
Crew Accommodation Standards

Notice to ship owners, managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors

This Notice supersedes BMA Information Bulletin No.139

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Notice describes the required standards for crew accommodation on Bahamian ships.
- 1.2. This Notice should be read in conjunction with:
 - i. Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations 1978 (Crew Accommodation Regulations)
 - ii. Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012
 - iii. International Labor Organization Conventions 92 and 133
 - iv. ILO Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006)
 - v. BMA Information Notice 27

2. Application

- 2.1. [Part 1](#) of this Notice applies to all ships.
- 2.2. [Part 2](#) of this Notice applies to ships to which MLC 2006 applies¹ that are constructed² **on or after 20 August 2013**.
- 2.3. [Part 3](#) of this Notice applies to ships to which MLC 2006 applies that were constructed **before 20 August 2013**.
- 2.4. [Part 4](#) of this Notice applies to ships to which MLC 2006 is not applicable.

¹ Please refer to [Marine Notice 31](#)

² 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 the date when: (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.

PART 1

Requirements applicable to all ships

3. General interpretations

3.1. *Insulation*

3.1.1. 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.

3.2. *Materials*

3.2.1. Materials used to construct internal bulkheads, panelling and sheeting, floors and joinings shall be suitable for their intended purpose.

3.3. *Lighting*

3.3.1. 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.

3.3.2. 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.

3.3.3. The BMA will consider applications for exemption from provision of natural light in sleeping rooms etc., where the provision of windows or ports are considered to pose a potential threat to the safety of the ship (e.g. offshore platforms). In such cases, natural light should be provided in recreational rooms.

3.4. *Ventilation and air conditioning systems*

3.4.1. 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.

- 3.4.2. Air conditioning systems should take account of the particular characteristics of operations at sea and should not produce excessive noise or vibration.
- 3.4.3. Air conditioning systems should be designed to facilitate easy cleaning and disinfection to prevent or control the spread of disease.
- 3.4.4. 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.

3.5. ***Heating***

- 3.5.1. Where provided, heating systems should be in operation at all times when seafarers are living or working onboard and conditions require their use.
- 3.5.2. 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.
- 3.5.3. 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.
- 3.5.4. 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.

3.6. ***Drainage***

- 3.6.1. Sufficient drainage pipes and channels should be provided wherever necessary to clear water shipped from the sea.
- 3.6.2. 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.

3.7. ***Noise and Vibration***

- 3.7.1. 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.

- 3.7.2. 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.
- 3.7.3. 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.
- 3.7.4. 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.
- 3.7.5. Accommodation, recreational or catering facilities should not be exposed to excessive vibration.

4. Mess Rooms

- 4.1. 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.
- 4.2. 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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.

5. Sanitary Facilities

- 5.1. Hot and cold fresh water should be provided to all washbasins, baths and showers.
- 5.2. Suitable measures to prevent scalding at washbasins and baths should be taken.

- 5.3. Washbasins and tub baths should be constructed of materials with a smooth surface not liable to crack, flake or corrode.
- 5.4. 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.

6. Hospitals

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. 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.

7. Laundry Facilities

- 7.1. Laundry facilities shall be provided for the use of the crew.

8. Recreational Facilities

- 8.1. Furnishings for recreational facilities should as a minimum include a bookcase and facilities for reading, writing and, where practicable, games.
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. 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.

- 8.4. 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.

9. Crew Accommodation Inspections

- 9.1. In order to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the Convention requirements, the following areas are to be inspected at intervals not exceeding 7 days by the Master or a designate:
- i. Crew accommodation;
 - ii. Supplies of food and potable (drinking) water;
 - iii. Spaces and equipment used for storage and handling of food and drinking water;
 - iv. Galley and equipment and spaces used for the preparation and service of meals
- 9.2. The Master or designate shall be accompanied by at least one other member of the crew during each inspection.
- 9.3. Each inspection is to be recorded in the ship's Official Log Book with the following details:
- i. Time and date of inspection;
 - ii. Names and ranks of persons conducting the inspection; and
 - iii. Details of any deficiencies or areas of non-compliance.
- 9.4. The Official Log Book shall be made available for review by an authorised officer.

10. Fresh & Potable (Drinking) Water Treatment

- 10.1. Fresh and potable (drinking) water is to be treated in accordance with the Bahamas Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations, as amended. The guidance given in the United Kingdom Maritime & Coastguard Agency document MGN 397 (M+F) is to be taken into account.

PART 2

Ships constructed on or after 20 February 2013

11. General interpretations

11.1. General

11.1.1. Ships constructed on or after 20 February 2013 shall generally comply with Title 3 of MLC 2006.

11.2. Clear headroom

11.2.1. All parts of the crew accommodation, except cold store rooms, shall have a clear headroom of at least **2.03 metres** at every point where full and free movement is necessary.

