



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-275**

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**To:** Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organizations (ROs).

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**Subject:** Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) – Regulation 3.2 – Food and Catering

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**Reference:** Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)  
Resolution ADM-105, 2008

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1. The purpose of this circular is to inform users of the Panama Maritime Authority about the new regulation applicable to the food and catering services in accordance to Rule 3.2 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)

2. Every ship shall provide free of charge to seafarers during their period on board or contract period, drinking water and food supplies suitable in respect of quality, variety, nutritional value and quantity, adequately covering the needs of seafarers and taking into account their different cultural and religious origins, as well as the duration and nature of the voyage.

3. The organization and equipment of the catering service of the ship shall allow the provision to the seafarers of adequate, varied and nutritious meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions. In regards to hygiene of food and water, the provisions contained in Chapter 29 of the International Medical Guide for Ships, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition or its subsequent versions shall be taken into account.

4. Shipowners shall ensure that seafarers hired as cooks on board a ship, are trained for that purpose and have the qualifications and competences required for such position, for which completion of the training course recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority is required and must cover practical cookery, food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock control, environmental protection and catering health and safety.

The Panama Maritime Authority will recognize the training courses in the follow situations:

a) When the training course certificate is issued by a training center with a cook course recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority through a resolution.

b) When the cook training course certificate, has been issued by a Competent Administration who has ratified and enforced the MLC, 2006 and the certificate expresses thoroughly that the course has been imparted according to Regulation 3.2 of the Marine Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

5. On ships operating with a prescribed manning of less than ten crew members, may not be required to carry a fully qualified cook, however, anyone processing food in the galley shall be trained or instructed in areas including food and personal hygiene as well as handling and storage of food on board a ship, in accordance to the Administration.

6. Notwithstanding the stated on paragraph 4 of this Circular, every seafarer hired as a cook on board a ship, having a license (certificate of competence) at the entry into force of the MLC, 2006

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(August 20, 2013) issued by the Panama Maritime Authority but not counting with a training course endorsed by the Panama Maritime Authority certifying him as a fully qualified cook, shall be granted a grace period of six month starting at the entry into force of the MLC, 2006 in order to obtain the training and endorsement certifying him as a fully qualified cook. During the time in which the seafarer has not yet obtained the certificate described above, he shall follow the guidelines authorized by the Administration, in areas including food and personal hygiene as well as handling and storage of food on board ship.

7. During the grace period, the persons previously indicated, shall continue performing their usual jobs according to their respective contracts, with the commitment that during the grace period, obtain the approval certificate of the training course for cooks required by the national legislation, which shall be endorsed by the Panama Maritime Authority.

8. Once the MLC,2006 enters into force, a seafarer shall be considered as qualified to opt for a license (certificate of competence) accrediting him as cook on board a Panamanian flagged vessel, only if the following requirements are met:

A. General or Administrative Requirements:

- 1- Application.
- 2- 6 color pictures of 3x3 cm.
- 3- Copy of passport or personal identification number.
- 4- Valid medic certificate, in accordance to Regulation I/9 of the STCW, amended; and Regulation 1.2 of the MLC,2006.
- 5- Proof of having passed the 4 basic courses:
  - a- Personal Survival Techniques
  - b- Prevention and Fight Against Fire
  - c- Basic First Aid
  - d- Personal Safety and Social Responsibility
  - e- Security Awareness

B. Specific Requirements for Cooks:

- 1- The applicant must be 18 years old
- 2- The applicant must have completed a training course recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority, covering practical cookery, food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock control, environmental protection and catering health and safety.
- 3- The applicant shall endorse the training course recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority, covering practical cookery, food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock control, environmental protection and catering health and safety.

\*No experience on board is required.

9. Ships are required to maintain on board the documents of endorsements issued by the Panama Maritime Authority attesting to the satisfactory training and qualifications of the Cook or Cooks serving on board.

10. The Panama Maritime Authority in circumstances of exceptional necessity, may issue a dispensation permitting a non-fully qualified cook to serve in a specified ship for a specified limited period, until the next convenient port of call or for a period not exceeding one month, provided that the person to whom the dispensation is issued is trained or instructed in areas including food and personal hygiene as well as handling and storage of food on board ship.

11. The master or person appointed by him shall frequently perform documented inspections on board the ship, related to:

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- a- The supply of food and drinking water
- b- All the stores and equipment used for the storing and handling of food and drinking water; and
- c- The kitchen and other facilities and equipment used to prepare and serve meals.

The date and results of each inspection shall be recorded in the Master's official logbook and be available for review.

12. Vessels that at the moment of the expiration of the grace period granted for a duration of 6 months, according to point six (6) of this circular, have on board cooks that have not yet completed their employments contracts and neither have on board the cook training certificate that our Maritime Administration requires, should ask for a dispense letter to the Maritime Labour Affairs Department, of the Seafarers General Directorate of Panama Maritime Authority, so that the cooks can continue on board until they finish their respective contracts. It is understood that no extension of the contract is allowed in these cases.

The present dispense letter will be granted just for one time only. After that, the cook who wants to continue working on board Panamanian Flagged vessels must obtain their certification as a qualified cook, according to the MLC, 2006 and Circular MMC-275.

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### 13. Instructions For Handling, Storage and Preparation of Food

**February, 2014 – Modification of point 4**

**October, 2013 – New point 12**

**September, 2013 – Modification of point 4**

**July, 2013 - Changes all throughout the text of the Circular**

**June, 2013**

**Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular or any request should be directed to:**

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