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## **INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 139**

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### **Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006) Accommodation Standards**

#### **Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers and Masters**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The Bahamas Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012 give effect to the requirements of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (hereinafter referred to as MLC 2006) and should be read in conjunction with this Bulletin.
- 1.2. This Bulletin provides guidance on the Bahamas requirements in relation to accommodation standards for the purpose of compliance with MLC 2006.

#### **2. Application**

- 2.1. The accommodation standards specified in the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012 are applicable to ships constructed on or after the date of entry into force of MLC 2006. MLC 2006 refers to the date of the keel being laid or at a similar stage of construction. For uniformity, the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) interprets "similar date of construction" as being harmonised with the definition from SOLAS Ch. II-1, regulation 1.2:
  - i. Construction identifiable with a specific ship begins; and
  - ii. assembly of that ship has commenced comprising at least 50 tonnes or one per cent of the estimated mass of all structural material, whichever is less.

### **3. Existing Ships**

- 3.1. Ships built before the date of entry into force of MLC 2006 ("existing ships") will continue to comply with the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations 1978, as amended, together with any agreed deviations applicable to the vessel concerned.
- 3.2. The BMA is generally satisfied that its existing registered ships comply with the current crew accommodation regulations. However, noting that Port State Control may require documentary evidence of compliance with ILO 92/133, the BMA recommends that existing ships obtain documentary evidence of compliance. Appropriate verification and certification may be issued by any Bahamas Recognised Organisation.

### **4. General interpretations**

#### **4.1. Clear headroom**

- 4.1.1. For the avoidance of doubt, the clear headroom of not less than 203 centimetres required by Regulation 22 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012 is considered to be the height of the space measured from the deck.

#### **4.2. Insulation**

- 4.2.1. The bulkheads, casing and decks separating the crew accommodation from other spaces in the ship in which heat or cold may be generated shall be insulated in a manner which will prevent the sleeping rooms, mess rooms, recreation rooms and alleyways in the accommodation space being so affected by such heat or cold or by condensation as to prejudice the health or comfort of the crew. External bulkheads of sleeping rooms and mess rooms should likewise be insulated.
- 4.2.2. All machinery casings and all boundary bulkheads of galleys and other spaces in which heat is produced should be adequately insulated where there is a possibility of resulting heat effects in adjoining accommodation or passageways.
- 4.2.3. Measures should also be taken to provide protection from heat effects of steam and/or hot water service pipes.

### **4.3. Materials**

- 4.3.1. Materials used to construct internal bulkheads, panelling and sheeting, floors and joinings shall be suitable for their intended purpose.
- 4.3.2. Bulkhead surfaces and deckheads should be of material with a surface easily kept clean.
- 4.3.3. No form of construction likely to harbour vermin should be used.
- 4.3.4. The bulkhead surfaces and deckheads in sleeping rooms and mess rooms should be capable of being easily kept clean and light in colour with a durable, non-toxic finish.
- 4.3.5. The decks in all seafarer accommodation should be of approved material and construction and shall provide a non-slip surface impervious to damp and be easily kept clean.
- 4.3.6. Where the floorings are made of composite materials, the joints with the sides should be profiled to avoid crevices.

### **4.4. Lighting**

- 4.4.1. In spaces lit by natural lighting, the natural light should be bright enough in day time in clear weather to enable a person with normal sight to read an ordinary newspaper in those parts of the room or other space which are available for free movement.
- 4.4.2. Electric lighting should be provided in seafarer's accommodation. If the electric lighting is not fed from two independent sources of electrical power (i.e. main and emergency source of power), additional emergency lighting using lamps or apparatus suitable for the purpose should be provided.
- 4.4.3. The standards of artificial lighting should be in accordance with Schedule 3 of the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations, 1978, as amended.

### **4.5. Ventilation and air conditioning systems**

- 4.5.1. The system of ventilation for sleeping rooms and mess rooms should be controlled so as to maintain the air in a satisfactory condition and to ensure sufficient air movement in all conditions of weather and climate.

