

# Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Control and Compliance Department

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-268

- To:** Parties, Administrations, Supervision Authorities by the Port State, Shipowners/Operators, Acknowledged Organizations, Seafarers, Legal Representatives, Authorized Maritime Training Centers, authorized doctors (MD), Privative Consulates of Merchant Marine of the Republic of Panama, Inspection offices, Auxiliary Registry Offices, Authorized Offices, Processor Companies, Departments/Areas/Units of the General Directorate of Seafarers, Regional Documentation Offices of the Panama Maritime Authority and users of the Panama Ship Registry.
- Subject:** Adopted Standards regarding watchkeeping, applicable to seafarers working onboard ships under Panamanian flag, according to the STCW'78 Convention, as amended, the MLC, 2006, amended and the national regulations.
- Reference:** STCW'78 Convention, as amended, MLC 2006, amended, Law No. 4 of May 15, 1992, Law No. 2 of January 6, 2009, Executive Decree No. 86 of February 22, 2013, Executive Decree No. 160 of March 3, 2021, J.D, Resolution No. 076-2020 of October 8, 2020 and ADM Resolution No. 074-2021 of May 10, 2021.  
Circular No. DGGM-016 **(Only as recommendation)**.

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1. This Merchant Marine Circular replaces the **MMC-187**, **MMC-188** and **MMC-189**.
  2. The purpose of this Circular is to communicate users of the Panamanian Registry about the adopted standard regarding watchkeeping applicable for seafarers working onboard ships of Panamanian Flag, according to STCW'78 Convention, amended, the MLC 2006, as amended and the national regulations.
  3. The limits of minimum hours of rest are applicable to all seafarers working onboard ships of Panamanian Flag, according to STCW'78 Convention, as amended, the MLC, 2006, amended and the national regulations.

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4. The minimum number of hours of rest shall not be less than:
  - 4.1. Ten (10) hours of rest in any twenty-four-hour period; or
  - 4.2. Seventy-seven (77) hours in any seven (7)-day-period.
5. The hours of rest can be grouped in no more than two periods, one of which shall have a minimum of six (6) uninterrupted hours and the interval among two (2) consecutive periods of rest, not to exceed fourteen (14) hours.
6. There are exceptions to the minimum limits of the hours of rest for the seafarers, according to Regulation 2.3.13 from the MLC 2006, amended, so long as they are acknowledged within a collective convention or adjusted to the provisions established on STCW'98 Convention, amended. The higher frequency and length of the leave periods or the compensatory leave granted to the seafarers that perform watchkeeping or who work onboard ships dedicated to short trips, may be considered.
7. The master of a ship shall have the right to interrupt and suspend the hours of rest of the seafarers when required:
  - 7.1 To guarantee the immediate safety of the ship, the persons on board or cargo, or for the purpose of giving assistance to other ships or people in distress at sea, until normality has been restored.
  - 7.2 To perform exercises of firefighting, lifeboat drills and abandonment or other exercises established by the national and international regulations, which should be performed avoiding as possible the interruption of rest periods, and not to induce fatigue
  - 7.3 To perform mandatory operational tasks indispensable and that cannot be delayed for safety or environmental reasons that were unforeseeable at the beginning of the journey.
8. Once the normal situation has been restored, the master shall ensure the concession of a compensatory resting time adequate to each seafarer who has worked during his/her hours of rest.
9. All ships shall be posted and maintained in a visible place, easily accessible and at the reach of the competent authority a chart describing the work organization onboard, featuring at least the following for each position:
  - 9.1. The program of service at sea and at the port.
  - 9.2. The minimum number of hours of rest.
  - 9.3. Entries for each position or rank.

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10. The onboard work organization chart shall be adjusted to every kind of ship and it will be prepared by the shipowner or the ship operator, according to the minimum data format adopted by the General Directorate of Seafarers and drafted in the work-language or languages of the ship and in English.
11. All ships have to keep the registries of the hours of rest of the seafarers that will serve as documentary evidence of the effective compliance with the minimum hours of rest corresponding to the seafarers, according with the minimum data format adopted by the General Directorate of Seafarers and drafted in the work language or languages and in English.
12. The seafarers shall keep a record of the daily hours of rest of their own time, which should be stamped and signed by the master or the person authorized by the master and by the seafarers.
13. The captain or the person he/she designates is obliged to establish and keep an adequate and efficient organization of watchkeeping periods, in order to assure the compliance of the hours of rest, avoiding fatigue without risking the safety of the ships and crew at all times.
14. The standardized formats of the records of seafarer's daily hours of rest and the onboard work organization chart adopted by the General Directorate of Seafarers are available on the following links:
  - 14.1 [Standardized format of the records of seafarer's daily hours.](#)
  - 14.2 [Standardized format of the onboard work organization chart.](#)
15. The records of the seafarers' hours of rest and the onboard work organization chart shall be kept on the ship and should be made available for competent authorities, including the Flag State Inspectors and the Port State Inspectors.
16. [ADM Resolution No. 074-2021 of May 10, 2021.](#)

**December, 2021** – Change in the paragraph # 4.1 and # 4.2, Paragraph 14 with hyperlinks (14.1 and 14.2) and the hyperlink of paragraph # 16 was updated.

**August, 2021** – Change in the subject and new paragraphs # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 (hyperlink).

**August, 2019** – Change of email address on email below.

**March, 2013.**



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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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