



MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE
MSN 1814

**SEAFARER MEDICAL EXAMINATION SYSTEM AND APPROVED
MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS**

This notice replaces MSN 0808 and is hereby issued to all Shipowners, Agents, Masters, Seafarers, Maritime Training Institutions and Approved Medical Practitioners

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Merchant Shipping (Medical Examinations) Regulations, 2016, (referred to in this Notice as “the Regulations” which were gazetted through GN 244 of 12 August 2016 implement the International Maritime Organization regulations on medical standards under the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 as amended.

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1.2 These Regulations fulfill the requirements under section 157 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2003.

2.0 Application

2.1 These Regulations apply to:
Seafarers employed or engaged in any capacity on board every ship, whether publicly or privately owned, which is registered in Tanzania and is ordinarily engaged in commercial maritime operations.

For the purpose of this Notice, the terms “seafarer”, “ship” and “commercial maritime operations” are considered in paragraphs 2.2-2.4.

2.2 Seafarer

2.2.1 A seafarer is a person employed or engaged in any capacity on board a ship on business of the ship. This is taken to mean a person whose usual place of work



is on board a ship, and includes any master, crew member, resident entertainer and franchise employee on passenger ships.

- 2.2.2 The Regulations will not be taken to apply to those whose usual place of work is ashore but who are working on a ship on a temporary or short-term basis eg pilots, fitters and research scientists.

2.3 Ship

For the purpose of this Notice, a ship is one which is registered under the Merchant Shipping legislation for navigation at sea and in inland waterways including foreign registered vessels engaged in the local trade.

2.4 Commercial Maritime Operations

- 2.4.1 Commercial operations will normally be taken to include all vessels engaged in trade, carrying cargo or fare-paying passengers.
- 2.4.2 Government ships such as those operated by the Navy and Marine Police, which are not ordinarily engaged in commercial maritime operations, are not covered by these Regulations.

3.0 Employment of seafarers

- 3.1 These Regulations make it a legal requirement for any seafarer employed or engaged in any capacity aboard a ship, to hold a valid certificate attesting to their medical fitness for the work for which they are employed.

4.0 Acceptable Certificates

4.1 These are:

- (i) a certificate issued by an approved medical practitioner in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations; or
- (ii) a certificate issued by the Government of any country, accepted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as to fulfilling the organizations regulations on medical standards.

5.0 Application for Medical Fitness Certificate



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5.1 An application for a seafarer medical certificate should be made directly to one of the maritime administration(TASAC) approved medical practitioners by an individual seafarer or on the behalf of seafarer by the actual or prospective employer.

The approved medical practitioners for the purpose of seafarer medical examination, in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations and section A-I/9 of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code, (STCW Code) are:

- (i) Dr. Charles K. Orito
EDEN Medical Clinic
Mavuno House, Azikiwe Street
P.O. Box 65202

- (ii) Dr. Faustina N. Ncheye
Muhimbili National Hospital
Out Patient Service Department
P.O. Box 65000
DAR ES SALAAM
Telephone +255 22 151367/Ext. 26
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- (iii) Dr. Ernest Nyanda Chenya
Upendo Foundation Health Centre
P.O. Box 16
KIGOMA
Telephone +255 28 280 4391
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E Mail: ernestchenya@yahoo.com

- (iv) Dr. Joshua A. Masikini
Star Medicare Dispensary, Mabatini
P.O. Box 2472

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(v) Dr. Francis G. Mhagama
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(vii) Dr. Joseph S Mberesero
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(viii) Dr. Emma Mwande
Ligula Regional Hospital
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- (ix) Dr. Kigwala Issa
Ligula Regional Hospital
P.O Box 520
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Mobile +255 765 550 655
E Mail: kiswagala14@gmail.com

- 5.2 A seafarer attending a medical examination must produce personal and photographic identification, which will be verified by the approved medical practitioner. When it is not a first medical examination, the previous medical certificate should also be brought to the examination.
- 5.3 The approved medical practitioner is entitled to require reasonable payment for the service rendered in respect of the medical examinations and this cost should be met by the seafarer's employer or company or seafarer himself/herself.
- 5.4 Approved medical practitioners are required to keep all medical examination forms, including results of investigation in a confidential file for a period of at least 30 years.

