

**Guidelines for flag State
inspections under the
Maritime Labour Convention, 2006,
as amended**

International Labour Organization

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as amended**

International Labour Office Geneva

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Preface

When the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), was adopted by the 94th (Maritime) Session of the International Labour Conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in February 2006, it was described as a “historic event”. The MLC, 2006, is seen by seafarers as a “charter of rights” that will help ensure “Decent Work” for seafarers, no matter where ships sail and no matter which flag they fly. Shipowners also support the MLC, 2006, as it is seen as an important new tool to help ensure a level playing field for quality shipowners that may have to compete with ships that have substandard conditions. The MLC, 2006, is also important for governments because it brings together nearly 70 international legal instruments in one comprehensive modern document that covers almost every aspect of decent work in this sector.

A key feature of the MLC, 2006, is that it builds on the strengths of the ILO approach to making sure that, in each country, international labour standards are effectively implemented at the “ground level” and enforced. At the same time the MLC, 2006, meets the challenges of this globalized industry by taking over many elements that are found in other major maritime Conventions and have contributed to the success of those Conventions in ensuring safer and secure shipping and preventing marine pollution.

The most important of these elements is found in the emphasis in the MLC, 2006, on effective flag State inspection and certification of ships. Flag State inspectors, including those from Recognized Organizations, are at the front line of the combat to ensure decent conditions of work for seafarers. An effective and coordinated system of regular inspections, monitoring and other control measures of ships adopted by the competent authorities in flag States is the primary tool for ensuring that ships meet the requirements of the MLC, 2006, as implemented in national laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements and practice.

The International Labour Conference saw the importance of ensuring that the MLC, 2006, was backed up by an effective system for inspections by flag States complemented by a widespread harmonized port State control. It adopted two key resolutions intended to support the promotion, ratification and effective implementation of the Convention and the achievement of decent working and living conditions for seafarers.¹

These two resolutions are the “Resolution concerning the development of guidelines for port State control” (resolution IV), and the “Resolution concerning the development of guidelines for flag State inspection” (resolution XIII). Both

¹ Adopted 22 February 2006, International Labour Conference, 94th (Maritime) Session, 2006, *Provisional Record* No. 16, p. 16/9.

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resolutions called for tripartite meetings of experts to develop guidelines for flag State inspections and to assist port State control officers carrying out MLC, 2006, inspections.

Resolution XIII on developing guidelines for flag State inspection requested the ILO Director-General to convene a tripartite expert meeting to develop “... suitable guidance for flag State inspection.” The resolution explained that the success of the Convention will depend, among others, upon the uniform and harmonized implementation of flag State responsibilities in accordance with its relevant provisions, and that given the global nature of the shipping industry, it is important for flag State inspectors to receive proper guidelines for the performance of their duties.

Developing international guidelines and the related national flag State inspections and guidelines for their inspectors is an important aspect of implementation of the MLC, 2006, and an essential aspect of ensuring widespread harmonized implementation of the MLC, 2006.

The *Guidelines for flag State inspections under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, were adopted in September 2008 by tripartite experts’ meetings attended by nearly 300 participants. The experts were drawn from all regions of the world. The flag State inspection guidelines contained in this book are published alongside the *Guidelines for port State control officers carrying out inspections under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, which were also adopted by a tripartite experts’ meeting in September 2008 and are intended to assist port State control officers to carry out inspections of foreign ships coming into their ports.

Each country may have its own practices relating to flag State inspection. The flag State’s competent authorities of the various countries may wish to adapt these guidelines to fit their current practices. These international guidelines are designed to be of practical assistance to governments in drafting their own national guidelines. It is hoped that they will, at the same time, achieve their primary aim – namely, effective flag State inspection and, where appropriate, certification of ships for compliance with the requirements of the MLC, 2006, as implemented nationally. If this is achieved, seafarers will benefit from decent conditions of work, not only in law but also in practice.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Explanation of the objectives and content of the guidelines

1. In accordance with resolution XIII adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) at its 94th (Maritime) Session, these international guidelines have been developed to assist flag State administrations to effectively implement their responsibilities with respect to the ship inspection and certification duties under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). Pursuant to the 2018 Resolution of the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the MLC, 2006, the guidelines have been updated to reflect the 2014, 2016 and 2018 amendments.

2. The guidelines are intended to provide supplementary practical information and guidance to flag States that can be adapted to specifically reflect their national laws and other measures implementing the MLC, 2006.

3. It must be emphasized that these guidelines are intended as a practical resource that can be used by any government that finds them helpful.

4. In all cases, the relevant national laws or regulations or collective bargaining agreements or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, in the flag State should be viewed as the authoritative statement of the requirements in the flag State.

5. The remaining sections of Chapter 1 provide general information on the structure, key concepts and terminology used in the MLC, 2006.

6. Chapter 2 is divided into two sections. The first section provides an overview of the flag State inspection system obligations in the MLC, 2006, and contains information with respect to actions or determinations that flag States or the competent authority in the flag State may take for ship inspection and certification. The second section provides more specific guidance on the process of maritime labour inspection and certification under the MLC, 2006.

7. Chapter 3 addresses the requirements of the MLC, 2006, that are to be inspected and, if required, certified, on all ships covered by the MLC, 2006. It contains guidance as to what a flag State inspector (or a recognized organization (RO) that has been delegated this task by a flag State) would check in verifying compliance. It also provides some examples of deficiencies.

8. Chapter 4 outlines a range of actions that can be taken if deficiencies or non-conformities are identified by flag State inspectors (or reported to the flag State by ROs acting on its behalf).

1.2. Brief overview of the MLC, 2006

9. The Preamble to the MLC, 2006, sets out the intentions and the objectives of the Members of the International Labour Organization in adopting the Convention. The Preamble refers to the global nature of the shipping industry and the need for seafarers to have special protection. It also links the MLC, 2006, to the other key international Conventions that establish minimum standards for the shipping industry in connection with safety, security and marine environmental protection. **The MLC, 2006, complementing other major international conventions, reflects international agreement on the minimum requirements for working and living conditions for seafarers.**

10. Like other international labour standards, the MLC, 2006, only sets out minimum international standards. However, recalling paragraph 8 of article 19 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, the Preamble goes on to clarify that in no case shall the adoption of any Convention and Recommendation by the Conference or the ratification of any Convention by any Member be deemed to affect any law, award, custom or agreement which ensures more favourable conditions to the workers concerned than those provided for in the Convention or Recommendation.

11. The MLC, 2006, contains an explanatory note, which was adopted by the 94th (Maritime) Session of the ILC to assist governments with respect to their legislative obligations and to understanding the legal relationship between the different parts of the MLC, 2006. It also provides an outline of the overall structure of the MLC, 2006.

*Explanatory note to the Regulations and Code
of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*

1. This explanatory note, which does not form part of the Maritime Labour Convention, is intended as a general guide to the Convention.

2. The Convention comprises three different but related parts: the Articles, the Regulations and the Code.

3. The Articles and Regulations set out the core rights and principles and the basic obligations of Members ratifying the Convention. The Articles and Regulations can only be changed by the Conference in the framework of article 19 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (see Article XIV of the Convention).

4. The Code contains the details for the implementation of the Regulations. It comprises Part A (Mandatory standards) and Part B (Non-mandatory guidelines). The Code can be amended through the simplified procedure set out in Article XV of the Convention. Since the Code relates to detailed implementation, amendments to it must remain within the general scope of the Articles and Regulations.

5. The Regulations and the Code are organized into general areas under five Titles:

- Title 1: Minimum requirements for seafarers to work on a ship;
- Title 2: Conditions of employment;
- Title 3: Accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering;
- Title 4: Health protection, medical care, welfare and social security protection;
- Title 5: Compliance and enforcement.

6. Each Title contains groups of provisions relating to a particular right or principle (or enforcement measure in Title 5), with connected numbering. The first group in Title 1, for example, consists of Regulation 1.1, Standard A1.1 and Guideline B1.1 relating to minimum age.

7. The Convention has three underlying purposes:

- (a) to lay down, in its Articles and Regulations, a firm set of rights and principles;
- (b) to allow, through the Code, a considerable degree of flexibility in the way Members implement those rights and principles; and
- (c) to ensure, through Title 5, that the rights and principles are properly complied with and enforced.

8. There are two main areas for flexibility in implementation: one is the possibility for a Member, where necessary (see Article VI, paragraph 3), to give effect to the detailed requirements of Part A of the Code through substantial equivalence (as defined in Article VI, paragraph 4).

9. The second area of flexibility in implementation is provided by formulating the mandatory requirements of many provisions in Part A in a more general way, thus leaving a wider scope for discretion as to the precise action to be provided for at the national level. In such cases, guidance on implementation is given in the non-mandatory Part B of the Code. In this way, Members which have ratified this Convention can ascertain the kind of action that might be expected of them under the corresponding general obligation in Part A, as well as action that would not necessarily be required. For example, Standard A4.1 requires all ships to provide prompt access to the necessary medicines for medical care on board ship (paragraph 1(b)) and to “carry a medicine chest” (paragraph 4(a)). The fulfilment in good faith of this latter obligation clearly means something more than simply having a medicine chest on board each ship. A more precise indication of what is involved is provided in the corresponding Guideline B4.1.1 (paragraph 4) so as to ensure that the contents of the chest are properly stored, used and maintained.

10. Members which have ratified this Convention are not bound by the guidance concerned and, as indicated in the provisions in Title 5 on port State control, inspections would deal only with the relevant requirements of this Convention (Articles, Regulations and the Standards in Part A). However, Members are required under paragraph 2 of Article VI to give due consideration to

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implementing their responsibilities under Part A of the Code in the manner provided for in Part B. If, having duly considered the relevant Guidelines, a Member decides to provide for different arrangements which ensure the proper storage, use and maintenance of the contents of the medicine chest, to take the example given above, as required by the Standard in Part A, then that is acceptable. On the other hand, by following the guidance provided in Part B, the Member concerned, as well as the ILO bodies responsible for reviewing implementation of international labour Conventions, can be sure without further consideration that the arrangements the Member has provided for are adequate to implement the responsibilities under Part A to which the Guideline relates.

12. With particular reference to flag State inspection responsibilities and the ship certification system, as dealt with in these guidelines, it is important to take account of ~~three six~~ of the ~~four seven~~ appendices located at the end of Title 5 of the MLC, 2006:

- Appendix A2-I: Evidence of financial security under Regulation 2.5, paragraph 2;
- Appendix A4-I: Evidence of financial security under Regulation 4.2;
- Appendix B4-I: Model Receipt and Release Form referred to in Guideline B4.2.2;
- Appendix A5-I: List of matters for flag State inspection for certification purposes;
- Appendix A5-II: Model documents relating to the flag State inspection and certification system established in Title 5:
 - Maritime Labour Certificate;
 - Interim Maritime Labour Certificate;
 - Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC (two parts – Part I and Part II));
- Appendix B5-I: An example, to provide guidance as to the way both parts of the DMLC might be filled out by the flag State (Part I) and a shipowner (Part II).

1.3. Key concepts in the MLC, 2006

13. This section of Chapter 1 sets out some of the key concepts relating to the application of the MLC, 2006. Section 1.4, which follows, contains the definitions of terms that are found in the MLC, 2006.

1.3.1. Application

14. The MLC, 2006, applies to all seafarers on all ships covered by the MLC, 2006. A seafarer is any person who is employed or engaged or works in any capacity on board a ship to which the MLC, 2006, applies. All ships registered with a flag State, if covered by the MLC, 2006, are subject to an inspection for compliance with the requirements of the MLC, 2006. The terms “seafarer” and “ship” are defined in the MLC, 2006 (see section 1.4 below).

1.3.2. Seafarers’ rights

15. The MLC, 2006, is intended to help achieve decent work for all seafarers. It sets out the fundamental rights and principles that seafarers have with respect to their working and living conditions.

16. Article III of the MLC, 2006, relates to *fundamental rights and principles* requiring ILO member States to satisfy themselves that the provisions of their laws and regulations respect, in the context of this Convention, the fundamental rights to:

- (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
- (b) the effective abolition of child labour; and
- (c) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

17. Article IV relates to *seafarers’ employment and social rights* and states:

- 1. Every seafarer has the right to a safe and secure workplace that complies with safety standards.
- 2. Every seafarer has a right to fair terms of employment.
- 3. Every seafarer has a right to decent working and living conditions on board ship.
- 4. Every seafarer has a right to health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection.
- 5. Each Member shall ensure, within the limits of its jurisdiction, that the seafarers’ employment and social rights set out in the preceding paragraphs of this Article are fully implemented in accordance with the requirements of the Convention. Unless specified otherwise in the Convention, such implementation may be achieved through national laws or regulations, through applicable collective bargaining agreements or through other measures or in practice.

