

Training at Sea

Guidance for Cadets

Merchant Navy Training Board

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This free publication can be downloaded from the MNTB website at:
www.mntb.org.uk

Introduction



What this document is about

Seagoing service is required as part of an officer cadet programme, leading to a Certificate of Competency. It is vitally important in the development of skills, knowledge and experience needed by officers in the Merchant Navy and is an integral part of the overall programme of training.

Training programmes follow a pattern of alternating periods of sea service and college/university-based learning. This provides an integrated and progressive pattern of education, training and practical experience covering the requirements for obtaining a Certificate of Competency.

This guide explains the arrangements that should be followed to ensure the quality and effectiveness of training at sea, meeting the required standards of the training programme you are undertaking. At any time should you feel your safety is compromised, you should speak to your DSTO and Training officer immediately.

This document has been developed by the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) in conjunction with industry.

Why has it been developed

The document has been developed to assist cadets with helpful information and tools during sea time phases of training.



Who is it aimed at

All cadets undergoing approved maritime education and training leading to a UK Officer of the Watch Certificate of Competency.



Aim

The overall aim is to provide cadets with the necessary information for a successful sea time experience as part of the cadet programme.



Training at Sea



Information for joining your first ship

Joining your first ship is an exciting prospect. Before you join, you should make sure you have the following:

- Travel arrangements
- Details of ship's agent, including out of hours contact details
- Ship's port and berth details

Your sponsoring company/training management company should also have provided you with details of the Designated Shipboard Training Officer (DSTO) before joining the ship. This should include the DSTO's name, rank/job title and how to make contact once on board.

You should also be provided with the contact details and emergency telephone number of the Company Training Officer (CTO).



What to take

The following is intended as a general guide on what you'll probably need for your sea phases. Much of the following will be required at sea as well as when attending college. It's important to keep your kit in good order, in particular your uniform.

Pack the following in your hand luggage:

- All original documentation, including TRB
- Flight tickets, agents details, joining instructions
- Change of clothes
- Small toiletries if travelling long haul



Uniform:



- White shirts with fitted epaulettes (long or short sleeved)
- Black trousers
- Jumper – round neck fitted with epaulettes
- Black uniform shoes and black socks
- Company/sponsor tie
- Working clothes for all expected weather: boiler suits, t-shirts, working shirts and trousers
- Safety boots and shoes with steel toe-caps and spare laces
- Extra uniform requirements may apply to some types of vessels (eg cruise ships) or specific companies. Make sure you know what is required

Clothing (general):



- T-shirts, trousers, shorts, shoes, trainers, flip flops, etc
- Sports kit, swimwear, etc
- Sunglasses, sunhat, suncream
- Underwear
- Toiletries, eg, razor, shaving gear, toothbrush/paste, soap/shower gel, deodorant, sanitary products
- Large towel (always useful)

Documentation:



- Original signed MLC-compliant Training Agreement
- Original ENG1 Medical certificate (valid for the entire voyage)
- Original STCW certificates: Proficiency in Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting, Personal Survival Techniques, Elementary First Aid, Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities, Security Awareness
- Original passport (valid for at least six months after the date you expect to return to the UK)
- Original Discharge Book (and Seaman's Card if required)
- Visas as required
- Vaccination certificates (as required) and vaccination record
- Other original certification as required by the company, eg Tanker Familiarisation, Designated Security Duties, etc
- Other documentation instructed by the shipping company
- MNTB Training Record Book
- Folder and paper for Operations Workbook
- Scientific calculator
- Folders, dividers, colour tabs for referencing
- Pens, pencils, coloured pencils, highlighters, ruler, stapler, sticky tack, paper, notebook

Electrical:



- Mobile phone, laptop, memory stick, portable hard drive, smart speaker (you may want to download films, etc prior to joining the ship as bandwidth might be insufficient to download large files)
- Watch, alarm clock, radio, torch and batteries
- Travel plug adaptors

Equipment (deck):