6.0 Medical and Eyesight Standards

- 6.1 Approved medical practitioners are required to determine a seafarer's fitness by reference to the statutory medical and eyesight standards set out in the first schedule (Guidelines for medical examination of seafarers) to the Regulations and the minimum physical abilities set out in table B-I/9 of the STCW Code. In accordance with international guidelines, the approved medical practitioner may also consider it appropriate to undertake additional tests such as audiometry and physical fitness, as well as giving lifestyle guidance, immunisations and tuberculosis screening. Additional charges may be incurred.

6.2 Medical standards

- 6.2.1 It is clearly not possible to cover every medical condition within the specified standards. As a general principle the approved medical practitioner should be satisfied in each case that no disease or defect is present which could



either be aggravated by working at sea, or represent an unacceptable health risk to the individual seafarer, other crew members or the safety of the ship.

6.2.2 Apart from the purely medical aspects, the occupational circumstances which apply at sea should be fully considered, especially in any borderline case. Particular factors which should be taken into account are:

- a) the potentially hazardous nature of seafaring, which calls for high standards of health and continuing fitness;
- b) the restricted medical facilities likely to be available on board ship. Few ships carry doctors, medical supplies are limited and there will be delay before full medical treatment is available;
- c) the possible difficulty of providing/replacing required medication. As a rule, seafarer should not be accepted for service if the loss of a necessary medicine could precipitate the rapid deterioration of a medical condition;
- d) the confined nature of life on board ship and need to be able to live and work in a closed community;
- e) the limited crew complements which means that illness of one crew member may place a burden on others or impair the safe and efficient working of the ship;
- f) the potential need for crew members to play a role in an emergency or emergency drill, which may involve strenuous activity in adverse conditions;
- g) since seafarers may need to join and leave ships by air, they should be free from any condition which precludes air travel or could be seriously affected by it, such as pneumothorax or conditions which predispose to barotraumas.

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



required. Where medication is acceptable for seafarers, the individual seafarer should arrange for reserve stock of the prescribed drugs to be held in a safe place, with the agreement of the ship's master. However, seafarers taking any medication that has side effects that will impair judgment, balance or any other requirements for effective and safe performance of routine and emergency duties shall not be allowed on board.

6.3 Eyesight Standards

6.3.1 The approved medical practitioner must also ensure that the seafarer meets the visual acuity and colour vision standards and will include testing during the medical examination. Colour vision testing shall be in accordance with the International Recommendations for Colour Vision Requirements for Transport, published by the Commission Internationale de l'Eclairage (CIE 143-2001) including any subsequent versions) or equivalent test methods. Seafarers in the deck department required to undertake lookout duties must meet the minimum eyesight standards for distance vision aided, near/immediate vision and colour vision in table A-I/9 of the STCW Code. Failure in this test will mean that a medical certificate may only be issued with a restriction precluding navigational watch/lookout duties.

6.3.2 Applicants intending to work as engineer or radio officers must also meet the colour requirements. Failure in this test will mean that a certificate will only be issued with a restriction precluding work with coloured cables and equipment.

6.3.3 The minimum in-service eyesight standards in each eye for unaided distance vision shall be at least 0.1 (value given in Snellen decimal notation).

6.3.3 In view of the importance of meeting the eyesight standards, anyone considering a seagoing career is strongly advised to have a full sight test by an optometrist before beginning training to ensure that they meet the standards.

6.4 Categories of Medical Fitness

6.1 The following categories are applied in assessing whether or not a seafarer is fit in terms of the medical and eyesight standards:



- (i) A. for unrestricted sea service
- (ii) E. for restricted sea service only
- (iii) B. permanently unfit
- (iv) C. indefinitely: review in six months
- (v) D. temporarily: review in twelve weeks

7.0 Issue of Medical Certificate

- 7.1 Persons applying for a medical certificate shall do so on the prescribed form and shall present to the recognized medical practitioner appropriate identity documentation to establish their identity. They shall also surrender their previous medical certificate, if held.
- 7.2 If the approved medical practitioner considers the seafarer is fit for sea service and meets the medical and eyesight standards, he will issue a medical fitness certificate under category A or A(T). Under category A(T), the certificate may also be restricted to such capacity of sea service (eg catering department), duties (eg not fit for lookout duties) or geographical area (eg excluding service in winter areas) as the approved practitioner considers appropriate.
- 7.3 If the approved medical practitioner considers the seafarer is temporarily or permanently unfit or issues any certificate subject to restriction, he must issue the seafarer with a notice of failure/restriction. It is helpful to the seafarer in deciding whether or not to appeal, if the approved medical practitioner discloses to the seafarer the medical reasons for the refusal of a certificate or the inclusion of a restriction, unless the approved medical practitioner considers that such disclosure would be harmful to the seafarer's health. Seafarers considered temporarily unfit for a period of three months or less, do not have a right to appeal.
- 7.4 It is the responsibility of the employer, or those authorized to act on his behalf, to ensure that the category recommended by the approved medical practitioner is taken fully into account when the engagement or the continued employment of a seafarer is under consideration.