1.3.3. Ships

18. The MLC, 2006, applies to all ships, whether publicly or privately owned, ordinarily engaged in commercial activities. Subject to any national provisions to the contrary, the MLC, 2006, does not apply to:

- ships which navigate exclusively in inland waters or waters within, or closely adjacent to, sheltered waters or areas where port regulations apply;
- ships engaged in fishing or in similar pursuits and ships of traditional build such as dhows and junks;
- warships or naval auxiliaries.

1.3.4. Compliance and enforcement (ship inspection and certification)

19. The flag State must verify, through an effective and coordinated system of regular inspection, monitoring and other control measures, that ships comply with the requirements of the Convention as implemented in national laws or regulations, or collective bargaining agreements or other measures or practices implementing the requirements of the MLC, 2006. Generally, under Regulation 5.1.3, in addition to being inspected, ships must also be certified for compliance with the requirements for the 14-16 areas of seafarers' working and living conditions set out in Title 5, Appendix A5-I. A flag State must also verify that its ships meet all MLC, 2006, requirements, even if the requirement is not one that must be certified. For ships that do not have to be certified (ships under 500 gross tonnage (gt), or ships that are not engaged in international voyages and that do not operate from a port or between ports in another country) the flag State must still verify compliance for all the same requirements as a certified ship.

20. The MLC, 2006, recognizes that ILO Members need some flexibility to address particular national situations, especially with respect to smaller ships and ships that do not go on international voyages or specific kinds of ships. It also recognizes that flag States may not always be in a position to implement the requirements of the MLC, 2006, in the manner set out in Part A of the Code and allows them to adopt measures which are "substantially equivalent" (see paragraph 37 below). The MLC, 2006, provides guidance primarily directed to national law-making bodies as to the ways in which this national flexibility can be exercised. For ships that are engaged in international voyages or operate from a port or between ports in another country these matters will be stated on the MLC, 2006, documents carried on ships for the information of flag State inspectors and authorized officers carrying out port State control inspections (PSCO).

Certified ships

21. For ships of 500 gt or over that are engaged in international voyages or ships of 500 gt or over that fly the flag of one country and operate from a port or between ports in another country, the MLC, 2006, contains a list of 14-16 areas that are subject to a mandatory certification system (see MLC, 2006, Title 5, Appendix A5-I). Certification is mandatory only for some ships that are covered by the MLC, 2006; however, a shipowner can also request that a ship be certified even in cases where certification is not required.

22. The documents that are issued by the flag State, or by an RO on its behalf, if so authorized, are the Maritime Labour Certificate and a DMLC. The DMLC has two parts. Part I is filled out by the flag State and refers to the relevant national requirements that are to be certified as having been complied with. Part II is prepared by the shipowner and outlines the measures that the shipowner has put in place to ensure ongoing compliance on the ship with these flag State requirements. Models for the documents that must be carried on ships can be found in Appendix A5-II which is located at the end of Title 5 of the MLC, 2006.

Ships that are not certified

23. Ships that are not certified are subject to inspection, at intervals not exceeding three years, against the same MLC, 2006, requirements (as implemented nationally) for certified ships. The only difference is that the Maritime Labour Certificate and the DMLC are not issued to these ships. The national requirements for the 14-16 areas that are normally identified in Part I of a DMLC would also be relevant to flag State inspections of ships that are not certified, as would all the other requirements of the MLC, 2006.

1.4. Definitions

24. The following definitions are found in Article II, paragraph 1, of the MLC, 2006:

- (a) *competent authority* means the minister, government department or other authority having power to issue and enforce regulations, orders or other instructions having the force of law in respect of the subject matter of the provision concerned;
- (b) *declaration of maritime labour compliance* means the declaration referred to in Regulation 5.1.3;
- (c) *gross tonnage* means the gross tonnage calculated in accordance with the tonnage measurement regulations contained in Annex I to the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969, or any successor

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Convention; for ships covered by the tonnage measurement interim scheme adopted by the International Maritime Organization, the gross tonnage is that which is included in the REMARKS column of the International Tonnage Certificate (1969);

- (d) *maritime labour certificate* means the certificate referred to in Regulation 5.1.3;
- (e) *requirements of this Convention* refers to the requirements in these Articles and in the Regulations and Part A of the Code of this Convention;
- (f) *seafarer* means any person who is employed or engaged or works in any capacity on board a ship to which this Convention applies;
- (g) *seafarers' employment agreement* includes both a contract of employment and articles of agreement;
- (h) *seafarer recruitment and placement service* means any person, company, institution, agency or other organization, in the public or the private sector, which is engaged in recruiting seafarers on behalf of shipowners or placing seafarers with shipowners;
- (i) *ship* means a ship other than one which navigates exclusively in inland waters or waters within, or closely adjacent to, sheltered waters or areas where port regulations apply;
- (j) *shipowner* means the owner of the ship or another organization or person, such as the manager, agent or bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for the operation of the ship from the owner and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over the duties and responsibilities imposed on shipowners in accordance with this Convention, regardless of whether any other organizations or persons fulfil certain of the duties or responsibilities on behalf of the shipowner.

2. The flag State inspection system

2.1. Overview of flag State responsibilities

2.1.1. General note

25. This section of these guidelines is intended to assist flag States by providing a summary of their responsibilities primarily in relation to the flag State inspection system. **In all cases, the national legal framework implementing the MLC, 2006, as well as the Convention itself, remain the primary sources of information and guidance as to specific responsibilities of the flag State (or competent authorities).**

26. The majority of the provisions in the MLC, 2006, are directed to national lawmakers with respect to the elements of the national legal framework that are needed to implement the Convention. This includes information on situations where a State, or a “competent authority” in a State, can (or in some cases must) make determinations and take actions that are related to ensuring decent working and living conditions for seafarers and, in particular, for seafarers on ships that fly its flag.¹

27. Many of these national determinations relate to specific areas where flexibility can be exercised in the flag State, to respond to specific situations in the country. In most cases these refer to determinations that are to be made by the “competent authority” and require consultation with the seafarer and shipowner organizations concerned.² Although some general information is provided on this matter, the process of legal implementation by either the flag State (or a competent authority of the flag State) at the national level is outside the scope of these guidelines. The question of whether a country has properly implemented its obligations under the MLC, 2006, is a matter that is dealt with by the international

¹ National practice may vary with respect to which department (or departments) of government is considered as the “competent authority” (as defined in Article II – see para. 24 above) for purposes of giving effect to national laws or regulations or other measures implementing the requirements of the MLC, 2006.

² In cases where representative organizations of shipowners or of seafarers do not exist within a Member, any derogation, exemption or other flexible application of the MLC, 2006, for which the Convention requires consultation with shipowners’ and seafarers’ organizations may only be decided by that Member through consultation with the special tripartite committee established by the Convention (Article VII).

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supervisory system that is established under the Constitution of the International Labour Organization.

28. However, there are some specific actions that need to be taken at the more practical level to support implementation of the national requirements on ships. Of particular importance for these guidelines, which are concerned with flag State inspection responsibilities, are the:

- appointment of flag State inspectors, or ROs if authorized by the flag State to carry out some flag State tasks;
- inspection, monitoring and other control measures;
- issuance, renewal and withdrawal of the Maritime Labour Certificate and completion of Part I of the DMLC;
- responding to seafarer complaints;
- responding to requests for information about its ships from port State control authorities;
- taking enforcement action where ships are found not to be in compliance with the requirements of the Convention.

2.1.2. Overview of the MLC, 2006, national flexibility (determinations/exemptions on application of the requirements)

29. As noted above the exercise of national flexibility and determinations regarding the application of the MLC, 2006, is a matter for national legal implementation and is outside the scope of these guidelines. The discussion in this section of the guidelines is intended only as a background summary for information purposes.

General application to ships and seafarers

30. In some cases, questions might arise with respect to whether a particular ship (or category of ships) is covered by the MLC, 2006, or whether a category of persons are seafarers within the meaning of the Convention or with respect to the extent to which the requirements of the Convention are to be applied to smaller ships that do not go on international voyages.

31. Determinations can be made by the competent authority on these matters (if authorized to do so under national law) either in or, in many cases, after, consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned. In addition, any determinations that are made must be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office (Article II, paragraph 7).

The flag State inspection system

32. If there is doubt as to whether a category of persons are seafarers, then paragraph 3 of Article II should be considered. Additional guidance on this determination is provided in resolution VII adopted by the 94th Session of the ILC.³

33. Likewise, if there is doubt as to whether the MLC, 2006, applies to a ship or a particular category of ships, then paragraph 5 of Article II should be considered.

34. For ships of less than 200 gt that do not go on international voyages, paragraph 6 of Article II may need to be considered.

Specific application matters

35. There may also be decisions taken by flag States on other matters related to national implementation and application that are addressed in national laws or regulations or other measures, including substantial equivalences, determinations as to the application of, or exemptions from, some of the requirements under Standard A3.1 dealing with seafarer accommodation and recreational facilities for ships.

36. National substantial equivalences, and exemptions in accordance with Standard A3.1, as they pertain to the certified requirements of the MLC, 2006, will be stated in Part I of the DMLC. For other verified areas, specific national requirements would need to be consulted.

Substantial equivalence

37. Where a flag State is not in a position to implement a particular requirement in Titles 1–4 of the Convention in the manner set out in Part A of the Code (the Standards), it is permitted, under Article VI, paragraph 3, of the MLC, 2006, to adopt a “substantially equivalent” provision in its national laws, regulations or other measures. Any substantially equivalent provisions that relate to matters that are subject to certification must be noted in Part I of the DMLC (see paragraph 36 above). In considering the adoption of substantially equivalent provisions, the flag State must take account of Article VI, paragraph 4, of the MLC, 2006, which lays down that, for a national law or other measure to be considered as substantially equivalent, in the context of the Convention, the flag State must have satisfied itself that:

- (a) it is conducive to the full achievement of the general object and purpose of the provision or provisions of Part A of the Code concerned; and
- (b) it gives effect to the provision or provisions of Part A of the Code concerned.

³ Resolution concerning information on occupational groups.

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Exemptions and application of Regulation 3.1 and Standard A3.1

38. The purpose of the minimum requirements in Regulation 3.1 and Standard A3.1 is to ensure that seafarers have decent accommodation and recreational facilities on board ship. In many cases, the requirements are directed specifically at matters affecting ship design and construction (e.g. cabin size, location, etc.) and equipment. The provisions in this part of the MLC, 2006, are very detailed and it was recognized that, in some cases, a strict application of these requirements may not be possible on ships that are already in existence or are below a certain size or on certain categories of ships. In addition, it was recognized that there is a need to take account, without discrimination, of the interests of seafarers with differing and distinctive religious and social practices. Exemptions or variations (see paragraph 44 below) can only be granted after consultation with the shipowners' and seafarers' organizations concerned. Exemptions must be noted in Part I of the DMLC. It is also advisable to note variations.

Application to ships that exist at the time the MLC, 2006, enters into force for the flag State

39. Regulation 3.1, paragraph 2, provides that the requirements in the Code that relate to ship construction and equipment apply only to ships constructed on or after the date when the MLC, 2006, comes into force for the flag State.

40. For ships constructed before the entry into force date, the requirements relating to ship construction and equipment that are set out in earlier ILO Conventions apply to the extent that they were already applicable under the law or practice of the Member concerned (see paragraphs 90 to 92 below).

41. All other requirements in the MLC, 2006 (as implemented nationally), including those in Standard A3.1, that are not related to ship construction and equipment will still apply to these ships.

Application to smaller ships and specific categories of ships

42. Standard A3.1, paragraphs 20 and 21, permits flag States, in specified circumstances, to exempt ships of less than 200 gt from some requirements in the Standard relating to accommodation and recreational facilities.

43. Standard A3.1 also has specific provisions whereby the requirements can be modified for passenger and special purposes ships. In addition, ships less than 3,000 gt may be exempted from some requirements. National law or regulations or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, should be carefully reviewed by flag State inspectors to ascertain the requirements that have been adopted in the flag State.

Variations for differing religious and social practices

44. Variations are permitted on condition that they do not result in overall facilities less favourable than those which would result from the application of this Standard A3.1 (Standard A3.1, paragraph 19). In addition, evaluation of the quality and appropriateness of food provisions on the ship needs to take account of differing cultural and religious backgrounds (Regulation 3.2, paragraph 1).