- Parallel rules
- Dividers (straight or single handed)
- Pencils – 2B. Harder pencils are not easy to erase and leave marks on charts. Softer pencils produce thick lines unless sharpened very frequently
- Eraser
- Radar plotting sheets
- Norrie's Nautical Tables and A Seaman's Guide Pocket Book of the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea
- Make sure you file any college notes that might be required for revision

Equipment (engineer):



- Compass/dividers
- Drawing instruments
- Graph paper

General:



- Cash, cards
- Contact lenses, fluids, sunglasses
- Medication*
- Books/magazines, kindle, etc
- Photos of family and friends
- Snacks or anything you might miss from home

Handy tips:



- Take a copy of all your original documentation, eg Discharge Book, passport, visas, certification, pages from your TRB) and leave these at home just in case
- Travel or sports bags that fold flat are preferable to suitcases as storage space on board can be limited.

*You should ensure that you take an adequate supply of any prescribed medication initiated by your own doctor for the duration of your expected appointment on board. Any prescribed medication should be kept in its original packaging and declared to the Master when you arrive on board. You should always check the rules for prescribed medicines with the embassy of the country you will be visiting. Speak to your sponsor/training management company for further guidance.

On arrival, the ship's gangway should be attended by someone on duty who will ask you for photo ID and ask you to sign the gangway log. You should report to the Master or senior officer. Depending on where you join the vessel and how long you have travelled, there may be a need for adequate rest period before starting your first watch.

Induction is the term used to describe a procedure used to help a newcomer settle into a new job and new social environment. It is a practical technique that can influence and promote a positive attitude to working within an organisation.

Your shipboard induction should involve familiarisation with:

- Onboard safety procedures, including muster station and any assigned duties
- Guided tour of the ship, including accommodation and living arrangements
- Introductions to key shipboard personnel, including a 1:1 meeting with the Master or Chief Engineer (as appropriate)
- The onboard policies and procedures

For each voyage, the tasks in the Training Record Book appropriate to the stage of training should be progressed. Ships' staff need to be aware of the progress of each cadet on board.

What you should expect as a cadet



Life on board

Cadets are classed as 'supernumerary' on board and do not form part of the ships core complement. However, cadets are defined as seafarers for the purpose of national and international regulation.

On any ship there is a hierarchical structure and cadets should be expected to obey reasonable instructions, eg undertake certain physical jobs. However, should you feel the task you have been asked to carry out is dangerous, you have a right to challenge this. You should speak in the first instance to the DSTO on board.

Working and living on board ship away from family and friends for an extended period of time can be challenging; the ship is a temporary home, with work and social activities taking place in sometimes relatively restricted areas. It is important to be aware of social responsibilities on board including:

- adequate rest periods
- keeping fit and healthy
- working safely
- the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse

It is important that those on board support each other in sometimes challenging circumstances.



Training Record Book completion

Before going to sea, you will be issued with a Training Record Book (TRB). It is your responsibility to maintain the TRB and to present it for scrutiny to the Master or Chief Engineer, the Shipboard Training Officer and Company Training Officer. Regular meetings, usually once a week, should be held with your DSTO to ensure the TRB is being correctly completed.

It is important that the TRB is kept up to date and that all entries provide evidence of completion of planned training and completion of tasks. Cadets should be given appropriate time for undertaking Training Record Books tasks and other periods of study. Depending on the vessel, access to Wi-Fi could be limited, depending on bandwidth.

It is your responsibility to complete all the appropriate tasks within the Training Record Book, ie, during Phase 2 all 'progressing' tasks should be completed and signed off, and by Phase 5, all tasks should be signed off and the Training Record Book completed. You should also ensure that your workbook is complete as well as the shipboard testimonials.



Mental and physical wellbeing

If, during the course of your sea phase, you start to feel worried about your mental or physical wellbeing, the first point of contact should be to alert someone on board. They may feel that you should get further help from your sponsoring company/training management company.