- 4.5.2. The number of air changes per hour and volume of fresh air per minute required for each space should take into account Schedule 4 of the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations, 1978, as amended.
- 4.5.3. When air conditioning systems are fitted, the number of air changes per hour may be reduced, taking into account Regulation 16(2)(ii) and (iii) of the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations, 1978, as amended.
- 4.5.4. Air conditioning systems should take account of the particular characteristics of operations at sea and should not produce excessive noise or vibration.
- 4.5.5. Air conditioning systems should be designed to facilitate easy cleaning and disinfection to prevent or control the spread of disease.
- 4.5.6. As a guide, air conditioning systems should be capable of maintaining a temperature of 29°C (dry bulb) with 50% relative humidity when the ambient (outside) conditions are 32°C (dry bulb) with 78% humidity.
- 4.5.7. Power for the operation of the air conditioning and other ventilation systems should be available at all times when seafarers are living or working onboard and conditions require their use. However, power need not be provided from an emergency source.

#### **4.6. Heating**

- 4.6.1. Where provided, heating systems should be in operation at all times when seafarers are living or working onboard and conditions require their use.
- 4.6.2. Heating should be by means of hot water, thermal heating oil, warm air, electricity, steam or equivalent. However, within the accommodation area, steam should not be used as a medium for heat transmission.
- 4.6.3. The heating system should be capable of maintaining the temperature in seafarer accommodation at a satisfactory level under normal conditions of weather and climate likely to be met within the trade in which the ship is engaged.
- 4.6.4. As a guide, heating systems should be capable of maintaining a temperature in the accommodation of 21°C when the ventilation system provided is working normally and the temperature of the ambient (outside) air is 1°C.

4.6.5. Radiators and other heating apparatus should be placed and, where necessary, shielded so as to avoid risk of fire or danger or discomfort to the occupants.

#### **4.7. Drainage**

4.7.1. Sufficient drainage pipes and channels should be provided wherever necessary to clear water shipped from the sea.

4.7.2. Soil and other waste water drainage systems should be so arranged and fitted with such water seals, air vents and storm valves as are necessary to prevent siphonage or blow-back.

4.7.3. Sanitary spaces and laundries should be served by one or more scuppers which do not serve any space other than sanitary accommodation or another laundry. The scuppers should be at least 50 millimetres in diameter and should be placed wherever water is likely to collect on the floor.

4.7.4. There should be no drainage into sanitary accommodation from any source outside that accommodation except other sanitary accommodation.

#### **4.8. Noise and Vibration**

4.8.1. Accommodation, recreational and catering facilities should be located as far as practicable from the engines, steering gear rooms, deck winches, ventilation, heating and air conditioning equipment and other noisy machinery and apparatus.

4.8.2. Acoustic insulation or other appropriate sound-absorbing materials should be used in the construction and finishing of bulkheads, deckheads and decks within the sound-producing spaces as well as self-closing noise-isolating doors for machinery spaces.

4.8.3. Engine rooms and other machinery spaces should be provided, wherever practicable, with soundproof centralised control rooms for engine-room personnel. Working spaces, such as the machine shop, should be insulated, as far as practicable, from the general engine-room noise and measures should be taken to reduce noise in the operation of machinery.

4.8.4. The limits for noise levels for working and living spaces should be in conformity with the international guidelines on exposure levels, including

those in the ILO Code of Practice "*Ambient factors in the workplace*" 2001 and IMO Assembly Resolution A.468 (XII) "*Code on Noise Levels onboard Ships*". A copy of the applicable instruments in English or the working language of the ship should be carried on board and should be accessible to seafarers.

4.8.5. Accommodation, recreational or catering facilities should not be exposed to excessive vibration.

## **5. Sleeping Rooms**

### **5.1. Floor area**

5.1.1. It is expected that sleeping rooms in the majority of ships will meet the minimum floor areas as set out in Regulation 22 of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012.

5.1.2. Space occupied by berths and lockers, chests of drawers and seats should be included in the measurement of the floor area.

