

Commonwealth of Dominica



Office of the Maritime Administrator

TO: SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MANAGEMENT COMPANIES, MASTERS, OFFICERS AND CREW OF DOMINICA FLAGGED SHIPS

SUBJECT: COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA MARITIME ADMINISTRATION POLICY ON DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

PURPOSE: The Policy is to provide guidance on the requirements of shipowners and operating companies regarding drug and alcohol abuse on Dominica vessels

APPLICABILITY: This Policy Letter applies to all shipowners, operating companies and seafarers on board Dominica flagged vessels

General

1. Seafarers seeking original licensing from Dominica Maritime Administration are required to undergo drug and alcohol screening prior to issuance of a Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency.
2. Dominica Maritime Administration, Office of Maritime Affairs also urges all Recruitment and Placement Services providing services to Dominica certificated seafarers to conduct pre-employment drug and alcohol screenings prior to joining a vessel to ensure the safety of the seafarer, the vessel and its crew.
3. Shipowners, operating companies and managers of Dominica flagged ships are required to ensure that pre-employment drug and alcohol screening is conducted for every seafarer that joins a Dominica flagged ship within at least six months prior to joining where the seafarer has not been part of a random drug and alcohol screening program within the six months prior to joining the ship.
4. Seafarers able to demonstrate participation in a random drug and alcohol screening program within six months prior to joining a Dominica flagged vessel or submitting an application for original certification may be waived from the requirement of any additional drug and alcohol screening.
5. Seafarers that are under the influence of drugs or alcohol shall not be authorized to stand watch or perform any other regular duties to which they have been assigned. Appropriate measures shall be taken to ensure that the safety of the ship, the crew and the environment are maintained in the event a seafarer is found unfit to stand watch or perform their regular duties.

6. Seafarers shall be considered unfit to stand watch or perform their regular duties if their blood alcohol content (BAC) is in excess of 0.08% or if the seafarer is not able to demonstrate appropriate cognitive or physical abilities.
7. Seafarers shall not consume alcohol within four (4) hours of taking watch or performing any other duties.

Required Action

Owners, Operators and Managers

8. Owners, operators and managers of Dominica flagged vessels are required to ensure that a formalized Drug and Alcohol Program is developed to ensure compliance companywide.
9. A Drug and Alcohol Program may be incorporated into a Safety Management System, Work Program, Occupational Health and Safety Program or other existing program or policy.
10. Drug and Alcohol Program, as a minimum, must contain the following subjects:
 - a. Policy on Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse including a Screening Program;
 - b. Methods of Identifying Drug and Alcohol Abuse;
 - c. Rehabilitation;
 - d. Education Regarding Drug and Alcohol Abuse; and
 - e. Counselling for Employees with Drug and Alcohol related problems.
11. All reasonable efforts should be made by owners, operators and managers of Dominica flagged vessels to aid seafarers that have been identified as having drug and alcohol related problems without the threat of termination from employment or other penalty unless there is inherent risk to the safety of the individual, the ship, the crew or the environment.
12. All Drug and Alcohol Programs or Policies shall be respectful of the dignity, privacy, confidentiality and fundamental legal rights of all seafarers concerned.
13. It is recommended that the International Labour Organization's (ILO) publication "Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programmes in the Maritime Industry (A Manual for Planners)," as may be amended from time to time, be used as guidance when developing a Drug and Alcohol Program.

Screening and Testing Facilities

14. Any authorized facility to conduct testing or screening for drugs and alcohol shall ensure that specimens collected are suitably safeguarded and that analysis is performed by competent persons or independent agencies.
15. Any testing and analysis procedures should be maintained by rigorous quality control procedures consistent with industry standards.
16. Any positive screening and analysis results shall be interpreted by a medically competent person duly licensed and certificated in the country in which they are practicing.

Other Provisions

17. Concerned port States may conduct testing and screening for drugs or alcohol following marine pollution incidents or casualties which shall be conducted according to that port State's requirements.
18. In the circumstances indicated under paragraph 1 of this section, only those seafarers considered to be directly involved in the incident should be subject to screening or testing.
19. In the event other seafarers or persons that were not directly involved in a marine pollution incident or casualty, or where a marine pollution incident or casualty has not occurred, are requested to undergo screening or testing for drugs or alcohol, the seafarers or company concerned should contact the Dominica Maritime Administration immediately.

Any questions can be directed to:

Technical Department
Tel: + 1 508 992 7170 ext. 312
e-mail: technical@dominica-registry.com

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