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Working hours arrangements on which applications for determination of minimum safe manning on Norwegian ships can be based

Act of 16 February 2007 No. 9 on ship safety and security (Ship Safety and Security Act) section 23 lays down that the regular working hours shall be 8 hours a day, with one day of rest per week and rest on holidays.

The main rule on hours of rest on board Norwegian ships is provided by section 24 first paragraph of the Ship Safety and Security Act. The hours of rest shall not be less than ten hours in any 24-hour period, and 77 hours in any 168-hour period. Hours of rest may in principle be divided into a maximum of two periods, one of which shall be at least six hours in length. The interval between consecutive periods of rest, i.e. the duration of the working hours, shall not exceed 14 hours. Exceptions from the main rule on hours of rest are laid down in section 24 second to fifth paragraphs of the Ship Safety and Security Act.

Sections 4 to 8 of the Regulations of 26 June 2007 No. 705 on hours of work and rest on board Norwegian passenger and cargo ships, etc., supplement the provisions of the Ship Safety and Security Act on hours of rest and work.

When applying for determination of the minimum safe manning of a ship, the company has a duty to ensure that the established working hours arrangements and watchkeeping arrangements satisfy the requirements for safe operation and adequate watchkeeping.

Working hours arrangements and watch systems that are normally used on board Norwegian ships and that are used as basis for determination of the safe manning documents, may be illustrated by the following examples:

Daytime schedule

On ships using a daytime schedule, the persons working on board have the same normal working hours.

The hours of rest are also effected within time periods that are shared by the persons working on board.

On ships using daytime schedules, the ship shall be securely moored at berth when the hours of rest are being effected. The rest may be carried out on board or ashore.

The persons working on board shall not participate in cargo-handling operations, maintenance, repairs or similar activities during the hours of rest.

Within the framework for hours of work and rest that otherwise follows from the legislation, the term "daytime schedule" does not set any limitations with regard to when in the day/night the ship can operate.

Ships using daytime schedules cannot operate round the clock.

Shift schedule

Shift schedules follow the same principles as daytime schedules, but are arranged so that the manning is determined for two or more shifts (watchkeeping groups). Each watchkeeping group is on board for a specified time period, and will then be relieved completely or partially by a new watchkeeping group.

Ships using shift schedules can operate round the clock.

Round-the-clock operation requires a sufficient number of shifts being set up, so that the provisions on hours of work and rest referred to above are complied with.

On ships there may be up to four watchkeeping groups that take turns being on duty. The hours of rest may be taken on board or ashore.

Shift schedules are mainly used on public car ferries and passenger vessels engaged on domestic voyages.

Watch schedule

Section 2 subparagraph k in the Regulations on hours of work and rest lays down that a watch system is a working hours arrangement according to which the working hours of the ship's crew, wholly or in part, will be divided into watches, and the entire crew will normally remain on board. The rest periods shall be spent on board.

Ships with watch schedules are usually operated round the clock when the ship is underway. Section 5 of the Regulations on hours of work and rest lays down provisions on the setting and breaking of watches.

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