Flag State inspectors would need to be aware of any national provisions as to application or exemptions or variations that have been made by the flag State under the MLC, 2006.

It is essential that this information is communicated to flag State inspectors and any ROs that have been authorized to carry out flag State inspection responsibilities.

2.1.3. Flag State inspection system responsibilities

45. The flag State is required to establish an effective system for inspection and certification of maritime labour conditions on ships that fly its flag (Regulation 5.1, paragraph 2). This involves a wide range of matters including:

- drawing up the national documents required by the Convention;
- providing a sufficient number of qualified inspectors (training and competence);
- developing rules or regulations providing for inspectors' powers, status and independence;
- guidelines regarding inspectors' tasks and confidentiality;
- identification (credentials) for inspectors;
- reporting responsibilities;
- delegation of some aspect of the inspection system to ROs (if an RO is used);
- establishing a process for receiving and responding to complaints or requests for information.

46. The purpose of the discussion below is to highlight some aspects of these areas of responsibility.

National documents required by the Convention

47. The flag State (or its competent authority) will need to draw up a number of documents if they do not already exist. With respect to the ship

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certification system, a national form of the Maritime Labour Certificate and the two-part DMLC has to be drawn up (see paragraphs 49 to 55 below).

48. In addition, other documents are required by the MLC, 2006, including: a standardized table for shipboard working arrangements (Standard A2.3, paragraphs 10 and 11); a standard medical certificate (Standard A1.2, paragraph 2); and a form for on-board medical reports (Standard A4.1, paragraph 2). A record-keeping system must also be maintained for inspection reports (Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 13). Many of these other documents will already exist.

Certification system documents

49. A Maritime Labour Certificate accompanied by a DMLC must be carried on board ships of 500 gt or over that are engaged in international voyages or operate from a port or between ports in another country.

50. The Maritime Labour Certificate and DMLC (accompanied by an English translation if it is not in English) is to be posted in a conspicuous place on the ship where it is available to seafarers with a copy made available, on request, to seafarers, flag State inspectors, authorized officials in port States and shipowners' and seafarers' representatives (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 12).

51. The requirements for the Certificate and the DMLC are set out in Regulation 5.1.3 and Standard A5.1.3. Model documents are set out in Title 5, Appendix A5-II, with examples of how they might be filled out shown in Title 5, Appendix B5-I. The documents must be in a form that corresponds to the model documents set out in Title 5, Appendix A5-II.

Maritime Labour Certificate (Regulation 5.1.3)

52. A Maritime Labour Certificate must be issued by the competent authority or by an authorized RO on its behalf, on completion of a satisfactory inspection of the national requirements for the 14-16 areas listed in Title 5, Appendix A5-I. A DMLC must be attached for it to be valid. The Certificate must be issued for a period not exceeding five years (but see paragraphs 87 to 88 ter).

Interim Maritime Labour Certificate (Regulation 5.1.3)

53. Standard A5.1.3, paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8, detail the circumstances when an interim Maritime Labour Certificate may be issued. Such a certificate may have a maximum validity of six months. No consecutive interim certificates may be issued, following the initial six months, by the same flag State, to the same shipowner. A DMLC need not be issued for the period of validity of the interim certificate. An inspection must be carried out prior to expiry of the interim certificate to enable issuance of a Maritime Labour Certificate.

***Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC)
(Regulation 5.1.3)***

54. DMLC, Part I – Part I is to be completed by the competent authority. It contains references to the relevant details of the national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006. Any national substantial equivalences and any exemptions granted by the flag State must be specified in the DMLC, Part I. See Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 10, for the contents of Part I with additional guidance in Guideline B5.1.3, paragraph 1. An example of how it might be filled out is provided in Title 5, Appendix B5-I.

55. DMLC, Part II – Part II is to be completed by the shipowner and must identify the measures adopted to ensure ongoing compliance with the national requirements between inspections and the measures proposed to ensure that there is continuous improvement. Part II is subject to inspection before certification by the competent authority or an RO on its behalf. See Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 10, for the contents of Part II with additional guidance in Guideline B5.1.3, paragraphs 2, 3 and 4. See Title 5, Appendix B5-I for an example of how it might be filled out.

Flag State inspectors

56. Information on the appointment, powers, training, and the required credentials for flag State inspectors is contained in Standard A5.1.4. This can include appointment of ROs to carry out aspects of these responsibilities. In addition, competent authorities need to develop guidelines for inspectors (see Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 7) as well as appropriate training, regarding the tasks to be performed.

Authorization of recognized organizations

57. Under Regulation 5.1.1, paragraph 3, public institutions or other organizations, recognized as competent and independent, may be authorized, in accordance with the MLC, 2006, by a flag State to carry out inspections or to issue certificates or do both on its behalf. They are called “recognized organizations” in the MLC, 2006.

58. The role of the RO is described in paragraph 3 of Regulation 5.1.1 and paragraph 1 of Regulation 5.1.2. Standard A5.1.2 sets out requirements for flag States that may wish to appoint public institutions or other organizations to carry out inspections required by the MLC, 2006, in accordance with normal practice. An up to date list of any authorizations (and the scope of the authorization) for ROs must be provided to the International Labour Office for publication (Standard A5.1.2, paragraph 4).

59. When an RO is appointed, the flag State (or its competent authority) needs to specify the scope of the RO’s role with respect to verification of national

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requirements. Although the attention of an RO carrying out a flag State inspection might be drawn to a possible deficiency on a ship by seafarers and reported to the flag State, the investigation of complaints that are made to the flag State regarding its ships (Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 5) or the enforcement of the national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006 (see Chapter 4 of these guidelines) should be dealt with by the competent authority in each flag State. Information as to the role of ROs and the scope of their authority should also be made available to seafarers in the event that they have a complaint.

60. The flag State should also have in place an oversight system for ROs that it has authorized. This system should include procedures for communicating with the RO and provision of information on any national measures that differ from the MLC, 2006, provisions (Standard A5.1.2, paragraph 3). Guideline B5.1.2, paragraph 6, provides additional information about oversight procedures.

Annual reports

61. The competent authority is required to publish an annual report on inspection activities within six months of the end of each year. When compiling an annual report, the flag State should give due consideration to the contents of Guideline B5.1.4, paragraph 10.

Responding to requests for information

62. It is the responsibility of the flag State to respond in a timely manner to requests for advice, information and assistance from a port State control authority in order to ensure that the ship in question is not unduly delayed by the port State authority.

Responding to complaints about maritime labour conditions on a ship

63. It is the responsibility of the flag State to receive complaints, investigate and take appropriate enforcement action. Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 5, of the MLC, 2006, provides that:

If a Member receives a complaint which it does not consider manifestly unfounded or obtains evidence that a ship that flies its flag does not conform to the requirements of this Convention or that there are serious deficiencies in the implementation of the measures set out in the declaration of maritime labour compliance, the Member shall take the steps necessary to investigate the matter and ensure that action is taken to remedy any deficiencies found.

64. Information about non-conformity or serious deficiencies in the conditions on a ship or the on-board implementation of Part II of the DMLC could

come from a number of sources including from a concern raised with an RO by a seafarer during an inspection.

65. A flag State is expected to have in place procedures for receiving and responding to such complaints, and ensuring the necessary confidentiality.

66. An RO may in some circumstances be specifically authorized to investigate a particular complaint by a flag State, but the responsibility for resolution of a complaint remains with the flag State.

2.2. Maritime labour inspection and certification process

2.2.1. General note

67. All ships covered by the MLC, 2006, are subject to inspection for all the requirements of the Convention (Regulation 5.1.4, paragraph 1). For ships that will be certified the provisions of Regulation 5.1.3 and Standard A5.1.3 will also apply. The inspection standards are the national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006.

68. The relevant national provisions implementing the requirements of the MLC, 2006, in the 14-16 areas that must be certified for some ships will be referenced in Part I of the DMLC that is to be prepared by the competent authority. Although ships that are not certified will not have a DMLC, inspectors may, nevertheless, find it useful to refer to the national provisions which are normally identified in the DMLC, Part I, as a basic checklist for the matters it covers.

69. Inspectors familiar with maritime inspections in connection with the ship safety, human security and marine pollution prevention conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) will note a difference of terminology in the MLC, 2006, in connection with the certification process. The IMO conventions refer to ships being “surveyed” for the purpose of issuing or endorsing a statutory certificate. The MLC, 2006, does not distinguish between a survey and an inspection.

70. A maritime labour inspection can be divided into two parts: the first concerns the physical items such as the seafarer accommodation and galley conditions, whilst the second relates to other elements of decent work or human and operational issues such as payment of wages, seafarer employment agreements, minimum age, medical certification and hours of work or rest. Some areas of concern, such as occupational safety and health, are mixed, involving physical aspects (protective equipment/construction) and operational practices on a ship. For a satisfactory inspection to be completed, it is likely that the inspector will need to employ different methods, including document review, visual

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observation, general discussions with seafarers and interviews with seafarers in private. When inspectors are interviewing seafarers, they will need to be sensitive on what may be considered to be personal or potentially controversial matters.

71. In addition, as stated in Standard A5.1.4, paragraphs 10 and 11:

10. Inspectors shall treat as confidential the source of any grievance or complaint alleging a danger or deficiency in relation to seafarers' working and living conditions or a violation of laws and regulations and give no intimation to the shipowner, the shipowner's representative or the operator of the ship that an inspection was made as a consequence of such a grievance or complaint.

11. In particular, inspectors shall: ...

(b) subject to appropriate sanctions or disciplinary measures, not reveal, even after leaving service, any commercial secrets or confidential working processes or information of a personal nature which may come to their knowledge in the course of their duties.

72. In all circumstances, attending inspectors must exercise their professional judgement when carrying out maritime labour inspections.

2.2.2. Preparing for an inspection

73. In addition to reviewing, especially in the case of the initial inspection, a ship's DMLC, Part II, the flag State inspector should review various sources of information in order to gain an understanding of a ship's history (where applicable). Information could be obtained from the individual ship files containing previous inspection reports, relevant flag State and port State control and other databases and ILO records.

74. For existing certified and uncertified ships before an inspection of a ship is carried out, the flag State inspector should ascertain from the information sources available whether there are any outstanding deficiencies which have not been addressed by the shipowner. If there are any outstanding deficiencies not addressed by the shipowner then the competent authority or flag State inspector should take action (see Chapter 4 below) regarding rectification in a timely manner.

75. A flag State inspector must also be aware of any national determinations, substantial equivalences, exemptions and variations that have been made by the flag State under the MLC, 2006.

76. Where a ship already carries a Maritime Labour Certificate, this certificate and the attached DMLC should be the starting point for flag State inspections: the DMLC, Part I will remind inspectors of the national requirements in the 14-16 areas specified in Appendix A5-I that must be inspected for a

certificate to be issued, and the DMLC, Part II sets out the shipowner's measures for ensuring ongoing compliance with those national requirements.

77. Where a ship does not already carry a Maritime Labour Certificate and the purpose of the inspection is to enable certification of the ship, the starting point should be the DMLC, Part I and either:

- the draft for a DMLC, Part II submitted for the competent authority's approval, where a certificate is to be issued, or
- the information provided in accordance with Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 7, where an interim certificate is to be issued.

78. For ships that are not subject to certification (unless certification is requested), the requirements of the national laws or regulations or collective bargaining agreements or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, are the starting point, although the national provisions which are normally identified in the DMLC, Part I may be helpful to inspections of these ships.

79. Although the 14-16 areas for certification must be inspected for a certificate to be issued, both certified and uncertified ships must be inspected for compliance with all the requirements of the MLC, 2006, which are, therefore, included in the detailed inspection information that is set out in Chapter 3, section 3.2, below.

2.2.3. Overview of the process for ship inspections and certification

80. Ships may need to be inspected and certified or may only be inspected in a variety of circumstances. Some ships may be under construction or newly constructed, others may transfer from another registry and some may not need to be certified. Information on the various stages and situations is in the remainder of this section of Chapter 2.

2.2.4. Inspections prior to the issue of the first certificate

81. In the case of ships under construction that have been, or are to be, registered in the flag State, the relevant drawings in relation to applicable MLC, 2006, requirements (Regulations 3.1 (Seafarer accommodation and recreational facilities), 3.2 (Food and catering) and 4.3 (Health and safety protection and accident prevention)) should be reviewed for compliance with the national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006.

82. In the case of new ships entering service, the "as built" arrangement for items covered under Title 3 should be checked against the drawings when the flag

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State inspector attends the ship. Compliance with the other national requirements (including those covered by Part I of the DMLC in the case of ships that are to be certified) should be inspected, to the extent possible, immediately prior to the ship entering service on the basis of such documentation and information as is available. In this case where insufficient information is available because, for example, seafarers may not yet have joined the ship, only an interim certificate may be issued (see Standard A5.1.3, paragraphs 5–8).

