



Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

Marine Notice No. 33 of 2005

*To all Owners, Agents, Operators, Masters, Fishing Skippers, National Maritime College,
National Fishery Training Centres, Approved Training Providers and to all Fishermen and
Seafarers*

AMENDMENTS TO THE DEPARTMENT'S PUBLICATION "EXAMINATIONS FOR CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY FOR FISHING VESSELS, DECK OFFICER REQUIREMENTS"

Following a review of the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examinations) Regulations all eyesight testing to fulfil the requirements for the above examinations will be conducted by a panel of Approved Doctors effective from 12th December 2005.

It is therefore necessary to amend sections of Chapter 3 and Appendix B of the Department's publication "Examinations for Certificates of Competency for Fishing Vessels, Deck Officer requirements, Syllabuses and Specimen Papers" in relation to Sight Tests.

The amendments are as follows:

"CHAPTER 3

Delete the existing Section 3.13 to Section 3.16 and insert the following:

3.13 Sight Tests

(1) Every candidate for a certificate of competency must, before a certificate can be issued to him/her, pass the prescribed eyesight test.

These eyesight tests consist of

- (a) The Letter test by an Approved Doctor using Keystone Vision Screening or Snellan Charts and,
- (b) Colour vision testing undertaken with Ishihara plates with confirmatory testing using the Holmes Wright B Lantern if required.

(2) A pass certificate in the eyesight test will be valid for 2 years and for 6 years in relation to colour vision. A candidate who already holds a certificate of competency of any grade for which a pass in Ishihara or the Lantern Test is required will not again be required to undergo Ishihara or Lantern Tests within 6 years.

(3) If circumstances make it necessary for a candidate to be examined in navigation and seamanship before undergoing the sight tests, such examination will be cancelled if he fails in either of the sight tests.

3.14 The eyesight tests are open to all persons serving or intending to serve in merchant ships or fishing boats, and all such persons are advised to take the earliest opportunity of ensuring that their vision is up to the required standards. Any such person wishing to undergo the tests should make an appointment with one of the Approved Doctors as outlined in a Marine Notice. The Approved Doctor will issue an appropriate certificate and a fee will be payable whenever a candidate is examined.

3.15 It is important that every young person who contemplates becoming a Skipper or Second Hand should realise that ability to reach the required standard when they first go to sea does not guarantee that they will be able to pass the Letter and Colour Vision tests when they present themselves for examination for certificate of competency or that they will be able to maintain the necessary standard of visual acuteness throughout their working lives. It is possible that there may be certain latent defects of eyesight which may cause their standard of vision to fail as he/she grows older and it is very desirable therefore, that before embarking on a sea career in a deck capacity every young person should in his/her own interest, undergo a thorough examination of their sight by an ophthalmologist.

3.16 Detailed information about the conduct of the eyesight test examination and the standards required is contained in Appendix B.

APPENDIX B

Deleted the existing Appendix B and insert the following:

Sight Tests

The Conduct of the Tests

The purpose of these tests is to ensure that the candidate's eyesight is sufficient to enable him/her to pick up and identify correctly the lights of distant ships at sea. Experience has shown that for this purpose a person must be able to reach certain minimum standards both of form and colour vision.

An eyesight test comprises of a Letter test (Keystone vision/Snellan chart) and an Ishihara (colour vision) test taken in that order. The tests will be conducted under the strict personal supervision of an Approved Doctor who will keep a record of the outcome of the assessment.

Every candidate seeking admission to an examination for a first certificate of competency as a deck officer in the merchant navy or the fishing fleet must hold a sight test certificate showing that he/she has passed in both the letter (within 2 years) and the Ishihara/Lantern (within 6 years) tests preceding the date of examination.

Candidates are cautioned that, when taking the Ishihara test, they should not attempt to hurry. They should satisfy themselves as to their answers before reporting them to the Approved

Doctor. The result of the test can only be judged by what the candidate reports; carelessness may cause failure and thus prevent the candidate from taking up a chosen career at sea.

Candidates should be good health when taking the test otherwise their vision may be impaired.

Candidates may take the sight test with or without aids (conventional spectacles or contact lenses) at their option but candidates who opt to use aids for the letter or Ishihara/Lantern tests or both must additionally reach a minimum standards in each eye without aids.

