carried ships and fishing vessels operating commercially. These medical stores are intended for the treatment of those working on the vessel. The Regulations define three categories of vessel for the purposes of medical stores, Category A, Category B and Category C. The definitions are included at section 2 of Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1768(M+F).
- 1.2 Annex 1 of Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1768(M+F) lists for each Category A to C the treatments which must be carried on board, with recommended medicines and recommended quantities to be carried for each 10 persons on board.



2. Mandatory and non-mandatory provisions

2.1 The list of treatments in column 2 of the tables in Annex 1 of MSN 1768(M+F) are mandatory.

2.2 The medicines listed in column 3 and the quantities per 10 workers on board given in column 4 are recommendations.

2.3 So, for example, (ref no 3(a) of the table):

1	2	3	4		
Ref no.	Statutory Treatment Requirements	Recommended medicine and dosage strength representing best practice	Recommended quantity for 10 workers		
			A	B	C
3(a)	Analgesics, anti-pyretics and anti-inflammatory	i) Paracetamol 500mg tablets	100	50	50
		and ii) Ibuprofen 400mg tablets	100	50	50
		and iii) Diclofenac sodium 50mg suppository	10	-	-
	MANDATORY	RECOMMENDED	RECOMMENDED		

All vessels of Category A, Category B or Category C **must** carry analgesics, anti-pyretics and anti-inflammatory treatments (column 2).

Best practice for Category B and Category C vessels is to carry two types of medicine (column 3) to meet this requirement; paracetamol and ibuprofen are **recommended**.

On a Category A vessel a third type (Diclofenac sodium) is recommended.

The dosage strengths are recommended.

The quantities (column 4) are recommended for each 10 workers on board.

2.4 Different specific medicines and dosage strengths may be carried on the advice of a pharmacist, but the item or items carried for ref no. 3(a) must be effective as analgesic, anti-pyretic and anti-inflammatory.

3. Risk assessment

3.1 A higher or lower quantity may be carried based on a risk assessment, in consultation with a pharmacist. The risk assessment may consider (for example) the operating area and pattern of the vessel, including distance from shore, and the likelihood of more than one crew member requiring the same treatment. A reduced quantity should only be carried where the risk assessment demonstrates that there is no reduction in protection for the crew as a result.



3.2 Under the Merchant Shipping (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995, the Category of medical stores to be provided is determined solely on the basis of the distance from shore that the vessel operates. However, for Category C stores, the definition of the relevant distance from shore is not specific (it refers to “vessels operating very close to shore”).

3.3 The UK has interpreted “very close to shore” to mean no more than 60 miles from a safe haven (see section 2.1 of MSN 1768(M+F)). However, if a risk assessment shows that because of the nature of the work on board, or the type or pattern of operation, the range of stores required in a Category C kit may not be adequate to respond to likely medical requirements on board, the owner or master should consider whether a vessel operating less than 60 miles from a safe haven should carry a Category B kit.

3.4 A copy of the risk assessment and determination as to the Category of stores to be carried should be retained on board to provide evidence that the Category of stores and any variations from the recommended quantities of medicines in MSN 1768(M+F) are justified in accordance with Regulations made under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995.

4. Supply of medicines in compliance with the Merchant Shipping (Medical Stores) Regulations 1995 and MSN 1768(M+F).

4.1 Some of the treatments required and some of the medicines recommended for carriage under MSN 1768(M), in order to make it possible to provide effective treatment to seafarers at sea, are prescription only medicines and additionally may be subject to restrictions covered by the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001. The owner and master of a ship has dispensation to carry and administer the medicines which are necessary to comply with the merchant shipping legislation.

4.1.1 The Human Medicines Regulations 2012 Schedule 17¹ gives the owner or the master of a ship which does not carry a doctor the right to requisition prescription only medicines to comply with merchant shipping legislation.

4.1.2 The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001, regulation 14(4)(d)² allows the owner or master of a ship which does not carry a doctor to requisition controlled drugs in accordance with merchant shipping legislation.

4.2 Prescription only medicines including controlled drugs, may be obtained in the UK on presentation of a signed order, as a retail sale from a UK registered retail pharmacy business (Human Medicines Regulations 2012, Schedule 17). Wholesale supply in the UK can only be made from a supplier possessing a Wholesale Dealers Authorisation who additionally must possess a Controlled Drug Licence (issued by the Home Office covering both possession and supply of the drugs requested). Evidence will be required that the requisition is being made by the ship owner or master of the ship.

4.3 In addition, any requisition for controlled drugs will require a signed order as explained in Regulation 14 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations. The minimum contents of a signed order for controlled drugs (referred to as a requisition) is given in Annex 7 of MSN 1768(M+F). A requisition must be made by the ship owner or master of the ship, and evidence will be required that the person requisitioning the drugs is indeed the ship owner or master of the ship.

4.4 It is not expected that the Category of stores requested would be challenged, but this notice may be cited in support of the requisition if needed.

¹ S.I. 2012/1916 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/1916/schedule/17/made> See Part 2 row 2.

² S.I. 2001/3998 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2001/3998/regulation/14/made>



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