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GENERAL CIRCULAR

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To: The Fleet

Subject: HYGIENE ON BOARD

Dear Masters,

We all know hygiene is an important subject to all of us.

Personal hygiene and living quarters:

Hygiene start first by yourselves. Creating a clean environment does not give the chance for insects and other vermin for development Self-monitoring is a must. Keep your cabins clean from waste, food and dirt. Proper cleaning with clean water and disinfecting products will give you a fresh environment keeping germs away. Avoid any packages of food or cans, especially open ones to be stored in your cabins. Keep showers and toilets clean, observe for leakages. Humidity and a warm environment is a source for germs. Eliminating all contributing factors and proper cleaning and disinfection is a must.



Bed bug

We do not like give extra accommodation in our quarters to the insect above , do we?

Bed bugs only feed on blood. Under cool conditions, bed bugs have been able to survive up to a year without a meal.

They prefer to be more active at night when the host is asleep.

Found in cracks and crevices, including [mattress seams](#), sheets, furniture, behind baseboards, electrical outlet plates and picture frames. Often found in hotels, where they can travel from room to room and in visitors' luggage or other personal belongings such as purses and briefcases.

Hygiene at the work place

The galley room, mess room and stores are to be kept clean. The extent and specific details of the cleaning and disinfection should be documented in a corresponding plan.



Keep galley clean and tidy

Galleys, pantries and mess rooms are to be kept cleaned thoroughly at least once a day after all the work is done.

After the cleaning work has been executed disinfection measures are to be taken where a high germ load is likely.

Cleaning and disinfection agents may not be stored in areas where food is handled.

When handling food, disposable kitchen towels instead of dish clothes are to be used.

If dish clothes they are preferably to be changed daily and thoroughly washed. Knives and work tops are to be properly cleaned with hot water and washing up liquid after use and dried

Cutting boards or mats with smooth surfaces are to be used for preparation for meat and fish. After use they are preferably to be cleaned in a dishwasher , or washed and scrubbed respectively in very hot water with washing liquid.

If the dishes are washed by hand they should not soak for long time since warm water is an ideal breathing ground for bacteria.

Food waste

Food waste especially, but also other garbage should be stored in closable bins that are easy to clean and disinfect. Limit as much the food waste.

The garbage cans in galley, pantry and mess room are to be emptied and cleaned daily.

The provisions of Annex V of MARPOL convention concerning the disposal of food waste to be followed , as indicated in your garbage management plan.

Pest control

Common pests found in ships:

- Cockroaches: A German study reveals that seamen suffer from lung diseases such as asthma, caused by faeces and carcasses of cockroaches, particularly in heavily infested ships. Cockroaches also contaminate food and cause food poisoning.
- Rodents: Rats and mice are known to damage electric wiring, presenting significant danger to ships. In addition, they contaminate foodstuffs and can be blamed for loss of production. They can also transmit serious vector diseases to humans.
- Fleas: Carried by rodents mostly, but also in cats and dogs, fleas can transmit diseases such as plague, tularaemia, myxomatosis and others.
- Bedbugs: Hiding in upholstery, mattresses and cracks, these insects are blamed for various skin diseases and can introduce pathogens to the body. They have increased dramatically in the past ten years in ships.
- Mosquitoes: As well as being a nuisance, mosquitoes can transmit diseases like malaria, as well as several arboviruses (dengue, yellow fever, etc.), not only to passengers but to whole communities on arrival to their new destination.

The most important preventive action in avoiding a pest infestation is the observation of general orderliness and cleanliness.

Preventive actions are to be directed at removing food sources and eliminating places of refuge of potential pests

Galley and storage rooms are to be kept clean of insect attacks and other vermin.

As a precaution, food, as well as all rooms and pieces of equipment for storing and handling food are to be checked for pest infestation on a regular basis. If a pest infestation is detected, the pest has to be removed by using adequate methods. Certified products to be used and assistance of shore companies can be needed.

Risk on food handling

Major risk factors that contribute to foodborne outbreaks on board ships are primarily associated with temperature control of perishable food, infected food handlers, cross contamination, heat treatment of perishable food, contaminated raw ingredients and use of non-potable water in the galley. Some diseases can be transmitted from one country to another by infectious agents or contaminants due to poor control measures on board. Therefore, detecting contamination in the sources, preparation and processing of food, as well as in the service of food at restaurants and in mess rooms, is crucial for the prevention and control of foodborne disease.

