... and they expect us to be healthy!
Are you fit to fish?

For those of us who work on land, feeling off-colour or worse ill, then we always have the option to stay in bed or if necessary seek medical help, and where necessary we know we would be admitted to hospital for treatment.

For the Seafarer there are rarely any of these options, at least not in the short term. It is part of the downside of life on board the thousands of vessels which ply the seas of our world.

The Seafaring industry worldwide, together with governments, politicians and organisations both statutory and non-statutory are constantly making efforts to improve the life of the Seafarer.

Here in the Falklands the Industry, Government and others, such as The Lighthouse Seafarers Mission and Falkland Islands Port Welfare Board and importantly FIFCA (the Falkland Islands Fishing Companies Association, who are kindly funding this project) play their part in that work particularly for those vessels which come into Falkland waters.

Working on the premise that ‘prevention is better than a cure’, this Seafarers Manual, we hope, will give help and guidance to all seafarers. Helping them to recognise a possible health problem before it becomes serious and when an illness or injury becomes too much to bear then the manual gives guidance as to what they should do and how they can seek help.

I cannot thank enough all those who have worked with me to compile this manual. We offer it in several languages in the hope that we might prevent some unnecessary suffering somewhere for Seafarers who daily battle with the seas of this world to provide us with so much.

Maurice S Lake
PORT CHAPLAIN
LIGHTHOUSE SEAFARERS MISSION
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The Lighthouse Seafarer’s Mission

What happens if?... Your questions answered

MEDICAL ISSUE
In the event of a medical issue, whether you consider it important or not, you **MUST** inform an Officer on the Bridge.

The Captain will then seek medical advice from a medical expert ashore. The Captain make a decision on what do next. The issue either will be treated on-board or treated on-shore.

**Treatment on-board**
If the issue is something which can be treated on-board then treatment will be provided on-board the vessel.

**Treatment on-shore**
If the issue cannot be treated on-board, the Captain will contact the local shore representatives who will seek medical appointments for you and accompany to the hospital for the duration of your visit.

If the medical issue has been or is being treated but does not improved or gets worse then the Captain needs to be informed as soon as possible. The Captain will then seek further advice from the local hospital. The Captain will then make the decision on the next steps.

It is usual that companies will provide medical support for their crew and continued support in the situation of a
medical issue caused whilst under employment BUT this is provided the Captain and company are made aware of issues as they occur. This obligation is not guaranteed if the medical issue appears after the crew member has left the vessel.

**WHAT SHOULD BE EXPECTED:**

✦ You should be able to obtain medical direction for basic and treatable issues whilst on board. This extends to providing, upon obtaining medical advice, direction as to medication.

✦ You should expect an explanation of what the medical issue is and the suggested treatment

✦ Other associated persons you should expect to receive professional and fair treatment. You should be given the opportunity to be listened to.

✦ You should provide all the information relating to the medical issue so it can be effectively treated. Further we ask that you make the Captain and Officers aware of issues as they happen.

**ON-GOING TREATMENT:**

✦ If you return to the vessel with medication you must ensure you follow medical instruction regarding the treatment.

✦ If you are required to come ashore either locally or return to your country of origin you must complete any on-going treatment in line with medical advice.

**CONTRACTS:**

✦ You should receive an employment contract from your vessel for the time you are on-board. This should include information specific to your employment situation.

If the issue cannot be treated on-board, the Captain will contact the local shore representatives.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF A CREW MEMBER DIES?**

If a crew member dies, the Coroner of the Falkland Islands will investigate. There is nothing to worry about and the Coroner is not seeking to blame anyone for the death. The Coroner wants to know the answers to 4 simple questions – who died, when he died, where he died and how he died.

