



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

F.No.25-19/7/2024-NT-DGS(comp. no.30839)

Date: 03.02.2025

Merchant Shipping Notice 01 of 2025

(This Notice supersedes the MS Notice No. 20 of 2014 dated 03.11.2014)

Subject: Age Restriction for Engagement of Seafarers for service on ships.

1. This notice is issued in light of recent incident which resulted in loss of three lives following sinking of an Indian Flagged vessel off Indian coast. The ship had an arrangement wherein only the life rafts to be used for abandoning ship.
2. The incident has raised concerns regarding the suitability of seafarers above a certain age to serve on vessels that do not have lifeboats as lifesaving appliances.
3. It was observed that the Master of the said vessel, who was 74 years old, exhibited reluctance to communicate with the owners in a timely manner, delayed sending a distress message, and ultimately abandoned the vessel.
4. The Master of the vessel could not disembark from ship on to the life raft swiftly in an emergency due to his level of physical fitness. Also, the reluctance of the Master to give abandon ship order resulted in delay by crew to leave ship and loss of three precious lives.
5. Furthermore, the vessel in question was required to be equipped with life-rafts only as per Rules, which require inflation and boarding by jumping into the water, rather than lifeboats that can be boarded directly from the ship. Boarding a life-raft is a difficult task especially in rough weather.
6. The interview with crew revealed that the delay in abandon ship order by the Master might be due to his age and the resultant reluctance to board the life-raft by jumping into water and then boarding the life raft.
7. Given these facts and the increased risk posed by the absence of lifeboats, it is hereby recommended that seafarer above 65 years of age may not be employed to serve on Cargo/Passenger vessels registered under MS Act or certified as RSV/ICV where lifeboats are not mandated as part of life-saving appliances under the applicable rules.

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8. In exceptional circumstances, the company intending to engage seafarers beyond the age of 65 years may seek permission from the nearest MMD with pre joining medical certificate and test reports. The MMD shall decide on the merits of the application on the same day. The minimum physical abilities set out in STCW Table B/1-9 should be considered, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers. The validity of medical certificate of seafarers beyond 65 years should be limited to the intended contract period only. The seafarer shall undergo medical examination prior to engagement on another ship.
9. This measure is intended to enhance safety standards and ensure that crew members are physically capable of responding swiftly and effectively in emergency situations.
10. Further, all seafarers beyond the age of 70 to undergo stringent pre joining medicals and thereafter the company to seek permission from nearest MMD to engage such seafarers on any vessel. The MMD shall decide on the merits of the application on the same day. The minimum physical abilities set out in STCW Table B/1-9 should be considered, bearing in mind the different duties of seafarers. The MMDs shall forward the report containing the details of such applications received, permission granted/rejected with reasons at monthly intervals to the Directorate for review.
11. The DGS approved medical practitioners shall conduct the pre-joining medical examination of seafarers above 65 years of age thoroughly in accordance with the applicable standards and forward the medical certificate along with test reports to the nearest MMD for verification and record. Any lapse or violation in conduct of medical examination of seafarers more than 65 years of age shall be viewed seriously and DGS approval of such doctors shall be withdrawn permanently.
12. Ship owners, operators and RPSL agencies are advised to take necessary actions to comply with this order with immediate effect.
13. This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



(Capt. Harinder Singh)
Nautical Surveyor and Dy. Director General of Shipping(Tech)