A EYESIGHT STANDARDS AND EYE CONDITIONS

A. General - eyesight testing is carried out by an Approved Doctor using Keystone Vision screening or Snellen charts (distance vision and near vision). Visual acuity adequate to permit the individual to mobilize and work safely in the onboard environment is essential. Any eye disease or visual defect rendering the individual incapable of carrying out their job duties efficiently and safely is unacceptable. Normal visual fields are required for masters, deck officers, ratings and others required to undertake lookout duties. All others require sufficient visual fields for the purpose. This is defined as normal central fields and absence of gross field defect. A gross field defect would be considered to be quadrantanopia or greater defect or any visual field defect detectable on gross field examination within 20 degrees of fixation.

No person should be accepted for training for sea service if irremediable morbid condition of either eye, or the lids of either eye, is present and liable to the risk of aggravation or recurrence. Individuals who wish to go to sea as deck or engineering personnel, or who are considering dual qualifications are strongly advised to have their eyes tested before embarking on their career, in view of the particular importance for them to have good sight. The presence of diplopia, congenital night blindness, retinitis pigmentosa or any other serious or progressive eye disease is unacceptable reference fitness for seafaring.

Accommodation may be required for Fishing Vessel Deck Officer candidates who indicate that they are dyslexic or where it becomes apparent during the course of the eyesight test. Dyslexia is a complex disorder with many variable degrees of presentation and clinical manifestation. It is not within the remit of an Approved Doctor to evaluate the extent of an individual with dyslexia but any potential Deck Officer on a Fishing Vessel needs to achieve the appropriate eyesight standards which will be assessed by the Approved Doctor.

Binocular vision is normally necessary for all categories of seafarers. However, monocular serving seafarers or those who become monocular in service and meet the required standards should be allowed to continue at sea.

Stereoscopic vision is not required for normal offshore tasks unless the individual is also required to operate cranes.

The Eyesight Standards are as follows.

Category Of Seafarer	Distance Vision (unaided)		Distance Vision (aided)		Near Vision (aided)	Visual Fields	Diplopia	Colour Vision
	One eye	Other eye	One eye	Other eye	Both eyes			Both eyes
Masters, deck officers ratings and fishing vessel deck officers required to undertake lookout duties	6/60	6/60	6/6	6/12	N8	Normal visual fields	No significant condition evident	Ishihara. Confirmation requires Lantern

B. Visual Acuity – An uncorrected visual acuity of 6/60 is recommended to permit emergency mobilisation around a location without corrective lenses if necessary. In all cases where visual aids (spectacles or contact lenses) are required for the efficient performance of duties, a spare pair must be carried when seafaring. Where different visual aids are used for distant and near vision, a spare pair of each must be carried.

C. Monocular Vision – monocular vision is acceptable in existing seafarers only as long as the minimum standard of visual acuity is met and a suitable period of adaptation (3 months) has occurred.

D. Visual Fields – these should be full and unrestricted and where any deficit is detected a specialist’s opinion should be sought.

E. Colour Vision - colour vision testing is carried out at an initial seafarer medical examination by the Approved Doctor. The result is valid for a maximum period of 6 years. Aids to visual acuity may be used for colour vision testing but colour correction devices shall not be worn for colour testing.

Masters, deck officers and ratings required to undertake lookout duties should be tested with Ishihara Plates. Candidates who fail will be referred for further colour vision testing using Holmes Wright B Lantern.

Confirmatory colour vision testing will be undertaken at a designated referral centre and the costs of this will be the responsibility of the seafarer. Details of the designated centre are outlined below. The result of confirmatory colour vision testing will be sent to the referring Approved Doctor who will issue the appropriate certificate.

F. Eye Diseases – specific eye diseases to include glaucoma and uveitis are satisfactory as long as the conditions are well controlled and visual acuity and visual fields meet acceptable standards. Specialist opinion may be required.

B TEST RESULTS

(a) A candidate who, having passed the letter test and the colour vision test, will be deemed to have passed the whole test and the Approved Doctor will issue the appropriate certificate to this effect.

The Certificate issued to the candidates who pass the test using aids to vision for any part of the test will be endorsed to the effect that such persons should use those aids when on watch and that a spare pair of spectacles should be carried; and in the case of those who pass the test wearing contact lenses either a spare pair of contact lenses or spectacles should be carried.

(b) A candidate who makes any mistakes will be deemed to have failed the Ishihara test.

(c) Candidates will be advised of their success or failure by the Approved Doctor.

(d) A candidate who fails the Ishihara test may not be re-tested except through the designated referral centre”.

Director General
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25th November 2005

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice please contact
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For information in relation to technical specification/type approval of radio equipment contact the Radio Surveyors
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