83. The shipowner must draw up the measures for ensuring initial and ongoing compliance in the DMLC, Part II. These measures must address the national requirements summarized in the DMLC, Part I. The inspector must review these Part II measures for the competent authority to certify Part II in accordance with Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 10. Where an interim certificate is to be issued, the review will relate to the information submitted in accordance with Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 7.

84. A full inspection, including the document review, must be completed before the Maritime Labour Certificate and the attached DMLC can be issued.

85. In subsequent inspections (referred to below), the review with respect to the DMLC, Part II will concentrate on whether or not the measures set out in Part II are being properly implemented.

2.2.5. Intermediate inspection

86. An intermediate inspection must be carried out in order to ensure ongoing compliance with the requirements of the MLC, 2006. It must be between the second and third anniversary dates.⁴ The scope and depth of the intermediate inspection is to be equal to an inspection for renewal of the certificate. The certificate is to be endorsed following satisfactory intermediate inspection. Failing to undergo this inspection and record the event on the Maritime Labour Certificate will invalidate a certificate (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 14(b)).

2.2.6. Renewal inspection

87. For a Maritime Labour Certificate renewal inspection, all requirements need to be inspected. When the renewal inspection has been completed within three months before the expiry date of the existing certificate, the new certificate will be valid from the date of completion of the renewal inspection for a period of

⁴ “Anniversary date” means the day and month of each year which will correspond to the date of expiry of the Maritime Labour Certificate (Standard A5.1.3, para. 2).

five years from the date of expiry of the existing certificate (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 3).

88. It is possible for a renewal inspection to be completed more than three months before the expiry date of the existing Maritime Labour Certificate. In that case, the new Certificate would be valid for a period not exceeding five years starting from the date of completion of the renewal inspection (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 3).

88 bis. When a renewal inspection has been completed prior to the expiry of the existing Maritime Labour Certificate and the ship continues to meet national laws, regulations or other measures implementing the requirements of the MLC, 2006, but a new certificate cannot immediately be issued to and made available on board that ship, the competent authority, or the recognized organization, may extend the validity of the existing certificate for a further period not exceeding five months from the expiry date of the existing certificate. The certificate may be endorsed accordingly. An addition may be made in the relevant part of the certificate as set out in Appendix A5-II: "Extension after inspection for renewal (if applicable)" (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 4).

88 ter. The new certificate shall be valid for a period not exceeding five years starting from the date provided for in paragraph 3 of Standard A5.1.3 as applicable ⁵ (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 4).

2.2.7. Changes of flag/re-registration, change of shipowner, substantial alteration

89. A Maritime Labour Certificate ceases to be valid and a new certificate will be required when a ship changes flag or changes shipowner or substantial changes have been made to the structure or equipment dealt with under Title 3 (Seafarers' accommodation) (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 14). The issue of a new certificate will require an inspection, which should be treated in the same way as the inspection of a new ship entering service, as covered in section 2.2.4 above.

⁵ When the renewal inspection has been completed **within three months before the expiry** of the existing maritime labour certificate, the new maritime labour certificate shall be valid from the date of completion of the renewal inspection **for a period not exceeding five years from the date of expiry of the existing certificate.**

When the renewal inspection is completed **more than three months before the expiry** date of the existing maritime labour certificate, the new maritime labour certificate shall be valid **for a period not exceeding five years starting from the date of completion of the renewal inspection.**

2.2.8. Ships in existence prior to entry into force of the MLC, 2006, for the flag State

90. Regulation 3.1, paragraph 2, provides that the requirements in Standard A3.1 that relate to ship construction and equipment apply only to ships constructed on or after the date when the MLC, 2006, comes into force for the flag State. The date of construction is defined as the date when a ship's keel is laid or when it is at a similar stage of construction.

91. For ships constructed before the entry into force for the flag State, the requirements relating to ship construction and equipment that are set out in the Accommodation of Crews Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 92), and the Accommodation of Crews (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1970 (No. 133), apply to the extent that they were already applicable, under the law or practice of the Member concerned. One or both of those Conventions may have become applicable through ratification by the country concerned. Or their substance may have become applicable through the country's ratification of the Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147), and/or the 1996 Protocol to Convention No. 147; there may also be cases where Conventions Nos 92 and 133 have not been ratified but have been made applicable under the country's national law.

92. As noted in paragraph 41 above, all other requirements in the MLC, 2006, as implemented nationally, including those in Standard A3.1 that are not related to construction and equipment, will still apply even to ships constructed before the MLC, 2006, entered into force for the flag State.

2.2.9. Ships where shipowners have requested certification

93. In the case of ships that are not required to carry a Maritime Labour Certificate, the shipowners may request that their ships be included in the certification system and be issued a Maritime Labour Certificate upon submission of a DMLC, Part II and completion of the inspection process.

2.2.10. Ships that are not certified

94. The MLC, 2006, applies to all seafarers on ships covered by the Convention regardless of the type and size of ships or whether or not the ship has been issued with a Maritime Labour Certificate. This means that ships below 500 gt or ships that are not engaged in international voyages and that do not operate from a port or between ports of another country are to be inspected to the same extent as a ship that has been certified or is seeking certification. The national provisions implementing the requirements of the Convention on certified

matters, as normally identified in the DMLC, Part I, would, therefore, be applicable to conditions on these ships.

2.2.11. Flag State inspectors' reports

95. Regardless of whether the ship is certified under the MLC, 2006, or not, after conducting an MLC, 2006, inspection, the attending inspector would need to provide an inspection report (Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 12) in accordance with national law and regulations. The report should stipulate that any deficiencies found during the inspection are rectified in accordance with standard inspection reporting procedures. A copy of the report is to be given to the ship's master and a copy is to be posted on the ship's notice board for the information of the seafarers. A third copy is to be retained by the flag State or RO which will keep the necessary records. Upon a request, on behalf of the seafarers, a copy of the report is to be sent to the seafarers' representatives.

96. For ships carrying a Maritime Labour Certificate and DMLC, the results of subsequent inspections (following the first) or verifications and any significant deficiencies found during the verifications are to be recorded together with the date when the deficiencies were found to be remedied (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 11). This record, in English (or an English translation when it is not written in English) is to be either written on the on-board copy of the DMLC or appended to it or otherwise made available in some way for the information of seafarers, flag State inspectors, authorized officers in a port State and shipowners' and seafarers' representatives.

3. Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

3.1. General note

97. As stated earlier, in all cases the relevant national laws or regulations or collective bargaining agreements or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, are the authoritative statement of requirements on any issue. The MLC, 2006, sets out the requirements that are to be implemented nationally. These guidelines refer only to the MLC, 2006, requirements and are to be considered general guidance only. Thus, although more detailed guidance is provided in section 3.2 below, this guidance will not necessarily be wholly relevant in all countries. The guidance in section 3.2 takes account of the requirements of the MLC, 2006, as set out in the Articles and the Regulations and in Part A of the Code, including the requirement on ILO member States to give due consideration to implementing their responsibilities in the manner provided for in the non-mandatory Part B of the Code. This means that there may be differences of detail between provisions of the MLC, 2006, and national provisions (or other measures) that have been adopted to implement the MLC, 2006. These differences may be due to the fact that, after the required due consideration has been given, the national laws or regulations or collective bargaining agreements or other measures are implementing the obligations under Part A of the Code in ways that are different from those recommended in Part B. As discussed in section 2.1 of Chapter 2, a member State may also have decided to adopt legislative provisions under Article VI of the MLC, 2006, that are “substantially equivalent” to the requirements of Part A. In addition, exemptions from certain requirements may have been determined in accordance with the MLC, 2006. Any such differences should be stated in Part I of the flag State’s DMLC and should be taken into account in the inspection.

98. Flag State inspectors may, however, be unable to find any national provisions or other measures that cover certain of the Convention’s requirements. In the case of apparent gaps in coverage of requirements, inspectors (including ROs) should request clarification from the flag State’s competent authority. Inspectors should alert the competent authority to any relevant deficiency or abuse not specifically covered by existing laws or regulations and submit proposals for improvement (see Guideline B5.1.4, paragraph 8(g)).

99. All of the requirements set out below in section 3.2 are subject to inspection on all ships covered by the MLC, 2006. For ships that are to be certified, this inspection will result in the certification of the ships as complying

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

with the national requirements in 14-16 of the areas set out in section 3.2 below, following inspection to verify:

- compliance with the national law summarized in the DMLC, Part I; and
- implementation of the measures that have been adopted by the shipowner to ensure initial and ongoing compliance (i.e. the measures set out in the DMLC, Part II).

100. In order to verify that the national requirements are complied with and that the shipowner's measures have been correctly implemented and are being followed (to the extent possible in the case of newly built ships), the flag State inspector should obtain supporting objective evidence by:

- inspecting the relevant areas of the ship;
- examining further documentation such as passports or other official documents, medical certificates, training records, crew lists and payroll records, seafarer employment agreements, safe manning documents and work schedules;
- interviewing, in private, a representative number of seafarers, taking account of the need to preserve confidentiality and of the seafarers' work and rest schedules.

101. As discussed earlier, in section 2.2, ships will be subject to inspection in very different situations. For example, the inspection of a new ship may of necessity be less extensive than that of a ship which has already been issued a Maritime Labour Certificate because for new ships, there will not yet be historical operational information for the ship and in some cases seafarers may not yet have joined the ship and would not be available for interviews. In such a case, the inspection may be carried out, as far as reasonable and practicable, for the issuance of an Interim Certificate (see Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 7). On the other hand, if sufficient documentation is available for the issuance of a Maritime Labour Certificate, the inspection might involve a review of the shipowner's measures for the purpose of certifying Part II of the DMLC, a physical inspection of the ship, a review of documentation and seafarer interviews, in private. In this connection inspectors may wish to refer to the information contained under the headings "How to check the basic requirements" in section 3.2 below.

102. For ships that are to be certified or already carry a Maritime Labour Certificate, Part II of the DMLC must be reviewed. The first step in the inspection should be to ensure that the shipowner's measures for ongoing compliance in each of the 14-16 areas that are subject to certification are being followed on the ship.

103. It should be noted that, whilst all the requirements of the MLC, 2006, must be inspected, any inspection is a sampling process and inspectors should use

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their professional judgement and expertise when determining the depth of inspection for each requirement.

104. In addition, account should be taken of Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 15, which provides that, when inspections are conducted or when measures are taken, all reasonable efforts shall be made to avoid a ship being unreasonably detained or delayed.

3.2. The MLC, 2006, requirements to be inspected and, where applicable, certified

Regulation 1.1 – Minimum age

Standard A1.1; Guideline B1.1

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Persons below the age of 16 shall not be employed or engaged or work on a ship (Standard A1.1, paragraph 1).
- Seafarers under the age of 18 shall not be employed or engaged or work where the work is likely to jeopardize their health or safety (Standard A1.1, paragraph 4).
- Special attention must be paid to the safety and health of seafarers under the age of 18, in accordance with national laws and regulations (Standard A4.3, paragraph 2(b)).
- Night work* for seafarers under the age of 18 is prohibited, except to the extent that an exemption has been made by the competent authority under Standard A1.1, paragraph 3, in the case of training programmes (Standard A1.1, paragraph 2).

* “Night” is defined in accordance with national law and practice. It covers a period of at least nine hours starting no later than midnight and ending no earlier than 5 a.m. (Standard A1.1, paragraph 2).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check a crew list, or passports or other official documents confirming seafarers’ birth dates.
- Check work schedule with respect to seafarers under the age of 18 to determine hours and nature of work.

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- Check to see that types of work on board that are likely to jeopardize the safety of seafarers under the age of 18 have been identified.
- Check recent accident reports and safety committee reports to determine whether seafarers under the age of 18 were involved.
- Confirm information through interviews, in private, with a representative number of seafarers.

Examples of deficiencies

- Person under the age of 16 working as a seafarer.
- Seafarer under the age of 18 working at night (and not as part of a training programme).
- Seafarer under the age of 18 carrying out tasks that are likely to jeopardize their safety or health.

Regulation 1.2 – Medical certificate

Standard A1.2; Guideline B1.2

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers are not allowed to work on a ship unless they are certified* as medically fit to perform their duties.
- For seafarers working on ships ordinarily engaged on international voyages the certificate must be provided in English (Standard A1.2, paragraph 10).
- The medical certificate must have been issued by a duly qualified medical practitioner and must be still valid.
- The period of validity for a certificate is determined under national law in accordance with the following:
 - two-year maximum for medical certificates except for seafarers under 18; then it is one year;
 - six-year maximum for a colour vision certificate.