It is likely that other crew members who worked with him or were friends with him will be asked to give a statement to help the Coroner. This is nothing to worry about. If you are a friend or work colleague, you will be invited to go to the Seafarer’s Mission to give as much information as possible. We want you to be as comfortable as possible so if there’s anything you need, please ask and we can try and help. There will be an interpreter to help you understand the questions. The Coroner’s Officer will be there to ask the questions and write down your answers. He may be wearing a uniform, but, again, don’t worry, he’s just there to help not to blame anyone.

Once your statement is taken, the interpreter will make sure you understood the questions and that you are happy with your answers. You will be asked to sign a certificate saying what you have said is true so it’s important that you are sure you understand the questions and answers.

Occasionally, the statement in the Court and the interpreter is there by video link. If we do it this way, it doesn’t mean that there is any problem, just that it’s easier to do it this way.

Once you’ve given a statement, it’s unlikely that the Coroner will ask you to do anything else and you can return to the ship.
Alcohol

Many of us enjoy an occasional alcoholic drink, and our body can cope with drinking a small amount of alcohol – but it really is a small amount. Drinking more than the recommended safe limit of alcohol can cause significant problems with your health, and the more alcohol you drink, the greater the risks. It is recommended that men and women should stick to a maximum of 14 units a week.

If you feel that you are drinking more alcohol than you should, or that you cannot stop drinking, then treatment and support are available, please talk to family, fellow crew members or your Captain for help.

Back Pain

Back pain is a common problem that effects most people at some point in their life. It may be triggered by bad posture while sitting or standing, bending awkwardly, or lifting incorrectly. It's not generally caused by a serious condition.

In most cases back pain will improve in a few weeks or months, although some people experience long-term pain or pain that keeps coming back.

Most causes of back pain get better on their own and you may not need to see a doctor.

If you've only had back pain for a few days or weeks, the following advice may help to prevent your symptoms and speed up your recovery:

✦ Remain as active as possible and try to continue with your daily activities
✦ Take over the counter painkillers such as Paracetamol or ibuprofen
✦ Use hot or cold compression packs – such as a cold pack or hot water bottle.

Preventing back pain

How you sit, stand, lie and lift can all affect the health of your back. Try to avoid placing too much pressure on your back and ensure it’s strong and supple. Regular exercise is an excellent way to prevent back pain.

You should seek urgent medical help if you have back pain and:

✦ A high temperature (fever)
✦ Unexplained weight loss
✦ Pain in the chest
✦ Loss of bladder or bowel control
✦ Inability to pass urine
✦ Numbness around your genitals, buttocks or back passage
✦ It’s started after an accident.
Depression & Stress

Both these issues can be a vicious circle in any human being, in that either one can lead to the other.
Both can affect both physical and mental health.
For the Seafarer the daily schedule of work does not help you to avoid either of these issues.

Some tips to help:
✦ Do ensure that you eat meals – don’t avoid meal breaks on board.
✦ Try to take some physical exercise daily – Yes even in the cramped cabin space! Simple bending/stretching/jogging on the spot – is good for you.
✦ Listen to music or read a book, if only a few pages before going to sleep.
✦ Talk with your crew mates – discuss, chat, laugh – all help to keep the mind active.
✦ Face your fears: If there is something of which you are frightened – talk to a crew mate, there is no shame whatsoever in admitting to fear – ALL HUMAN BEINGS FEAR SOMETHING.
✦ Avoid alcohol it is generally known as a depressant.
✦ When ashore try to contact and talk with family and friends. Please let the Port Chaplain know your needs when you are ashore – WE CAN HELP.

Drugs

The Falkland Islands Government pursues a policy of Zero Tolerance to any form of illegal drugs. In some countries it is no longer a crime to have cannabis for personal use.
This is NOT the case in the Falkland Islands. The Royal Falkland Islands Police are committed to supporting the government’s desire to ensure the islands are drug free.
If you bring in any form of illegal drugs into the Islands and get caught you are likely to face severe consequences. Likewise, if you are found to be in possession of illegal drugs on board ship in Falkland Island territorial waters you are liable to arrest and prosecution.
Possession of so called hard drugs e.g. Heroin and cocaine can lead to an automatic jail sentence.
Likewise if you give or sell illegal drugs to others the penalties, if caught, are severe.
Please respect the Islands’ laws and you will avoid committing offences linked to illegal drugs and the consequences this will bring.