Storage and the galley

Not all ships are the same. Size, age and operational performance often dictate the physical framework under which you work. Here are some guidelines which should be followed:

- All store rooms should be organized so there is room to place products on shelves with elevated edges. There must be a suitable distance between the floor and the lowest shelf to make it easy to clean, especially when shelves are deep. We recommend a minimum of 15 cm (6 inches) depending on the depth of the shelves. The deeper the shelves, the larger the space to allow access underneath with a mop or the like.
- The galley and store rooms should be organized so that they are safe to move around in, even in heavy weather.
- If heavy weather is on the way, it must be possible to prepare and to stow and lash loose items down.
- It is important that the deck is level, clear and non-slip and that there are no differences in level so there is no risk of slipping or falling. In the freezer or cold room, galley and if available dishwasher room, there is a special risk of slippery floors.
- Work tables for preparing food must either be joined together in their construction or have joints that are sealed to leave no cracks to collect food remnants.
- The surfaces of bulkheads and fittings, portholes and doors must be painted and maintained.
- Minimum one sink. If possible, there should be several sinks with good drainage and an appropriate floor drain.
- If the galley has only one sink (in or outside the galley), it's very important to keep food separated and wash hands between processes. The sink must be cleaned before use and hand washing is necessary before and after work is performed.
- Easy access to the toilet with wash basin, soap and paper dispensers.
- Efficient ventilation and well-proportioned cooker hood.
- Suitable shelving and space for setting aside with rubber nonslip underlay. Egg trays must not be saved and used to absorb grease, put pans on or as non-slip mats.

- Waste bins must be easy to clean, easily accessible and with a foot pedal and flipping lid, for example large pedal bins. They should be emptied frequently, especially if it is tropical hot. Waste bins must be cleaned regularly and replaced if they are so worn that they cannot be cleaned properly.
- Washing facilities on board for washing dish cloths, tea towels and work clothing every day.

Deep freezer

Temperature freezers should be maintained at least – 18 degrees C.
Organize requirements to ensure access is kept to a minimum.
Do not put food on the deck. Use grids. Never put food in direct line of the cooling unit fan as it restricts the air circulation which can lead to freezer burn.
Avoid the use of meat hooks.
Defrost the freezer before cleaning it.

Dry stores

Check for presence of pests and vermin.
Keep dry stores cool, around 10 degrees C, dry and well ventilated.
Do not put stores directly in contact with the deck and the walls.



Potatoes and onions stored directly on deck
The brown spots next to wooden tray are cockroaches

PS: this is on one of our ships



Cockroach

Mess room

A high level of personal hygiene is essential for good hygiene in the galley and mess. Good habits can rub off on others, making the majority remember to wash their hands.

Good hygiene issues in and around the mess that you can justifiably point to:

- Always wash your hands with soap after going to the toilet.
- Hang dirty work clothing outside the mess (clean clothing in the mess should be obligatory).
- Always wash hands before a meal.
- Use the antibacterial dispenser in the mess (only works if hands are clean).
- Use the servers at the buffet and not your own fork.
- Sneeze and cough into your armpit and away from the food on the buffet.
- Wash hands for example after smoking if you need to smoke between courses or if disturbed, that is to start again by washing hands, etc.

There are legal requirements for organizing areas where food is stored and prepared:

- Workplaces, machinery and equipment must be placed so that they prevent grease from building up, contact with poisonous material and the formation of condensation and mould.
- Interiors must be smooth, washable and non-toxic and the quality should be good enough to tolerate regular cleaning and disinfecting.
- It must be as easy as possible to clean and disinfect. The gallery, mess, dry stores and other rooms must be designed so that it is easy to keep them clean and tidy, also after heavy seas.

- It should be possible to carry out all duties safely and without galley personnel being physically subject to extreme loads, awkward working positions and monotonous, repetitive work.
- The mixer and meat slicer must be fitted with safety guards
- Conditions should promote good hygiene practice so as to avoid food contamination between food products and the use of tools and equipment, water, ventilation and exhaust hood, including personal hygiene and pest control.
- It must be easy and practical to maintain the correct temperatures before, during and after cooking and easy to check while cooking.

Fitness to work

Persons who have conditions or symptoms of boils, open sores, infected wounds, diarrhea, fever, or discharges from the nose or mouth shall be restricted from working with exposed food, ware washing, cleaning of equipment, table linens.

Enclosed

Hand washing procedure
Five keys for safer food

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