There are a number of organisations that provide support for seafarers, including mental and physical wellbeing:

- Togetherall (formerly Big White Wall) [Big White Wall | Togetherall](#)
- ISWAN [ISWAN | Promoting and supporting the welfare of seafarers \(seafarerswelfare.org\)](#) ISWAN work to promote and support the welfare of seafarers all over the world. They operate a 24-hour helpline service plus a number of other projects and services such as mental and physical health information



Maritime Labour Convention

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a UN agency which brings together governments, employers and workers of its member states to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all individuals.

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006) sets out seafarers' rights to decent conditions of work and helps to create conditions of fair competition for shipowners. Details can be found at [Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 \(ilo.org\)](#)

The basic aims of the MLC, 2006 are:

- To ensure comprehensive worldwide protection of the rights of seafarers; and
- To establish a level playing field for countries and shipowners committed to providing decent working and living conditions for seafarers, protecting them from unfair competition on the part of substandard ships.

Amongst other things, the MLC covers:

- Minimum requirements for seafarers to work on a ship.
- Conditions of Employment.
- Accommodation, recreational facilities, food and catering.
- Health protection, medical care, welfare and social protection.

Working in the shipping industry can involve long and irregular hours. Cadets will be required to undertake periods of watchkeeping and occasionally, cadets may need to work over rest periods, but only if the tasks are 'safety critical' for example, coming into, or leaving port. However there are set limits in place and cadets are classed as 'supernumerary' on board.

Cadets are entitled to periods of leave at college and from sea time placements which your sponsoring company/training management company will provide to you.

On occasion, cadets may be asked to sail in areas of high risk (HRA). In the unlikely event that this happens, you will have the choice to sail with the vessel or disembark. Your sponsoring company/training management company should ensure that you are fully aware of the risks and mitigations that are in place.



What is expected of you as a cadet

It is important to be aware of your social responsibilities on board including:

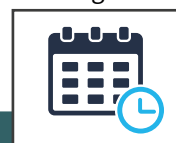
- behaving responsibly
- ask questions and show an interest in what is going on around you
- the importance of punctuality
- consideration for others
- your own personal hygiene

For cadets under 18 there should be additional safety protocols in place which may restrict what you can do, particularly at night or in safety critical areas of the ship.



Grievance policy/complaints procedure

A copy of the grievance procedure and complaints procedure should be provided by your sponsoring company/training management company. Please refer to these should a situation arise where you feel you have not been fairly treated. Please be reassured that raising a grievance or a complaint will not affect your cadet training.




Responsibilities on board


The main responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of cadets lies with the sponsoring company or training management company. The following details may vary from company to company.

The following summarises the roles and responsibilities of those involved in providing onboard training:

A company training officer, or person nominated by the sponsoring organisation/training management company is responsible for:

-  Overall administration of the training programme, including liaison and co-ordination between colleges, companies and the regulatory body (MCA) as required
- Monitoring the progress of the cadet, including inspection of college and onboard training reports

A designated shipboard training officer is responsible for:

-  Organising, under the authority of the Master/Chief Engineer, practical training at sea for the duration of each voyage
- Ensuring that the Training Record Book (TRB) is properly maintained and all requirements of the onboard training programme are fulfilled
- Making sure that the time a cadet spends on board is as useful as possible in terms of training and experience

The Master/Chief Engineer officer:



- Ensures that all concerned are effectively carrying out the onboard programme of training
- Fulfils the role of continuity if the designated shipboard training officer is unavailable during the voyage

The cadet is responsible for:



- Following the planned programme of training
- Making the most of opportunities presented
- Keeping the Training Record Book up to date and ensuring it is available at all times for scrutiny

The company Designated Person Ashore (DPA) is responsible for:



- The implementation of safety procedures on board
- Supporting the safety culture on board
- The contact details for the DPA should be displayed throughout the vessel



Social and cultural information

The shipping industry operates in a global environment and it is important to take account of and respect equality, cultural and diversity issues. Creating a good environment on board relies on a combination of issues, the impact of which will vary from company to company and ship to ship.

Where the majority of the ship's staff do not have English as a first language, you could easily feel socially isolated, especially during a first ship. A lack of social contact on board can be a big factor as well as some initial problems of homesickness, seasickness, etc.