Effects of consuming illegal drugs on board
The job of any seafarer is often a dangerous one – those of you who are Fishermen then you already undertake the most dangerous peacetime employment in the world.
Add illegal drugs into that role then:
You could well become extra tired and fall asleep on the job.
Your daily performance/energy levels will decrease.
Your decision making will be affected.
Your potential to suffer injury will increase.
You could alienate yourself from your crew mates.

Depression isn’t a sign of weakness or something you can “Snap out of”

Drugs/alcohol/ships simply do not make a good cocktail!
Eye Injuries

Common types of eye injuries include:
- Blows to the eye
- Scratches and abrasions
- Foreign bodies
- Penetrating or cutting injuries
- Chemical burns

Flushing your eye
If you have loose particles in your eye or your eye has been exposed to chemicals, flush it out with an eyewash or plenty of clean water for at least 10 to 15 minutes.

When to seek immediate medical advice:
- Persistent or severe eye pain
- Foreign bodies that can’t be washed out
- Decreased or double vision
- Flashing lights, spots, halos or shadows in your field of vision
- Blood visible in your eye
- Your pupil (the black spot in the centre of your eye) has changed shape
- Deep cuts around your eye

Preventing eye injuries
Many eye injuries are preventable if you take appropriate safety precautions during activities at work – such as wearing safety glasses or goggles.

First aid for cuts and scrapes

STOP THE BLEEDING
- Apply gentle pressure with sterile gauze or a clean cloth
- Elevate the wound above the heart
- If blood is spurting or continues to flow despite pressure and elevation seek immediate medical assistance

CLEAN THE WOUND
- Rinse the wound with clean water
- Do not use soap, iodine, alcohol or hydrogen peroxide; this can irritate the wound
- If dirt or debris remains in the wound after rinsing, use sterile/clean tweezers to gently remove the dirt/debris; if this fails seek medical assistance

COVER THE WOUND
- Keep the wound covered with an adhesive dressing or sterile gauze as it heals; this will keep the wound clean and prevent infection
- Change the dressing daily or sooner if the dressing becomes dirty or gets wet

Seek medical attention if the wound:
- Is more than half a centimetre deep or is gaping
- Has a jagged edge or fat/muscle tissue is visible
- Becomes irritated or infected (has increased redness, swelling, discharge or increases in pain)
- Is deep or dirty and it has been more than 10 years since your last tetanus injection
Frostbite

Frostbite is damage to skin and tissue caused by exposure to freezing temperatures – typically any temperature below -0.55 °C (31 °F). Frostbite can affect any part of your body, but the extremities, such as the hands, feet, ears, nose and lips, are most likely to be affected.

The symptoms of frostbite usually begin with the affected parts feeling cold and painful. If exposure to the cold continues you may feel pins and needles before the area becomes numb as the tissues freeze.

If you think you or someone else may have frostbite, report the symptoms immediately and seek medical advice.

Preventing frostbite

Almost all frostbite cases can be prevented by taking precautions during the cold weather and wearing appropriate clothing.

Genital Hygiene

It’s the body part that men arguably value the most, so you owe it to your penis to always keep it clean, healthy and fit for purpose. Give it the care it deserves and you may not be the only one to benefit – your partner will be probably be grateful too.

Gently wash the penis with warm water each day when you’re having a shower or bath. If you have a foreskin, pull it back gently and wash underneath. If you don’t wash underneath the foreskin correctly, a cheesy-looking substance called smegma may begin to gather.

Smegma is a natural lubricant that keeps the penis moist, if it builds up in the foreskin it can start to smell, stop you easily pulling your foreskin back and become a breeding ground for bacteria. This can cause redness and swelling of the head of your penis.