*** Certificates issued in accordance with, or meeting the substance of the applicable requirements, under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW), as amended, are to be accepted as meeting these requirements (Standard A1.2, paragraph 3).**

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How to check the basic requirements

- Check the crew list.
- Check for valid medical certificates stating that seafarers are medically fit to perform their duties.
- Check for valid colour vision certificates, where appropriate.
- Check (by reviewing work schedules and interviews, in private) that medical restrictions on work for individual seafarers are being respected and that seafarers are not assigned to or carrying out work contrary to these restrictions.
- In urgent cases where the competent authority of the flag State has permitted a seafarer to work without a valid or with an expired certificate, the authorization or permit should be checked to ensure it is still valid (subject to a three-month maximum).
- In cases where a medical certificate has expired while at sea, the certificate must be obtained within a maximum of three months.
- Check that the medical certificates of seafarers on ships ordinarily engaged in international voyages are in English.
- Check that the medical certificate has been issued by a duly qualified medical practitioner.

Examples of deficiencies

- Seafarer on board without a valid medical or colour vision certificate (where appropriate) or authorization from the competent authority in urgent cases.
- Seafarer working on the ship or performing tasks contrary to a restriction on a medical certificate.
- Seafarer's medical certificate not in the English language on a ship ordinarily engaged in international voyages.
- A medical certificate that has not been issued by a qualified medical practitioner.

Regulation 1.3 – Training and qualifications

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers must be trained or certified* as competent or otherwise qualified to perform their duties in accordance with flag State requirements.

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- Seafarers must have successfully completed training for personal safety on board ship.

*** Training and certification in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW), as amended, is to be accepted as meeting these requirements.**

How to check the basic requirements

- Check the minimum safe manning document (SMD) to verify the required qualifications of the seafarers.
- Check certificates and endorsements for STCW personnel confirming seafarers' competency with respect to their duties (check crew list to determine duties). Check documentary evidence (from a shipowner or, if relevant to the position concerned, a national authority or otherwise) confirming that seafarers have any qualifications that may be required under national law for those performing other duties on board ship (for example, ships' cooks – see below, Regulation 3.2).
- Check for evidence confirming that all seafarers have successfully completed training for personal safety on board ship.
- Check a copy of the appropriate training material that is available to the crew.
- Confirm training through interviews, in private, with a representative number of seafarers.

Examples of deficiencies

- Seafarer's qualifications not in accordance with the SMD.
- Seafarer working on the ship who is not trained or certified or otherwise qualified to perform required duties.
- Certificates or endorsements are not up to date or have expired.
- Seafarer working on the ship who has not successfully completed personal safety training.

Regulation 1.4 – Recruitment and placement

Standard A1.4; Guideline B1.4

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

Basic requirements

- Where a shipowner has used a private seafarer recruitment and placement service,* it must be licensed or certified or regulated in accordance with the MLC, 2006.
- Seafarers shall not be charged for use of these services.
- Shipowners using services based in States not party to the MLC, 2006, must ensure, as far as practicable, that these services meet the requirements of the MLC, 2006 (Standard A1.4, paragraph 9).**

* If private seafarer recruitment and placement services are operating in their territory, flag States are responsible for establishing an effective inspection and monitoring system with respect to those services (Regulation 5.3; Standard A5.3, paragraph 1).

** Flag States are responsible for ensuring that shipowners have a proper system for verifying that the recruitment and placement services conform to the national requirements implementing Standard A1.4 if they use recruitment and placement services based in States not party to the MLC, 2006. This responsibility may be fulfilled by continuously monitoring shipowners' compliance with those requirements, by monitoring recruitment and placement services in relevant non-MLC countries through a quality management system, and by providing information on the extent to which services in such countries have been found to meet the requirements of Standard A1.4.

How to check the basic requirements

- Check the national web sites of the competent authority regarding the licensing or regulation of seafarer recruitment and placement services (manning agencies).
- Check documentation or other information to allow the inspector to ascertain the following:
 1. Direct engagement
Seafarers were recruited and engaged by the shipowner. If this is the case, this fact should be noted and no further action is necessary.
 2. Recruited through a public service
Seafarers were engaged through a public seafarer recruitment and placement service in either the flag State or in another State to which the MLC, 2006, applies. If this is the case, this should be noted and no further action is necessary.
 3. Recruited through a private service (or a service operated by a seafarers' organization) in a country that has ratified the MLC, 2006

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- A. If the seafarers were engaged through a private seafarer recruitment and placement service in the flag State, check for documentary evidence confirming that the service concerned is operating in accordance with the national laws or regulations or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, requirements. Where the supervision of such services is entrusted to another national authority in the flag State, a statement by that authority that the service has been found to be operating in accordance with the relevant law is sufficient for this purpose.
 - B. If the seafarers were engaged through a private seafarer recruitment and placement service in another State that has ratified the MLC, 2006, no action need be taken unless the inspector has received a clear indication that basic rights have been violated (such as charging seafarers for use of services).
4. Recruited through a service that is based in a country that has not ratified the MLC, 2006

If the seafarers were engaged through a seafarer recruitment and placement service based in a country that has not ratified the MLC, 2006, check documentation showing that the shipowner has, as far as practicable, verified through a proper system that the service is operated consistently with the MLC, 2006. This system may, for example, take account of information collected by the flag State, as well as any audits or certifications concerning the quality of services operating in countries that have not ratified the MLC, 2006. Other evidence which shipowners could provide might be checklists against the MLC requirements or an RO audit of a recruitment and placement service based in a country that has not ratified the MLC, 2006.

- Check, through interviews, in private, with a representative number of seafarers, that they have not paid a fee or other charge to a recruitment or placement service and have been informed of their rights and duties.
- Check, through interviews, in private, with a representative number of seafarers, that the recruitment and placement service used does not operate a blacklist.

Examples of deficiencies

- No documentary evidence available to indicate that the service or agency is operated in accordance with the MLC, 2006.
- A seafarer who was recruited through a private seafarer recruitment and placement service that was not licensed or certified or regulated in accordance with the MLC, 2006, or whose licence or certificate or any other similar document is no longer valid.

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- Use of a recruitment and placement service requiring the seafarer to pay a fee or otherwise making a charge for employment services (if this is a possibility then it should also be reported to the competent authority in the State where the service is based).
- A seafarer working on board who was recruited by a recruitment and placement service operating in a country that has not ratified the MLC, 2006, in cases where the shipowner cannot support its conclusion of consistency with the MLC, 2006.

Regulation 2.1 – Seafarers’ employment agreements

Standard A2.1; Guideline B2.1

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- All seafarers must have a copy of their seafarers’ employment agreement (SEA) signed by both the seafarer and the shipowner or shipowner’s representative (or, where they are not employees, other evidence of contractual or similar arrangements).
- A SEA must, at a minimum, contain the matters set out in Standard A2.1, paragraph 4(a)–(k) of the MLC, 2006 (Standard A2.1, paragraph 4).
- Seafarers must also be given a document containing a record of their employment on the ship (such as a discharge book) (Standard A2.1, paragraph 1(e)).
- Where a collective bargaining agreement forms all or part of the SEA, the agreement must be on board the ship with relevant provisions in English (except for ships engaged only in domestic voyages) (Standard A2.1, paragraph 2).
- A SEA continues to have effect while a seafarer is held captive on or off the ship as a result of acts of piracy¹ or armed robbery against ships², regardless

¹ Piracy has the same meaning as in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 (Standard A2.1, paragraph 7(a)).

² Armed robbery against ships means any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State’s internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea, or any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described above (Standard A2.1, paragraph 7(b)).

of whether the date fixed for its expiry has passed or either party has given notice to suspend or terminate it (Standard A2.1, paragraph 7).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check a copy of the SEA and any applicable collective bargaining agreements for seafarers and, at a minimum, a standard form of the SEA (in English) for the ship.
- Check, where possible, given the timing of the inspection relative to employment period, possession by seafarers of a record of their employment (or request that such records are submitted to the inspector at a later date).
- Check that seafarers' records of employment do not contain statements as to the quality of their work or as to their wages.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that, on signing a SEA, seafarers were given an opportunity to examine and seek advice and freely accepted the agreement before signing.

Examples of deficiencies

- A seafarer without a SEA working on the ship.
- A seafarer with a SEA that does not contain all the items in Standard A2.1, paragraph 4(a)–(k).
- A seafarer with a SEA that is inconsistent with the national requirements.
- No system or provisions for seafarers to have their employment recorded.
- Seafarers are not given a record of their employment on the ship on completion of engagement.
- A collective bargaining agreement that forms all or part of the SEA is either not on board or, if on board, not in English on a ship that engages in international voyages.
- Standard form SEA is not in English.
- The SEA contains clauses that violate seafarers' rights.

Regulation 2.2 – Wages

Standard A2.2; Guideline B2.2

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

Basic requirements

- Seafarers must be paid at no greater than monthly intervals and in full for their work in accordance with their employment agreements.*
- Seafarers are entitled to an account each month indicating their monthly wage and any authorized deductions such as allotments.
- No unauthorized deductions, such as payments for travel to or from the ship.
- Charges for remittances/allotment** transmission services must be reasonable and exchange rates in accordance with national requirements.
- Where a seafarer is held captive on or off the ship as a result of acts of piracy or armed robbery against ships, wages and other entitlements under the SEA, relevant collective bargaining agreement or applicable national laws, including the remittance of any allotments, must continue to be paid during the entire period of captivity until the seafarer is released and duly repatriated, or, where the seafarer dies while in captivity, until the date of death as determined in accordance with applicable national laws or regulations (Standard A2.2).³

* Flag States may wish to consider requiring shipowners to carry on board their ships' documents such as a copy of payroll or electronic record sheets.

** An allotment is an arrangement whereby a proportion of seafarers' earnings are regularly remitted, on their request, to their families or dependants or legal beneficiaries whilst the seafarers are at sea (Standard A2.2, paragraphs 3 and 4).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check the SEA and documentation, such as the payroll records to confirm wages are being paid at intervals no greater than one month as specified in their SEA or relevant collective agreements.
- Check relevant documents showing service charges and exchange rates applied to any remittances made to the seafarers' families or dependants or legal beneficiaries at their request.
- Check relevant documents to confirm the payment of wages including the requirement that a monthly account (such as a wage slip) is provided to the seafarers. Copies of individual accounts should be available to inspectors at their request.

³The terms *piracy* and *armed robbery against ships* shall have the same meaning as in Standard A2.1, paragraph 7.

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- Check that the wages set out in the SEA are consistent with national wages for seafarers, if national laws or regulations or collective bargaining agreements governing seafarers' wages have been adopted.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm compliance with requirements on the payment of wages.

Examples of deficiencies

- A seafarer is not paid regularly (at least monthly) and in full in accordance with the SEA or collective bargaining agreement.
- A seafarer is not given a monthly account (such as a wage slip) of wage.
- Allotments are not being paid or are not being paid in accordance with the seafarer's instructions.
- Charge for converting and transmitting currencies is not in line with national requirements.
- More than one set of wage accounts is in use.
- A seafarer who is held captive on or off the ship as a result of acts of piracy or armed robbery against ships is not or has not been paid during the entire period of captivity and until the release and due repatriation of the seafarer or, where the seafarer dies while in captivity, until the date of death as determined in accordance with applicable national laws and regulations.

Regulation 2.3 – Hours of work and hours of rest

Standard A2.3; Guideline B2.3

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- The minimum hours of rest* must not be less than ten hours in any 24-hour period and 77 hours in any seven-day period, if the relevant national law relates to hours of rest, or, if the relevant national law relates to hours of work, the maximum hours of work** must not exceed 14 hours in any 24-hour period and 72 hours in any seven-day period (Standard A2.3, paragraph 5, as implemented in national standards).***
- Hours of rest may be divided into no more than two periods, one of which must be at least six hours; the interval between consecutive periods of rest must not exceed 14 hours (Standard A2.3, paragraph 6, as implemented in the national standards).***

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- Account must be taken of the danger posed by the fatigue of seafarers (Standard A2.3, paragraph 4).

* “Hours of rest” means time outside hours of work; this term does not include short breaks (Standard A2.3, paragraph 1(b)).

** “Hours of work” means time during which seafarers are required to do work on account of the ship (Standard A2.3, paragraph 1(a)).

