



Department of the Marine



MARINE NOTICE NO.17 OF 1989

Passenger Boarding Cards for Class II, II(A) and Class III Passenger Ship Operations

Notice to Owners, Masters and Officers of Irish registered Class II, II(A) and Class III passenger ships and other Class II, II(A) and Class III passenger ships serving Irish ports.

1. The Merchant Shipping (Passenger Boarding Cards) Regulations, 1989 ("the principal Regulations") came into force on 1st May, 1989.
2. The purpose of the principal Regulations is to require Irish passenger ships operating on Class II, II(A) or Class III certificates (almost all of which are ro/ro vessels) to operate a boarding card system for the determination and control of passenger numbers on voyages on which passengers are carried. The Regulations extend this requirement to foreign vessels when sailing from Irish ports.
3. In framing these Regulations the Department has had two objectives in mind:-
 - (a) the system of boarding cards to be adopted should be simple and clear, so that it will remain effective in the years to come.
 - (b) the proper functioning of the system should be capable of being easily checked and, if necessary, enforced by the Department's surveyors without the necessity of arranging a full passenger count as passengers leave the ship.
4. In the following paragraphs of the Marine Notice, references to numbered regulations are references to the principal Regulations.

Application (Regulations 2 and 3)

5. Regulations 2 and 3 make clear that the principal Regulations apply to ships operating on Class II, II(A) or Class III certificates. Operators' attention is drawn to the fact that where a particular leg of a voyage is operated on a Class II,

II(A) or Class III certificate and passengers do not all disembark at the port where that leg begins, it will be necessary to operate a boarding card system for previous legs in order to establish passenger numbers for the Class II, II(A) or Class III leg (see paragraph 17).

Operation of the Boarding Card System (Regulation 4)

6. The boarding card system referred to in regulation 4 shall apply to all passengers boarding a vessel for a particular voyage. Thus it will apply to foot passengers, cyclists and drivers of cars, lorries, coaches and their passengers. There must be one boarding card per passenger (regardless of whether passengers have individual tickets). Passengers remaining on board from a previous voyage are to be subject to special arrangements (see regulation 6 and paragraphs 14 to 17 below).
7. There is no requirement for a particular owner to use the same boarding card system for his different ships, or for any particular ship when operating from different ports. But for any particular voyage, all the passengers must be covered by the same system. All systems are required to be approved by the Minister for the Marine unless they conform to one of the following two descriptions:-
 - (i) there is for each sailing a book or books of numbered boarding cards. Except for ships certified to carry less than 100 passengers, each book shall contain at least 100 cards. Where the passenger capacity exceeds 400, larger books should be used or alternatively, it should be ensured that the books issued for a particular voyage are consecutively numbered. There shall be individually numbered counterfoils to facilitate counting. One card shall be issued to each passenger at or shortly before the time of boarding. (In the case of a vehicle with a number of passengers, the appropriate number of cards may be issued but it remains the duty of the shipowner to ensure that the passenger count for the vehicle is accurate.) The unissued cards and the numbered counterfoils provide a means of determining the total number of cards issued; or
 - (ii) each passenger is issued, before arriving at the embarkment point, with a boarding card which need not be specific to a particular sailing, but which may have a detachable portion. The detachable portions (or the complete cards) are collected by the shipowner at, or shortly before, the time of boarding. (For a vehicle with a number of passengers the cards may, as for method (i), be handled en-bloc by the driver or other responsible person, but it remains the responsibility of the

shipowners to ensure that the number of persons carried on the vehicle is as stated.) It is important for the reliability of this system that cards are issued and collected by different persons, at distinct points. To ensure accuracy when large number of passengers are involved, on ships certified to carry more than 200 passengers the detachable portions (or the complete cards) shall be counted by automatic counting machines.

8. In the case of non-electronic systems, the Department's preference is for the above two methods. However the Minister will be willing to consider approving alternative systems on the basis of precise descriptions, provided it is satisfied that they conform to the basic objectives to paragraph 3 above.
9. The Minister will also be willing to approve, on the basis of precise description, electronic boarding card systems such as those used for the control of aircraft passengers. The Department anticipates that such systems will usually be controlled by a computer which limits the number of cards issued to the passenger capacity of the ship and that cards will be issued when the passengers arrive at the port, as soon as they are assigned definitely to particular sailings. In that case, each card (or portion) will be collected at the boarding point but need not be counted. It is not sufficient however merely to rely on information relating to reservations.
10. Boarding cards should be made of card and should measure at least 100 mm by 50 mm. They should carry prominently the words "BOARDING CARD" or (see paragraph 17 below) "BOARDING AND LANDING CARD" and may be used to draw passengers' attention to safety information.
11. Shipowners' attention is drawn to the fact that leaving the berth before the total number of passengers on board has been determined by means of the boarding card system, and the master has been informed of that number, is an offence under the principal Regulations.

Retention of records and documents (Regulation 5)

12. Regulation 5 requires the retention for a period of the "relevant records and documents" relating to the issue of boarding cards. This retention period has now been set at 7 days. For the system described in paragraph 7(i), this should be the unissued numbered boarding cards and the numbered counterfoils of the issued cards. For the system described in paragraph 7(ii) it will be the collected detachable portions (or complete cards). Approval of electronic systems also will be conditional upon satisfactory arrangements for the keeping of records.

13. The relevant records and documents for each voyage are required to be sealed. Shipowners should make their own arrangements to ensure that once sealed, the evidence cannot be tampered with. The sealed container should carry on the outside a signed statement of the passenger numbers derived from the evidence.

Arrangements for determining the number of passengers remaining on board from a previous voyage (Regulation 6)

14. Shipowners should advise the Department of the arrangements they intend to make to count any passengers remaining on board from a previous voyage, including any persons, such as maintenance workers, travel industry personnel etc. if they are not required to be recorded on the crew list. These arrangements should contain provision for a record of the number of persons in each category for each sailing which taken with the evidence referred to in Regulation 5, will indicate the total number of passengers carried on each voyage.
15. In cases, including excursions and multiple-leg voyages, where passengers (other than maintenance workers, travel industry personnel etc.) are permitted to remain on board other than for exceptional reasons (e.g. illness, infirmity), such arrangements will be subject to the approval of the Minister.
16. In the case of out-and-return excursions, the Department will normally require that passengers staying on be asked to report to the purser's office where they will be given a card for the return journey (which could be a boarding card overstamped to indicate it was for a passenger staying on). It will be the responsibility of the shipowner to ensure that the system is effective, and if it is not, the Department may require an effective alternative method such as the introduction of a landing card system.
17. In the case of multiple-leg voyages, the Department will normally require passengers who land at each stopping point to be counted by means of landing cards. The landing cards should be the same as the boarding cards (if the system described at 7(i) above is used). The Department will require a running tally to be kept of boarders and landers so that the total number of passengers on board for any leg is always known.

Availability of information on numbers on board for rescue services

18. It is important that the rescue services can quickly ascertain the number of persons on board any ship in an emergency. In cases where the owner's shore organisation is not permanently manned and provided constantly with up-to-date information, other arrangements should be made (e.g. with a harbour authority or other organisations) to ensure that the numbers on board are always available for the use of the rescue services if necessary.

Exemptions and approvals

19. The principal Regulations came into effect on 1st May, 1989. Applications for exemptions or, where necessary, approvals should, where not already made, reach the Department as soon as possible.

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