8.0 Validity of Medical Fitness Certificates

- 8.1 The medical fitness certificate must specify the period of validity from the date of the medical examination. Under these Regulations, the maximum validity period for all seafarers over 18 is two years, and one year for seafarers under 18 years old or fifty years of age or more.



8.2 A seafarer whose certificate expires while he is in a location where medical examination in accordance with the Regulations is impracticable, may continue to be employed for a period of no more than three months from the date of expiry of the certificate.

8.3 If an approved medical practitioner has reasonable grounds for believing that:

- there is a significant change in the medical fitness of a seafarer during the period of validity of his medical fitness certificate; or that
- he did not have full details of the seafarer's condition at the time of examination, and if he had done so he could not reasonably have considered that the seafarer met the required standards; or
- that the medical fitness certificate was not issued in accordance with the Regulations;

He shall notify the seafarer concerned and exercise his powers under the Regulations to demand the return of the medical certificate so as to:-

- suspend the validity of the certificate until the seafarer has undergone a further medical examination; or
- suspend its validity for such period as he/she considers the seafarer will remain unfit to go to sea; or
- cancel the certificate if he/she considers that the seafarer is likely to remain permanently unfit to go to sea.

8.4 If, for any reason, the certificate is not returned, the approved medical practitioner should inform the Registrar of Ships, who will take appropriate action.

8.5 If a seafarer holding a valid medical fitness certificate, suffers a condition or has been incapacitated by injury or illness covered by the medical standards, or has been discharged or evacuated from a ship for health reasons, the seafarer should not use his medical certificate until an approved medical practitioner has re-examined the seafarer and is satisfied that the seafarer meets the standards for the category of certificate held. It is also the seafarer's responsibility to reveal to the approved medical practitioner if he has previously failed a seafarer medical examination.



8.6 A seafarer who is the holder of a valid medical certificate may at any time be required by the employer or owner or master of a ship to obtain a new certificate where, as a result of illness, injury or reasonable cause it is believed the seafarer may no longer meet appropriate minimum standards.

8.7 A seafarer required to hold a valid medical certificate is required to produce it to a proper authority on demand.

9.0 Appeal Procedure

9.1 Any seafarer may appeal if aggrieved by the refusal of an approved medical practitioner to issue him with a medical fitness certificate or any restriction imposed on such a certificate, or the suspension for a period of more than three months, or the cancellation of that certificate by an approved medical practitioner

9.2 Before exercising the right of appeal, the seafarer may wish to seek independent medical advice. A seafarer who wishes to appeal should make an application which, forms part of the notice of appeal and send it to maritime administration. The application must be made within one month of the date on which the seafarer is given notice by the approved medical practitioner of refusal, restriction or suspension of a certificate. The Registrar of Ships will then arrange for the appeal to be considered by a medical referee.

9.3 The appeal application includes an authority to the approved medical practitioner to release his report to the medical referee. Where the applicant wishes to submit additional medical evidence in support of his application, he shall send or cause to be sent such evidence to the medical referee before the appointment date.

9.4 Medical referees are empowered, while working to the same medical and eyesight standards:

- To ensure that the diagnosis has been established beyond reasonable doubt, in accordance with the medical evidence on which the approved medical practitioner reached his decision and normally, with the assistance of a report from a Consultant in the appropriate specialty;
- To determine whether the medical and eyesight standards, especially those with a discretionary element, have been properly interpreted; and



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- To consider the possibility of a seafarer, previously declared permanently unfit, returning to sea in some capacity.
- 9.5 In cases not covered by the medical and eyesight standards or in a ‘permanently unfit’ cases where exceptional medical considerations apply, the medical referee should decide an appropriate fitness category after consultation with the approved medical practitioner involved and consideration of all the evidence presented to him.
- 9.6 The medical referee must reach a decision within two months of the date on which the appeal was lodged with maritime administration (TASAC), or longer where necessary, subject to agreement with TASAC.
- 10 For inquiries
Registrar;
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