*** With respect to the national standards implementing Standard A2.3:

Standard A2.3, paragraph 3 provides that “Each Member acknowledges that the normal working hours’ standard for seafarers, like that for other workers, shall be based on an eight-hour day with one day of rest per week and rest on public holidays. However, this shall not prevent the Member from having procedures to authorize or register a collective agreement which determines seafarers’ normal working hours on a basis no less favourable than this standard.”

Standard A2.3, paragraph 13 provides that “Nothing in paragraphs 5 and 6 of this Standard shall prevent a Member from having national laws or regulations or a procedure for the competent authority to authorize or register collective agreements permitting exceptions to the limits set out. Such exceptions shall, as far as possible, follow the provisions of this Standard but may take account of more frequent or longer leave periods or the granting of compensatory leave for watchkeeping seafarers or seafarers working on board ships on short voyages.”

How to check the basic requirements

- Check that there is an approved standardized table of shipboard working arrangements setting out the national requirements for maximum hours of work or the minimum hours of rest and the schedule for service at sea and in port, posted in an easily accessible place on the ship.
- Check the working arrangement listed in the table.
- Check documents (the SEA or the relevant collective agreement and other documents, such as the bridge and engine room logbooks, that can also be checked) to confirm compliance with the basic requirements concerning minimum hours of rest or maximum hours of work.
- Check for a table of working arrangements or schedule in the working language or language of the ship and in English.
- Check that there are up to date records of work or rest, as required under national standards, for each seafarer serving on the ship.
- Check for seafarer fatigue, possibly indicated by hours of work that are consistently at the upper limits and by other contributory factors, such as disrupted rest periods. If there are seafarers that show symptoms such as lack

of concentration, irrelevant and inconsistent replies to questions, yawning and slow reaction times, further investigation may be considered.

Examples of deficiencies

- A seafarer's work schedule does not conform to the applicable standards.
- Table of working arrangements is not posted or does not contain required information.
- Table of working arrangements is not in English and the working language(s) of the ship.
- Records of work or rest are not available or are not maintained.
- Evidence of exceeding the limits of work and no record of suspension of the schedule, in accordance with Standard A2.3, paragraph 14, has been noted in a logbook or other document.

Regulation 2.4 – Entitlement to leave

Standard A2.4; Guidelines B2.4

*** Inspected**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers must be allowed paid annual leave* in accordance with national laws and regulations implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Unauthorized agreements to forgo the minimum annual leave with pay are prohibited (Standard A2.4, paragraph 3).
- Seafarers are to be granted shore leave to benefit their health and well-being and consistent with the operational requirements of their positions.

* The MLC, 2006, allows for differing calculations but establishes a minimum annual paid leave calculated on the basis of 2.5 calendar days per month of employment. In addition to the minimum period of annual leave, seafarers may also be entitled to a number of public and customary holidays recognized by the flag State. This is regardless of whether they fall within the individual seafarer's period of annual leave. For additional guidance see Guideline B2.4.1, paragraph 4.

How to check the basic requirements

- Check documents, such as the SEA or the relevant collective agreement, to confirm that seafarers are provided with the annual leave with pay entitlement required by the flag State (at a minimum, to be calculated on the basis of 2.5 calendar days per month of employment).

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- Check that seafarers' employment and wage records confirm that this requirement is met.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that they receive paid annual leave and are allowed an appropriate level of shore leave by the shipowner.

Examples of deficiencies

- Seafarer is not given paid annual leave.
- Seafarer who has an annual leave entitlement that is less than the national requirement (if more than 2.5 calendar days per month) or less than 2.5 calendar days per month of employment.
- Seafarer does not have an entitlement to paid annual leave in the SEA.
- Seafarer has agreed to forgo minimum annual leave with pay (and the competent authority has not authorized the agreement) (Standard A2.4, paragraph 3).
- Seafarer not allowed shore leave (although leave would be consistent with operational requirements of the seafarer's position).

Regulation 2.5 – Repatriation

Standard A2.5.1; Guideline B2.5 – Repatriation

*** Inspected**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers are to be repatriated, at no cost to themselves, in accordance with the national provisions implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Shipowners are required to provide financial security to ensure that repatriation will occur.
- A copy of the applicable national provisions regarding repatriation must be carried on ships and available to seafarers in an appropriate language (Standard A2.5.1, paragraph 9).
- At a minimum seafarers are entitled to repatriation in the following circumstances:
 - if the seafarers' employment agreement expires while they are abroad;
 - when their seafarers' employment agreement is terminated:
 - by the shipowner; or
 - by the seafarer for justified reasons; and

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- when the seafarers are no longer able to carry out their duties under their employment agreement or cannot be expected to carry them out in the specific circumstances (Standard A2.5.1, paragraphs 1 and 2).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check relevant documents confirming that shipowner has provided financial security.
- Check that a copy of the national provisions or SEA or relevant collective bargaining agreement regarding repatriation is available (in an appropriate language) to seafarers.
- Check for compliance with any national provision that seafarers under the age of 18 are to be repatriated after a prescribed period if it is apparent that they are unsuited to a career at sea (Guideline B2.5.2, paragraph 3).

Examples of deficiencies

- Seafarer is not repatriated in accordance with national requirements, or SEA or collective bargaining agreement.
- Ship does not have a copy of the national provisions on repatriation on board and accessible to seafarers.
- No evidence that financial security for repatriation has been provided.
- No provision for seafarer repatriation is in place.

Standard A2.5.2; Guideline B2.5.3 – Financial security

***Inspected and certified**

****Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

For all ships:

- A financial security system to assist seafarers in the event of their abandonment, ⁴ is in place (Standard A2.5.2, paragraphs 1 and 3).

⁴ Note: A seafarer is deemed to have been abandoned where the shipowner (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 2):

- (a) fails to cover the cost of the seafarer's repatriation; or
- (b) has left the seafarer without the necessary maintenance and support (adequate food, accommodation, drinking water supplies, essential fuel for survival on board the ship and necessary medical care (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 5)); or

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- The financial security system may be in the form of a social security scheme or insurance or a national fund or other similar arrangements (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 3).
- The financial security system must provide direct access, sufficient coverage and expedited financial assistance to any abandoned seafarer on board (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 4).
- Assistance provided by the financial security system must be granted promptly upon a request made by the seafarer or seafarer's nominated representative and supported by the necessary justification of entitlement (Standard A2.5.2, paragraphs 8 and 2).
- Assistance provided by the financial security system must be sufficient to cover (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 9):
 - (a) outstanding wages and other entitlements due from the shipowner limited to four months;
 - (b) all expenses reasonably incurred by the seafarer, including the cost of repatriation (which must cover travel by appropriate and expeditious means, normally by air, and provision for food and accommodation from the time of leaving the ship until arrival at home, necessary medical care, passage and transport of personal effects and any other reasonable costs or charges arising from the abandonment (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 10));
 - (c) essential needs of the seafarer including such items as: adequate food, clothing where necessary, accommodation, drinking water supplies, essential fuel for survival on board the ship, necessary medical care and any other reasonable costs or charges from the act or omission constituting the abandonment until the seafarer's arrival at home.
- The financial security must not cease before the end of the period of validity of the financial security unless the financial security provider has given prior notification of at least 30 days to the competent authority of the flag State (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 11).

*Additional basic requirements for ships required to be certified:*⁵

-
- (c) has otherwise unilaterally severed their ties with the seafarer including failure to pay contractual wages for a period of at least two months.

⁵ This means ships to which paragraph 1 or 2 of Regulation 5.1.3 applies, i.e. ships of 500 gross tonnage or over, engaged in international voyages (voyages from a country to a port outside such a country); ships of 500 gross tonnage or over, flying the flag of a

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- Ships must carry on board a certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security issued by the financial security provider (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 6).
- A copy of the financial security certificate or other documentary evidence must be posted in a conspicuous place on board where it is available to the seafarers (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 6).
- Where more than one financial security provider provides cover, the document provided by each provider must be carried on board (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 6).
- The certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security must contain the information required in Appendix A2-I (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 7).
- The certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security must be in English or accompanied by an English translation (Standard A2.5.2, paragraph 7).

How to check the basic requirements

For all ships:

- Check relevant documents confirming that financial security has been provided.

In addition, for ships required to be certified:

- Check the certificate of financial security or other documentary evidence issued by the financial security provider, including when the financial security is provided through a social security scheme.
- Check that the certificate of financial security contains the information required in Appendix A2-I.
- Check that it is valid and posted in a conspicuous place.
- Interview seafarers in private.
- Check DMLC, Part I for any national substantial equivalences, and, if so, DMLC, Part II to check for compliance.

Member and operating from a port, or between ports, in another country; and other ships at the request of the shipowner to the Member concerned.

Examples of deficiencies

For all ships:

- No evidence that financial security for repatriation has been provided.
- Seafarers are not provided with direct access to the financial security system when they have been abandoned.
- The assistance provided by the financial security system does not cover outstanding wages limited to four months, reasonable expenses including the cost of repatriation and the seafarer's essential needs.
- The financial security:
 - (i) has ceased before the expiration date stated on the financial security certificate or
 - (ii) has ceased before the end of the notice period of at least 30 days given to the competent authority (where applicable); or
 - (iii) is otherwise invalid.

In addition, for ships required to be certified:

- The certificate of financial security or other documentary evidence issued by the financial security provider, including when the financial security is provided through a social security scheme, is not carried on board.
- Where more than one financial security provider provides cover, not all documents provided by each provider are carried on board.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence is not posted in a conspicuous place on board where it is available to seafarers.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence does not include the required information as set out in Appendix A2-I.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence is not available in English or is not accompanied by an English translation.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence is invalid, for example, is expired or falsified.

Regulation 2.7 – Manning levels

Standard A2.7; Guideline B2.7

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Ship must have a sufficient number of seafarers employed on board to ensure that ships are operated safely, efficiently and with due regard to security under all conditions, taking into account concerns about fatigue and the particular nature and conditions of voyage.
- Ship must comply with the manning levels listed on the Safe Manning Document (SMD) or equivalent issued by the competent authority (Standard A2.7, paragraph 1).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check safe manning document (SMD) or applicable equivalent.
- Check crew list for number, category (such as cooks and those responsible for food preparation and those who are responsible for medical care) and qualifications of seafarers working on board.
- Check on-board table of working arrangements to confirm that safe manning requirements are being implemented.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that requirements are met.

Examples of deficiencies

- Number and/or categories of seafarers working on board does not correspond with those stated in the SMD.
- No SMD or equivalent on board.

Regulation 3.1 – Accommodation and recreational facilities

Standard A3.1; Guideline B3.1

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Ships must be in compliance with the minimum standards established by the MLC, 2006, providing and maintaining decent accommodation and recreational facilities for seafarers working or living on ships, or both, consistent with promoting seafarers' health and well-being.
- Seafarer accommodation must be safe and decent and must meet national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006 (Standard A3.1, paragraph 1).

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- Frequent inspections of seafarer accommodation areas are carried out by the master or a designate (Standard A3.1, paragraph 18) and are recorded and the records are available for review.

For ships coming into service:

- The attending flag State inspector should be aware of the plan approval process undertaken during the construction of the ship with respect to the seafarer accommodation arrangements. As part of the first inspection of a ship the inspector will need to verify that the accommodation and recreational facilities have been constructed in accordance with the approved drawings. The same applies to ships that have been substantially altered. This process need not be repeated for subsequent inspections.

For ships that were in existence before entry into force of the MLC, 2006, for the flag State:

- Account must be taken of any national provisions that may have been adopted (see Chapter 2 of these guidelines) with respect to this issue. These ships will still need to be inspected in connection with seafarers' accommodation and recreational facilities to verify that the ship:
 - meets the standards set out in either ILO Conventions Nos 92, 133, 147 or the Protocol of 1996 to Convention No. 147 (if applicable in the flag State); and/or
 - provides and maintains decent accommodation and recreational facilities for seafarers working or living on board, or both, consistent with promoting the seafarers' health and well-being in accordance with national legislation.