11.2.2. The BMA may permit reduction in headroom in any space or part of any space in the crew accommodation where it is satisfied that it is reasonable so to do and that such reduction will not result in discomfort to the crew.

11.2.3. For the avoidance of doubt, clear headroom is considered to be the height of the space measured from the deck.

12. Sleeping Rooms

12.1. Floor area

12.1.1. It is expected that sleeping rooms in the majority of ships will meet the minimum floor areas as set out in Title 3 of MLC 2006.

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

12.1.3. 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.

12.1.4. 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 will 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.

12.1.5. 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. Such applications will be dealt with under the provisions of Article VI (4) of the Convention.

12.2. **General**

12.2.1. 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.

12.2.2. There should be no more than two petty officers accommodated per sleeping room.

12.2.3. 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).

PART 3

Ships constructed before 20 February 2013

13. General interpretations

13.1. General

- 13.1.1. Ships constructed before 20 February 2013 shall comply with the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations 1978, as applicable and practicable. These Regulations were developed having regard to the principles contained in ILO Convention Nos. 92 and 133; however, such Conventions have not been ratified by The Bahamas and do not apply as certification standards.
- 13.1.2. For ships to which the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 applies, the Maritime Labour Certificate together with the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (Parts I and II) shall be accepted as prima facie evidence of compliance with crew accommodation requirements, including for ships constructed prior to the entry into force of the Convention, unless there are clear grounds to doubt such compliance.
- 13.1.3. Where documentary evidence relating to historical accommodation standards is unavailable, this shall not of itself be considered a deficiency.
- 13.1.4. Compliance with operational requirements regarding accommodation and recreational facilities will be assessed as part of MLC, 2006 inspections. The assessment is to be reported on as normal for MLC, 2006 inspections and compliance documented by the Maritime Labour Certificate.

13.2. Clear headroom

- 13.2.1. All parts of the crew accommodation, except cold store rooms, shall have a clear headroom of at least **1.98 metres** at every point where full and free movement is necessary.
- 13.2.2. The BMA may permit reduction in headroom in any space or part of any space in the crew accommodation where it is satisfied that it is reasonable so to do and that such reduction will not result in discomfort to the crew.
- 13.2.3. For the avoidance of doubt, clear headroom is considered to be the height of the space measured from the deck.

14. Sleeping Rooms

14.1. Floor area

- 14.1.1. It is expected that sleeping rooms in the majority of ships will meet the minimum floor areas as set out in the Crew Accommodation Regulations.
- 14.1.2. Space occupied by berths and lockers, chests of drawers and seats should be included in the measurement of the floor area.
- 14.1.3. 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.
- 14.1.4. 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.
- 14.1.5. 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.

PART 4

Ships to which MLC is not applicable

15. General interpretations

15.1. General

- 15.1.1. Ships to which the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 is not applicable shall comply with the Merchant Shipping (Crew Accommodation) Regulations 1978 to the extent practicable. These Regulations were developed having regard to the principles contained in ILO Convention Nos. 92 and 133; however, such Conventions have not been ratified by The Bahamas and do not apply as certification standards.
- 15.1.2. Where a ship holds a valid Maritime Labour Certificate on a voluntary basis, such certificate together with the Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (Parts I and II) shall be accepted as prima facie evidence of compliance with crew accommodation requirements, unless there are clear grounds to doubt such compliance.
- 15.1.3. Where documentary evidence relating to historical accommodation standards is unavailable, this shall not of itself be considered a deficiency.
- 15.1.4. Compliance with operational requirements regarding accommodation and recreational facilities will be assessed as part of MLC, 2006 inspections. The assessment is to be reported on as normal for MLC, 2006 inspections and compliance documented by the Maritime Labour Certificate.

15.2. Clear headroom

- 15.2.1. All parts of the crew accommodation, except cold store rooms, should have a clear headroom of at least **1.98 metres** at every point where full and free movement is necessary.
- 15.2.2. The BMA may permit reduction in headroom in any space or part of any space in the crew accommodation where it is satisfied that it is reasonable so to do and that such reduction will not result in discomfort to the crew.
- 15.2.3. For the avoidance of doubt, clear headroom is considered to be the height of the space measured from the deck.

16. Sleeping Rooms

16.1. Floor area

- 16.1.1. It is expected that sleeping rooms in the majority of ships will meet the minimum floor areas as set out in the Crew Accommodation Regulations.
- 16.1.2. Space occupied by berths and lockers, chests of drawers and seats should be included in the measurement of the floor area.
- 16.1.3. 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.
- 16.1.4. 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.
- 16.1.5. 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.

17. Queries

- 17.1. Any queries on this Notice may be submitted to tech@bahamasmaritime.com or any BMA office.