If you feel isolated in any way, you should contact the DSTO in the first instance and if appropriate, your sponsoring company/training management company for advice.



Bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment should not be tolerated by anyone on board a ship and can take many forms, including:

- Verbal, visual or physical harassment, including 'character building' culture
- Sexual harassment
- Harassment based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age

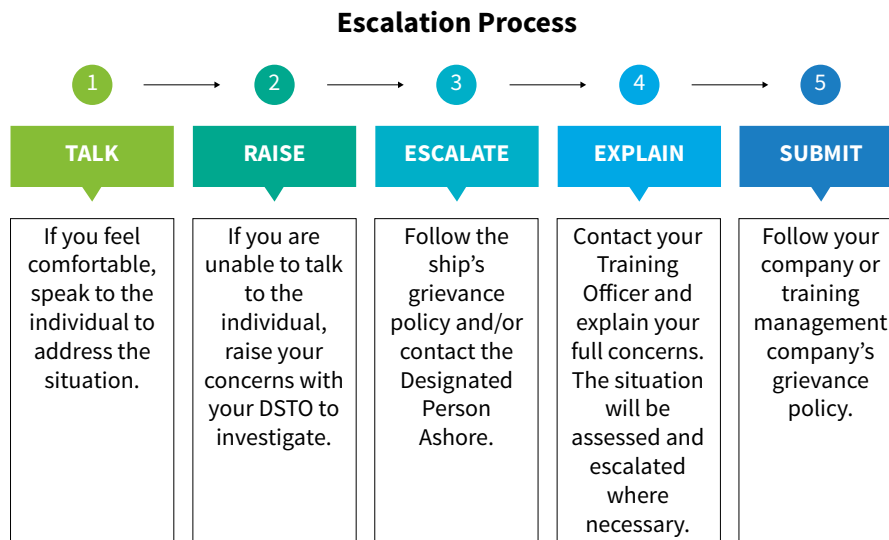
Shipping is a 'hierarchical' industry and cadets are expected to carry out reasonable instructions. However this is not an excuse for bullying behaviour. It is important that should you feel uncomfortable at any time you should report the issue to DSTO immediately in the first instance.

Guidelines developed by the UK Chamber of Shipping, Nautilus International and RMT, have been further developed by the International Transport Workers' Federation and the International Chamber of Shipping and are now incorporated into the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended. A copy of the guidelines can be found at [harassment-guide.pdf \(itfglobal.org\)](https://www.itfglobal.org/harassment-guide.pdf)



What to do if you have concerns

If you have any concerns about your experience at sea, you should in the first instance speak to the DSTO. If this does not resolve your issue, you should contact your sponsoring company/training management company to discuss.



If you are not able to get a resolution after following the escalation process, please contact your Trade Union or the Merchant Navy Training Board (www.mntb.org.uk).



Roles & Responsibilities

COMPANY TRAINING OFFICER	MASTER/CHIEF ENGINEER OFFICER	DESIGNATED SHIPBOARD TRAINING OFFICER	OFFICER CADET	COLLEGE/ UNIVERSITY
Manage the overall training programme, including liaison between ships, colleges, the company, MNTB and MCA	Provide the link between the company training officer and the shipboard training officer to ensure the effectiveness of onboard training	Responsible for arranging practical training at sea with the appropriate Officer/ crew on board	Responsible for completing all tasks required in the Training Record Book	Provide approved courses to develop skills, knowledge and understanding
Monitor and review overall progress of the officer cadet, including inspection of college reports and records of shipboard training	Monitor and review the progress of shipboard training	Record and monitor progress and be responsible for liaising with Company Training Officer	Take advantage of the opportunity for learning and developing skills	Develop and assess Work Based Learning modules, in collaboration with sponsoring companies
Provide guidance, progress reports and action plans as required to officer cadets and shipboard staff	Ensure continuity of the cadets' shipboard training and support throughout their sea service	Provide all required ship information, signatures and testimonials	Must keep on track with learning and escalate training needs to DSTO, when required	Review and provide reports on officer cadet progress in a timely manner