How to check the basic requirements

- Check the construction plan of the ship that shows dimensions and identifying the use to be made of each room or other area.
- Check the crew list compared to the number of sleeping rooms and berths.
- Carry out a visual observation of seafarers' on-board accommodation and recreational facilities with particular attention paid to the following requirements in the MLC, 2006:
 - general requirements (Standard A3.1, paragraph 6);
 - the size of rooms and other accommodation spaces (Standard A3.1, paragraphs 9 and 10);
 - heating and ventilation (Standard A3.1, paragraph 7);
 - noise and vibration and other ambient factors (Standard A3.1, paragraph 6(h));

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- sanitary and related facilities (Standard A3.1, paragraphs 11 and 13);
- lighting (Standard A3.1, paragraph 8);
- hospital accommodation (Standard A3.1, paragraph 12);
- recreational facilities (Standard A3.1, paragraphs 14 and 17);
- occupational safety and health and accident prevention requirements on ships, in light of the specific needs of seafarers who both live and work on ships (Standard A3.1, paragraphs 2(a) and 6(h)).
- Check the on-board records to confirm that frequent inspections are carried out by, or under the authority of, the ship's master, as well as (for ships that carry a Maritime Labour Certificate) that other inspections or actions provided for in the shipowners' approved measures found in the DMLC, Part II, have been carried out.
- Check that measures are being taken on the ship to monitor noise and vibration levels in seafarers' working and living areas.

Examples of deficiencies

- Location of sleeping rooms on the ship does not conform to national standards implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Number and/or size (including height) of sleeping rooms does not conform to national standards implementing the MLC, 2006.
- More than one seafarer per berth.
- Recreational facilities do not conform to national standards implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Heating, lighting or ventilation is inadequate or not functioning correctly.
- Fittings and fixtures within seafarer accommodation areas, including the hospital, mess rooms and recreational rooms, do not conform to national standards implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Separate sleeping rooms are not provided for males and females.
- Separate sanitation facilities are not provided for males and females.
- Sanitary facilities are inadequate or not functioning.
- Hospital is being used to accommodate persons who are not sick.
- Seafarer accommodation or recreational facilities are not being maintained in a clean and tidy condition.
- Regular inspections of seafarer accommodation are not being carried out by the master or another designated person.

Guidelines for flag State inspections – MLC, 2006

- Laundry facilities are inadequate or not functioning correctly.
- Exposure to hazardous levels of noise and vibration and other ambient factors and chemicals in the seafarer accommodation or recreational or catering facilities.

Regulation 3.2 – Food and catering

Standard A3.2; Guideline B3.2

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Food and drinking water must be of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity, taking into account the requirements of the ship and the differing cultural and religious backgrounds of seafarers on the ship.
- Food is to be provided free of charge to seafarers during the period of engagement.
- Seafarers employed as ship's cooks* with responsibility for preparing food must be trained and qualified for their positions.
- Seafarers working as ship's cooks must not be less than 18 years old (Standard A3.2, paragraph 8).
- Frequent and documented inspections of food, water and catering facilities are carried out by the master or a designate (Standard A3.2, paragraph 7).

* "Ship's cook" means a seafarer with responsibility for food preparation (Regulation 3.2, paragraph 3; Standard A3.2, paragraphs 3 and 4).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check documents (see Regulation 1.1 on minimum age) to confirm that the ship's cooks are 18 years old or older and that the ship's cooks are trained, qualified and competent for their positions in accordance with national requirements. In cases where a fully qualified cook is not required, check that seafarers processing food in the galley are trained or instructed in food and personal hygiene and handling and storage of food on board ships.
- Check on-board records to confirm that frequent and documented inspections are made of:
 - supplies of food and drinking water;
 - spaces used for handling and storage of food;

Inspecting the MLC, 2006, maritime labour requirements

- galleys and other equipment used in the preparation and service of meals.
- Visual observation of catering facilities, including galleys and store rooms, to check that they are hygienic and fit for purpose.
- Check that food and drinking water are of an appropriate quality (for example, not out of date) and quantity and nutritional value by:
 - checking drinking water quality and ascertaining how the quality is monitored;
 - reviewing menu plans together with visual observation of food supplies and storage areas to ensure that the food supplied is varied in nature.
- Check, by interviewing, in private, a representative number of seafarers, that they are not charged for food and are provided with drinking water and that food and drinking water are of appropriate quality and quantity.

Examples of deficiencies

- Food and drinking water are not of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity, for the seafarers on the ship.
- Seafarer is charged for food and/or is not provided with drink-
- Seafarer who has responsibility for preparing food is untrained or not instructed as required.
- Ship's cook is not trained and qualified.
- Ship's cook is under 18 years of age.
- Frequent and documented inspections of the food or water or the preparation/storage/handling areas are not being carried out.
- Catering facilities are not hygienic or are otherwise unfit for purpose.

Regulation 4.1 – Medical care on board ship and ashore

Standard A4.1; Guideline B4.1

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers must be covered by adequate measures for the protection of their health and have access to prompt and adequate medical care, including essential dental care, whilst working on board.
- Health protection and care are to be provided at no cost to the seafarer, in accordance with national law and practice.

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- Shipowners are to allow seafarers the right to visit a qualified medical doctor or dentist without delay in ports of call, where practicable (Standard A4.1, paragraph 1(c)).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check documents (such as the SEA) to confirm that, to the extent consistent with national law and practice, medical care and health protection services while seafarers are on board ship or landed in a foreign port, are provided free of charge (see Standard A4.1, paragraph 1(d)).
- Check documents (such as the SEA) to confirm that seafarers are given the right to visit a qualified medical doctor or dentist, without delay, when calling at a port, where practicable (see Standard A4.1, paragraph 1(c)).
- Check records and equipment to confirm that general provisions on occupational health protection and medical care are being observed (Standard A4.1, paragraph 1(a)).
- Undertake visual observation to confirm that the ship is equipped with sufficient medical supplies including a medicine chest and equipment, including either the most recent edition of the *International Medical Guide for Ships* or a medical guide as required by national laws and regulations.
- Check documents (such as the SMD and crew list) to confirm that a qualified medical doctor is working on board ships that carry 100 or more people and that are ordinarily engaged in voyages of more than three days' duration.
- Check that, where ships are not required to carry a medical doctor, they have at least one seafarer on board (who is trained and qualified to the requirements of STCW) to be in charge of medical care or is competent to provide medical first aid as part of their regular duties.
- Check that medical report forms are carried on board the ship.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that seafarers have access to medical care on board without charge and are given leave to obtain medical and dental care services when calling in a port, where practicable.
- Check that procedures are in place for radio or satellite communications for medical assistance.

Examples of deficiencies

- A seafarer working on the ship is denied, without justification, shore leave by the master and/or shipowner to go ashore for medical or dental care.
- A seafarer is not provided with appropriate health protection and medical care on board ship.

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- Medical personnel, with appropriate qualifications, as required by national laws or regulations, are not on board.
- Medical chest or equipment does not meet national standards and/or no medical guide is on board.
- No medical report forms are on board.
- Evidence that a seafarer is being charged for medical or dental care, contrary to national law or practice.

Regulation 4.2 – Shipowners' liability

Standard A4.2.1; Guideline B4.2.1
– Shipowners' liability

Standard A4.2.2; Guideline B4.2.2
– Treatment of contractual claims

* Inspected and certified
** Review DMLC, Part II

Basic requirements

- Seafarers have a right to material assistance and support from the shipowner with respect to the financial consequences of sickness, injury or death occurring while they are serving under a SEA or arising from their employment under such agreement (Regulation 4.2, paragraph 1).
- Shipowners are liable to defray the expense of medical care, including medical treatment and the supply of the necessary medicines and therapeutic appliances, and board and lodging away from home until the sick or injured seafarer has recovered, or until the sickness or incapacity has been declared of a permanent character (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 1(c)).
- Measures are to be taken by shipowners or their representatives for safeguarding property of seafarers left on board by sick, injured or deceased seafarers and for returning it to them or to their next of kin (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 7).
- Shipowners are to provide financial security to assure compensation in the event of the death or long-term disability of seafarers due to an occupational injury, illness or hazard, as set out in national law, the SEA or collective agreement (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 1(b)).
- The system of financial security, as provided for in Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 1(b), may be in the form of a social security scheme or insurance or fund or other similar arrangements (Standard A4.2.2, paragraph 2).

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- The contractual compensation where set out in the SEA and without prejudice to Standard A4.2.1., paragraph 8 (c), must be paid in full and without delay (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8 (a)).
- There must not be pressure to accept a payment less than the contractual amount (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8 (b)).
- Where the nature of the long-term disability of a seafarer makes it difficult to assess the full compensation to which the seafarer may be entitled, an interim payment or payments must be made to the seafarer so as to avoid undue hardship (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8 (c)).
- In accordance with Regulation 4.2, paragraph 2, the seafarer must receive payment without prejudice to other legal rights, but such payment may be offset by the shipowner against any damages resulting from any other claim made by the seafarer against the shipowner and arising from the same incident (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8 (d)).
- The claim for contractual compensation may be brought directly by the seafarer concerned, or their next of kin, or a representative of the seafarer or designated beneficiary (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8 (e)).
- For the purposes of Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8, the term “contractual claim” means any claim which relates to death or long-term disability of seafarers due to an occupational injury, illness or hazard as set out in national law, the SEA or collective agreement (Standard A4.2.2, paragraph 1).
- Effective arrangements must be in place to receive, deal with and impartially settle contractual claims relating to compensation referred to in Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 8, through expeditious and fair procedures (Standard A4.2.2, paragraph 3).
- Seafarers must receive prior notification if a shipowner’s financial security is to be cancelled or terminated (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 9).
- The provider of the financial security must notify the competent authority of the flag State if a shipowner’s financial security is cancelled or terminated (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 10).
- The financial security must not cease before the end of the period of validity of the financial security unless the financial security provider has given prior notification of at least 30 days to the competent authority (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 12).
- The financial security must provide for the payment of all contractual claims covered by it, which arise during the period for which the document is valid (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 13).

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- A certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security issued by the financial security provider must be carried on board (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 11).
- A copy of the certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security must be posted in a conspicuous place on board where it is available to the seafarers (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 11).
- Where more than one financial security provider provides cover, the document provided by each provider must be carried on board (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 11).
- The certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security must contain the information required in Appendix A4-I (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 14).
- The certificate or other documentary evidence of financial security must be in English or accompanied by an English translation (Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 14).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check the SEA and/or relevant collective bargaining agreement to verify that seafarers have the coverage required by national law implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Check for on-board procedures with respect to property that is left on board by sick, injured or deceased seafarers.
- ~~Check documents confirming that the shipowner has provided financial security to assure compensation as required.~~
- Check the certificate of financial security or other documentary evidence issued by the financial security provider.
- Check that the certificate of financial security or other documentary evidence is valid and posted in a conspicuous place.
- Check DMLC, Part I for any national substantial equivalences, and, if so, DMLC, Part II to check for compliance.
- Check whether there has been any relevant on-board complaint.
- Interview seafarers in private.

Examples of deficiencies

- ~~No evidence that financial security has been provided.~~

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- No information on coverage in the SEA or relevant collective bargaining agreement, if applicable.
- Where applicable, provisions in the SEA or collective bargaining agreement are not consistent with national requirements implementing the MLC, 2006.
- Seafarers do not receive contractual compensation payments as set out in the SEA.
- Contractual compensation delayed or not paid in full.
- Seafarers are pressured to accept a payment less than the contractual amount.
- Interim payment(s) are not made to the seafarer, where the nature of the long-term disability of a seafarer makes it difficult to assess the full compensation to which the seafarer may be entitled.
- Seafarers are not provided with direct access to the financial security system.
- No effective arrangements are in place to receive, deal with and impartially settle contractual claims in accordance with flag State requirements as set out in the DMLC, Part I, point 16.
- If the shipowner's financial security is to be ~~or has been~~ cancelled or terminated, and seafarers have not been notified.
- The financial security:
 - (i) has ceased before the expiration date stated on the financial security certificate or
 - (ii) has ceased before the end of the notice period of at least 30 days given to the competent authority (where applicable); or
 - (iii) is otherwise invalid.
- The certificate of financial security or other documentary evidence issued by the financial security provider, ~~including when the financial security is provided through a social security scheme~~, is not carried on board.
- Where more than one financial security provider provides cover, not all documents provided by each provider are carried on board.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence is not posted in a conspicuous place on board where it is available to the seafarers.
- The ~~financial security~~ certificate or other documentary evidence does not include the required information as set out in Appendix A4-I.
- The certificate or other documentary evidence is not available in English or is not accompanied by an English translation.
- The ~~financial security~~ certificate or other documentary evidence is invalid, for example, is expired or falsified.

- No procedures are in place to safeguard seafarers' property left on board, as required by Standard A4.2.1, paragraph 7.