5.1.3. Small or irregularly shaped spaces which do not add effectively to the space available for free movement and cannot be used for the installation of furniture should be excluded from the measurement of the floor area.

5.1.4. Notwithstanding the above, it is recognised that strict compliance with the minimum floor area requirements may prohibit design of alternative accommodation arrangements which would provide a generally superior standard of accommodation. The BMA may therefore consider applications to include the floor area of private (en-suite) sanitary facilities in the required total floor area of sleeping rooms where it can be demonstrated that such arrangements will result in a reduction in the overall numbers of cabins in multiple occupancy.

5.1.5. The BMA will take into account additional factors such as recreational facilities provided and alternatives such as quiet areas or reading rooms when considering applications for acceptance of alternative accommodation arrangements under paragraph 5.1.4 above. Such applications will be dealt with under the provisions of Article VI (4) of the Convention.

## **5.2. General**

- 5.2.1. Wherever reasonable and practicable, taking into account the size and layout of the ship and the activity in which it is to be engaged, sleeping rooms should be planned and equipped with a private bathroom, including a toilet, in order to provide reasonable comfort for the occupants and to facilitate tidiness. The BMA expects that the majority of modern ships will comply with this requirement wherever practicable.
- 5.2.2. There should be no more than two petty officers accommodated per sleeping room.
- 5.2.3. In order to provide sufficient berths for training, the BMA will permit officer cadets to be accommodated in two berth cabins constructed to similar standards as those provided for petty officers. Where officer cadets are to be so accommodated, this is to be notified to the BMA on the application for the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance, Part I (DMLC Part I).
- 5.2.4. An electric reading lamp should be installed at the head of each berth in seafarer's sleeping rooms.
- 5.2.5. Berths should be fitted with a comfortable mattress with a cushioning bottom or a combined cushioning mattress, including a spring bottom or a spring mattress. Mattress stuffing should be of a material not likely to attract or harbour vermin.
- 5.2.6. Mattresses and soft furnishings should be manufactured with fire retardant materials [or have a fire retardant finish].
- 5.2.7. Sleeping rooms should be fitted with curtains or equivalent for the sidelights, where fitted.
- 5.2.8. Sleeping rooms should be fitted with a mirror, small cabinets for toilet requisites, a book rack and a sufficient number of coat hooks.

## **6. Mess Rooms**

- 6.1. Separate or common mess room facilities are to be provided taking into account factors such as the size of the ship and the distinctive cultural, religious and social needs of the seafarers.

- 6.2. BMA approval of the mess room facilities to be provided is to be sought in all cases. Details of the mess room facilities to be provided are therefore to be included in the application for the DMLC Part I.
- 6.3. Where separate mess room facilities are provided, separate mess rooms should be provided for:
  - i. The master and officers; and
  - ii. Petty officers and other seafarers.
- 6.4. On ships other than passenger ships, the floor area of mess rooms for seafarers should be not less than 1.5 square metres per person of the planned seating capacity.
- 6.5. In all ships, mess rooms should be equipped with tables and appropriate fixed or movable seats sufficient to accommodate the greatest number of seafarers likely to use them at any one time. The tops of tables and seats should be of damp resistant material.
- 6.6. The following should be provided, where practicable, at all times when seafarers are onboard:
  - i. a conveniently located refrigerator of sufficient capacity for the number of persons using the mess room(s);
  - ii. facilities for hot beverages and cool water;
  - iii. where available pantries are not accessible to mess rooms, sufficient lockers for mess utensils and proper facilities for washing utensils should be provided;
  - iv. mess utensils, including plates, cups and other mess utensils of material which is easily cleaned should be provided.

