

M-Notices - October 2009

MGN397 (M+F) Guidelines for the Provision of Food and Fresh Water on Merchant Ships and Fishing Vessels

These guidelines provide practical advice on the provision of food and water for merchant and fishing vessels under current legislation, but also take account of the International Labour Organisation's 2006 Maritime Labour Convention which is expected to come into force by 2011.

Key points are that:

- all ships should provide free of charge food and drinking water 'of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity' to meet the needs of those onboard
- food hygiene principles and the provision and maintenance of fresh water must be applied regardless of the age, size and type of vessel
- bacterial contamination is the most serious risk to food and fresh water safety
- those preparing or serving food must be properly trained and demonstrate a working knowledge of the principles and practice of food hygiene, including food storage, rotation, handling, cooking and serving
- prevention using a risk assessment and management approach is one of the most effective means of ensuring food and fresh water safety

Current regulations, the notice points out, specifically require the supply of provisions and water that: are of suitable quantity, nutritive value, quality and variety for the size of crew and nature of the voyage; and contain nothing likely to cause sickness or injury or which renders water unpalatable.

Crew accommodation regulations for merchant ships and fishing vessel 15m and over require galleys, storerooms, sanitary and cabin accommodation to be maintained in a clean and habitable condition with all equipment and installations maintained in good working order.

Religious requirements and cultural practices of seafarers as they relate to food must also be taken into account.

Periodic assessments should be made of the effectiveness of training or instructions for those responsible for catering, and ship audits should be able to verify competency, the notice says. If there is any evidence of poor hygiene practices, designated cooks or others working in the galley should receive refresher training or other appropriate food hygiene training. Catering staff should also be aware of potential problems associated with food allergy and intolerance and have a basic understanding how to avoid cross-contamination and the importance of providing accurate information to crew. Information on food and water safety should be readily available to crew members in a clear language that includes English.

The M note, in detailed appendices, includes information on food and safety, hygiene and on fresh water supplies. Catering staff must beware, for instance, that contaminated food 'tastes and smells completely normal unless it is so contaminated that spoilage occurs', and that contamination usually occurs through 'recklessness, ignorance and people taking short cuts, and handling or storing food carelessly'. I also stresses that cross contamination, where bacteria is transferred, is 'a constant threat to food safety'.

Present regulations require that an inspection is made at least once a week of food and water supplies by the master or his/her deputy with a responsible member of the catering department.

MSN1735 (M+F) Amendment 3 Type=Approval of Marine Equipment (UK Nominated Bodies)

This notice covers the latest amendments to marine equipment listed in European Council directive 96/98/EC.

These amendments, introduced in response to changes in testing standards, apply where to equipment for which no agreed international testing standard presently exists.

The notice includes a detailed listing of equipment for which no detailed testing standards exist in international instruments, covering life saving appliances, marine pollution prevention equipment, fire protection equipment, navigation equipment, radiocommunication equipment, equipment under COLREG 72, bulk carrier safety equipment, marine engineering equipment, crew accommodation equipment.

The note also updates the contact details of the UK nominated bodies approved to undertake type approval of the equipment listed. The designated bodies are: ABS Europe, Bureau Veritas Marine Division, Det Norkse Veritas, Germanischer Lloyd AG, London Design Support Services Lloyds Register EMEA, QINETIQ, Registro Internazionale Navale (RINa Spa).

MIN354 (M) Written examination dates 2009/10: Deck and Engineer Officers (Merchant Navy)

This notice sets out the written examination dates for Merchant Navy officer certificates of competency for the 2009-10 academic year.

MIN355 (M) Written examination dates 2009/10: Engineer Officers (Yachts and Sail Training Vessels)

This notice sets out the written examination dates for engineer officer certificates of competency, limited to yachts and sail training vessels, for the 2009-10 academic year.