Regulation 4.3 – Health and safety protection and accident prevention

Standard A4.3; Guideline B4.3

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- The working, living and training environment on ships must be safe and hygienic and conform to national laws and regulations and other measures for occupational safety and health protection and accident prevention on board ship. Reasonable precautions are to be taken on the ships to prevent occupational accidents, injuries and diseases including risk of exposure to harmful levels of ambient factors and chemicals as well as the risk of injury or disease that may result from the use of equipment and machinery on the ship (Standard A4.3, paragraph 1(b)).
- Ship must have an occupational safety and health policy and programme to prevent occupational accident injuries and diseases, with a particular concern for the safety and health of seafarers under the age of 18 (Standard A4.3, paragraphs 1(c) and 2(b)).
- A ship safety committee, that includes participation by the seafarer safety representative, is required (for ships with five or more seafarers) (Standard A4.3, paragraph 2(d)).
- Risk evaluation is required for on-board occupational safety and health management (taking into account relevant statistical data) (Standard A4.3, paragraph 8).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check relevant documents, such as the on-board occupational accident reports, and the reports of risk evaluations undertaken for the management of occupational safety and health on the ship.
- Check for documents evidencing membership and meetings of the safety committee (e.g. records and minutes of the meetings, etc.) if the ship has five or more seafarers.
- Check documents related to the ship's on-board ongoing occupational safety and health policy and programme, to confirm that:

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- it is available to seafarers;
 - it is consistent with national provisions;
 - it includes risk evaluation, training and instruction for seafarers;
 - it pays special attention to the health and safety of young seafarers;
 - adequate preventive measures are being taken;
 - appropriate personal protective equipment is being used and maintained correctly.
- Check that relevant occupational safety and health and accident prevention notices and official instructions with respect to particular hazards on the ships are posted on the ship in a location that will bring it to the attention of seafarers (Standard A4.3, paragraph 7).
 - Check that appropriate protective equipment is available for seafarers to use.
 - Check that a reporting procedure for occupational accidents is in place.
 - Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm on-board occupational safety and health programmes and practices.
 - Check that, with respect to health and safety protection and accident prevention, special consideration is given to any national requirements covering:
 - the structural features of the ship, including means of access and asbestos-related risks;
 - machinery;
 - the effects of the extremely low or high temperature of any surfaces with which seafarers may be in contact;
 - the effects of noise in the workplace and in shipboard accommodation;
 - the effects of vibration in the workplace and in shipboard accommodation;
 - the effects of ambient factors (other than noise and vibration) in the workplace and in shipboard accommodation, including tobacco smoke;
 - special safety measures on and below deck;
 - loading and unloading equipment;
 - fire prevention and fire-fighting;
 - anchors, chains and lines;
 - dangerous cargo and ballast;

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- personal protective equipment for seafarers;
- work in enclosed spaces;
- physical and mental effects of fatigue;
- the effects of drug and alcohol dependency;
- HIV/AIDS protection and prevention;
- emergency and accident response;
- harassment and bullying on board ship.^{6, 7}

Examples of deficiencies

- Conditions exist on board which may impair efforts to prevent accidents.
- No evidence of an on-board policy and/or programmes for the prevention of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases.
- No established or functioning ship's safety committee when there are five or more seafarers working on board.
- Personal protective equipment is in poor condition or being incorrectly used or not being used.
- Risk assessments are missing.
- Seafarers are unaware of the measures adopted by the management to provide OSH and to prevent accidents.
- Risks posed to young seafarers have not been addressed.
- Occupational accidents are not being investigated or reported in accordance with the ship's procedures.

⁶ See *Guidance on eliminating shipboard harassment and bullying* jointly published by the International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers' Federation (<https://www.itfglobal.org/en/reports-publications/ics-itf-guidance-eliminating-shipboard-harassment-and-bullying>; <https://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/default-source/Other-documents/guidance-on-eliminating-shipboard-harassment-and-bullying.pdf?sfvrsn=4>).

⁷ See also *Guidelines for implementing the occupational safety and health provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, sections 6.4 and 6.5 (https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normative_instrument/wcms_325319.pdf).

Regulation 4.5 – Social security

Standard A4.5; Guideline B4.5

*** Inspected**

Basic requirements

- Seafarers who are subject to the flag State’s social security legislation, and, to the extent provided for in its national law, their dependants, are entitled to benefit from social security protection no less favourable than that enjoyed by shore workers.

Note: The MLC, 2006, requires that all seafarers be provided with social protection. This covers a number of complementary requirements including prevention-based approaches in connection with occupational safety and health, medical examinations, hours of work and rest and catering. Social protection is mainly addressed in the Title 4 with respect to Medical care (Regulation 4.1); Shipowner liability (Regulation 4.2); and Social security (Regulation 4.5). Regulation 4.5 and the related Standard A4.5 reflect an approach that recognizes the wide range of national systems and schemes and differing areas of coverage with respect to the provision of social security. Under Standard A4.5, paragraph 3, a ratifying country is required to “take steps according to its national circumstances to provide the complementary social security protection referred to in paragraph 1 of this Standard to all seafarers ordinarily resident in its territory”. The resulting protection must be no less favourable than that enjoyed by shoreworkers resident in its territory. The main responsibility of flag States is to ensure that the shipowners’ social security obligations are respected for seafarers on their ships, particularly those set out in Regulations 4.1 and 4.2 (see Standard A4.5, paragraph 5). A more general duty, referred to in Standard A4.5, paragraph 6, and Guideline B4.5, paragraph 5, is also applicable to flag States. ILO member States are to give consideration to ways in which comparable benefits could be provided to seafarers who do not have adequate social security coverage and to possibly themselves arrange for the needed protection to be provided. This responsibility reflects the fact that all States have an important role in promoting the protection of all seafarers and in cooperating to help ensure such protection. In this way flag States can make an important contribution to the achievement of adequate social security protection for seafarers worldwide.

In the context of flag State inspection of ships the main concern lies with confirming the complementary protection to be provided by shipowners and stated in the SEA (Standard A2.1, paragraph 4(h)).

How to check the basic requirements

- Check for evidence that, for seafarers covered by the national social security system, the appropriate contributions are being made if it is a contributory system.
- Check the SEA to confirm the protection to be provided by the shipowner.

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- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that mandatory contributions, if any, are made.

Examples of deficiencies

- No information on protection in the SEA.
- Mandatory contributions are not being made.

Regulation A5.1.1 – General principles

Standard A5.1.1; Guideline B5.1.1

*** Inspected**

Basic requirements

- Ships are required to have a copy of the MLC, 2006 **as amended**, available on board.

How to check the basic requirements

- Check to confirm that there is a copy of the MLC, 2006 **as amended**, on board.

Examples of deficiencies

- No copy of the MLC, 2006 **as amended**, on board.

Regulation 5.1.5 – On-board complaint procedures

Standard A5.1.5; Guideline B5.1.5

*** Inspected and certified**

**** Review DMLC, Part II**

Basic requirements

- Ships must have on-board procedures for the fair, effective and expeditious handling of seafarer complaints alleging breaches of the requirements of the MLC, 2006 (including seafarers' rights).
- All seafarers must be provided with a copy of the on-board complaint procedures applicable on the ship. This should be in the working language of the ship.
- Victimization of seafarers for filing complaints under the MLC, 2006, is prohibited.

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How to check the basic requirements

- Check the document outlining the on-board complaint procedures to confirm that the procedures are functioning on the ship, paying particular attention to the right of representation and to the required safeguards against victimization.
- Check that seafarers are provided with a copy of the on-board complaint procedures in the working language of the ship.
- Check a document outlining the on-board complaint procedures to confirm that seafarers are able to complain directly to the ship's master or an external authority.
- Interview, in private, a representative number of seafarers to confirm that seafarers are given a copy of the procedures and that they are able to complain directly to the ship's master or an external authority and that there is no victimization.

Examples of deficiencies

- No document setting out the on-board complaint procedures.
- Ship's on-board complaint procedures are not operating.
- Victimization of a seafarer for making a complaint.
- Seafarer is not provided with a copy of the complaint procedures in the working language of the ship.

4. Action to be taken if deficiencies are identified

4.1. General note

105. **It is recalled that the national laws and regulations or other measures implementing the MLC, 2006, provisions remain the overriding authority on the applicable requirements for inspections.**

106. The MLC, 2006, sets out a number of possible responses available to flag State inspectors (or the competent authority in the flag State) to help ensure that ships comply with those national requirements. Some actions are required while others allow for some exercise of discretion. All actions involve an exercise of professional judgement by the flag State inspector on identifying deficiencies (including those identified during the course of investigating a complaint (see Chapter 2) as set out in Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 5).

107. In determining the action to be taken, an important consideration is the question of who is to take the action. Where authority for verifying compliance with the MLC, 2006, has been delegated to an RO, it is important to remember that the flag State remains fully responsible for the inspection and certification of working and living conditions of seafarers on ships that fly its flag (Regulation 5.1.1, paragraph 3). The RO must, however, as a minimum be empowered to require the rectification of deficiencies that it identifies in seafarers' working and living conditions and to carry out inspections in this regard at the request of a port State (Standard A5.1.2, paragraph 2).

108. Some possible remedies, such as withdrawing certificates, apply specifically to certified ships, others such as detaining a ship apply to all ships and relate to the flag State inspector's authority to require rectification of the deficiencies before allowing a ship to sail. In addition, national laws or regulations may enable the flag State inspector or competent authority to impose penalties and other corrective measures on shipowners for breaches of the requirements of the MLC, 2006 (including seafarers' rights). Action taken is subject to any right of appeal by the shipowner to a judicial or administrative authority (Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 8).

109. In addition to specific events that may result in invalidity of a certificate (Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 14), Standard A5.1.3, paragraphs 7, 9, 16 and 17 should also be considered.

110. Before a certificate can be issued or endorsed or a ship allowed to sail, the flag State inspector would need to have confirmation either that all deficiencies

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noted during the inspection have been rectified or that a rectification action plan has been provided by the owner and agreed by the inspector.

111. As noted in Chapter 2, under Standard A5.1.3, paragraph 11, in the case of a ship that is certified, the results of subsequent inspections (after the first inspection) or verifications and any significant deficiencies found during the verification are to be recorded together with the date when the deficiencies were found to be remedied. This record, in English (or an English translation when it is not written in English), is to be either written on the on-board copy of the DMLC or appended to it or otherwise made available in some way for the information of seafarers, flag State inspectors, authorized officers in a port State and shipowners' and seafarers' representatives.

112. Chapter 3 contains examples of deficiencies for inspected items. In all cases any deficiencies should be rectified. Rectification of a deficiency related to shipowner use of recruitment and placement services should not, in principle, be to the detriment of the seafarers affected. In some cases a single instance of the deficiency, including a breach of seafarers' rights, may be sufficient to prevent a ship from going to sea until it is rectified, e.g. a ship with an underage person working as a seafarer. In other cases, a deficiency, for example, a breach of the lighting requirements in one sleeping room, may be rectified within a period of time. However, if there is a history of this problem or, if faulty or inadequate lighting in areas including sleeping rooms indicates an overall occupational safety and health problem (meeting criteria in Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 7(c)), a decision may be taken that the ship should not sail until the deficiencies are rectified.

113. Flag State inspectors will need to use their professional judgement as to whether a ship should be allowed to sail before the deficiency is rectified and, if it is not rectified, to decide on what action to take including withdrawal of the certificate.

4.2. Guidance on making determinations as to action

114. Depending upon the number and severity of any deficiencies the flag State inspector may consider the following actions:

- give appropriate advice;
- list, with appropriate timescales, the deficiencies to be rectified, for example, before departure; within 14 days; or before the issue of a Maritime Labour Certificate;
- prevent the ship from leaving port until necessary actions are taken;

Action to be taken if deficiencies are identified

- impose any penalties or other corrective measures available under national law;
- in the case of ships that are certified:
 - withdraw the Maritime Labour Certificate;
 - refuse to endorse the Maritime Labour Certificate following an intermediate inspection or refuse to renew the certificate.

115. When considering which action or actions to take, flag State inspectors should use their professional judgement. In addition, flag State inspectors should take into account the following when reaching a decision on whether or not to accept a rectification plan or prevent a ship from leaving port and/or recommend withdrawal of Maritime Labour Certificate:

- whether or not the non-conformities can be rapidly remedied in the port of inspection;
- whether the deficiencies constitute a significant danger to seafarers' safety, health or security;
- the seriousness of the breach of the requirements of the MLC, 2006 (including seafarers' rights);
- length and nature of the intended voyage or service;
- size and type of ship and equipment provided;
- whether or not the appropriate rest period for seafarers is being observed;
- nature of the cargo;
- prior history of similar deficiencies;
- number of deficiencies identified on the inspection;
- safe manning requirements;
- prior history with respect to rectifications.

116. All reasonable efforts are to be made to avoid a ship being unreasonably detained or delayed (Standard A5.1.4, paragraph 15).