## **7. Sanitary Facilities**

- 7.1. Hot and cold fresh water should be provided to all washbasins, baths and showers.
- 7.2. The hot water should be heated to a constant temperature of at least 66°C and should, where possible, be heated by thermostatically controlled calorifiers of sufficient capacity.
- 7.3. An anti-scalding mixing valve should be fitted to all showers, set in such a way that the temperature of the shower water can be varied by the person using it to any temperature between ambient and a temperature of at least :



- i. in the case of a thermostatically controlled mixing valve, 38°C, but not more than 43°C; or
  - ii. in the case of any other mixing valve, 35°C, but not more than 40°C.
- 7.4. Suitable measures to prevent scalding at washbasins and baths should be taken.
- 7.5. Washbasins and tub baths should be constructed of materials with a smooth surface not liable to crack, flake or corrode.
- 7.6. All toilets should be provided with an ample flush of water or with some other suitable flushing means, such as air, which are available at all times and independently controllable.
- 7.7. Sanitary accommodation intended for the use of more than one person should comply with the following:
  - i. floors should be of durable material, impervious to damp, and shall be properly drained;
  - ii. bulkheads should be of steel or other approved material and shall be watertight up to at least 23 centimetres above the level of the deck;
  - iii. the sanitary accommodation should be sufficiently lit, heated and ventilated, taking into account the relevant sections of this Bulletin;
  - iv. toilets should be situated convenient to, but separate from, sleeping rooms and wash rooms, without direct access from the sleeping rooms or from a passage between sleeping rooms and toilets to which there is no other access. This requirement does not apply where a toilet is located in a compartment between two sleeping rooms having a total of not more than four seafarers;
  - v. where there is more than one toilet in a compartment, they should be sufficiently screened to ensure privacy;
  - vi. towels, soap and toilet paper for all seafarers should be provided by the shipowner.
- 7.8. Where separate facilities for engine department personnel to change their clothes are provided, they should be located outside the machinery space but with easy access to it and should be fitted with individual clothes lockers as well as with tubs or showers or both and washbasins having hot and cold running fresh water.

## **8. Hospitals**

- 8.1. Ship's hospitals should be designed to facilitate consultation and the provision of medical first aid and to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
- 8.2. The arrangement of the entrance, berths, lighting, ventilation, heating and water supply should be designed to ensure the comfort and facilitate the treatment of the occupants.
- 8.3. The hospital should where practicable be provided with at least one bed for every 50 or fraction of 50 seafarers carried onboard.
- 8.4. For ships engaged in coastal trade, separate hospital accommodation is not necessary, provided that a suitably appointed cabin is identified for use as a temporary hospital should the need arise.
- 8.5. The sanitary accommodation provided for the use of the occupants of the hospital should:
  - i. be provided for the exclusive use of the hospital occupants; and
  - ii. be either part of the hospital or in close proximity to it; and
  - iii. have a minimum of one toilet, one washbasin and one tub or shower.

## **9. Laundry Facilities**

- 9.1. The laundry facilities provided should include the following:
  - i. washing machines;
  - ii. drying machines or adequately heated and ventilated drying rooms; and
  - iii. irons and ironing boards or their equivalent.

## **10. Recreational Facilities**

- 10.1. Furnishings for recreational facilities should as a minimum include a bookcase and facilities for reading, writing and, where practicable, games.
- 10.2. Consideration should be given to including the facilities listed in Guideline B3.1.11 of the Code to MLC 2006 at no cost to the seafarer, where practicable.

- 10.3. Every effort should be given to ensuring that the forwarding of seafarers' mail is as reliable and expeditious as possible. Efforts should also be considered for avoiding seafarers being required to pay additional postage when mail has to be readdressed owing to circumstances beyond their control.
- 10.4. Measures should be considered to ensure, subject to any applicable national or international laws or regulations, that whenever possible and reasonable seafarers are expeditiously granted permission to have their partners, relatives and friends as visitors on board their ship when in port. Such measures should meet any concerns for security clearances.
- 10.5. Where Company policy allows, consideration should be given to the possibility of allowing seafarers to be accompanied by their partners on occasional voyages where this is practicable and reasonable. Such partners should carry adequate insurance cover against accident and illness and the shipowners should give every assistance to the seafarer to effect such insurance.

## **11. Revision History**

Rev.0 (28 August 2012) – First issue