Testicles and pubic area

Don’t forget to clean the base of the penis and testicles, where sweat and hair can combine to produce a strong smell just as unpleasant as your armpits. Make sure the area between the base of the testicles and the anus is also clean and odour-free.

While you’re down there, it’s a good idea to check your testicles for lumps once a month after a warm bath or shower. Look out for any unusual lumps or swellings that were not there before, these could be a sign of testicular cancer.

Testicular cancer

Cancer of the testicle is one of the less common cancers and tends to mostly affect men between 15 and 49 years of age.

Typical symptoms are a painless swelling or lump in one of the testicles, or any change in shape or texture of the testicles. It’s important to be aware of what feels normal for you. Get to know your body and report any changes.

Check your testicles for lumps once a month.
Healthy Eating

A healthy diet may help to prevent certain long-term diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes. It may also help to reduce your risk of developing some cancers and help you to keep a healthy weight.

Your body needs energy to work normally and keep you alive. You obtain this energy from nutrients in the food you eat. A balanced diet generally contains food from each of the following food groups:

1. **Fat, butter, oils, sweets & salt**
   - USE SPARINGLY

2. **Milk, yoghurt & cheese**
   - 2-3 PORTIONS
   - A single serving is the size of your fist

3. **Meat, poultry, fish & egg**
   - 2-3 PORTIONS
   - The palm of your hand is the portion size for proteins such as beef, pork, poultry or fish

4. **Fruit, salads & vegetables**
   - 5-7 PORTIONS
   - A single serving is the size of your fist

5. **Bread, cereal, potatoes, pasta & rice**
   - 6-10 PORTIONS
   - A single serving is the size of your fist

Drink at least 8 cups of fluid a day, water is best.

**Too much salt increases your risk of getting high blood pressure**

Don’t have too many sugary foods and drinks
Sugary foods and drinks are high in calories and too much may cause weight gain. It isn’t just the amount of sugar that may be bad. Even eating small amounts of sugary foods (sweets etc) too often is bad for your teeth.

Don’t eat too much salt
Too much salt increases your risk of developing high blood pressure. Guidelines recommend that we should have no more than 6 grams of salt per day.

Don’t forget portion sizes
You may be eating very healthy but you still need to keep an eye on your portion size because if they are too large, you will still gain weight.

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**SALT CONTENT**

- 1/4 teaspoon of salt
  - 1 individual pork pie
  - 1 sausage roll
  - 60 g cornflakes with milk

- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
  - 2 noodle sachets
  - 1 tin of cream of tomato soup
  - 3 rashers of bacon

- 1 teaspoon of salt
  - 1 cup instant soup
  - 14 slices of bread
  - 3 tablespoons soy sauce
Heart Attack

**Symptoms**
The most common symptom is severe chest pain, which often feels like a heavy pressure feeling on your chest. The pain may also travel up into your jaw and down your left arm or down both arms. You may also sweat, feel sick and feel faint. You may also feel short of breath. Heart attack pain also doesn’t usually improve if you rest or take your usual angina medication.

However, some people have only a mild discomfort in their chest. That pain can often feel like indigestion or heartburn.

Occasionally, a heart attack happens without causing any pain. This is usually diagnosed when you have a heart tracing (electrocardiogram, or ECG) at a later stage.

Some people collapse and die suddenly if they have a large portion of the heart muscle damaged. This is NOT very common.

**What to do if you think you are having a Heart attack?**
Ideally you should be admitted to hospital. Being at sea negates this happening immediately.

Report to another crew member and your captain immediately.

Take an aspirin.

**Diagnosis and assessment?**
If you think someone is having a heart attack: Look for the 4 P’s:

✦ **PAIN** - a continuous pain in the chest, which could spread to the jaw, neck or arms.

✦ **Pale Skin**

✦ **Rapid and weak pulse**

✦ **Perspiration/sweating.**

**DON’T DELAY – REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY!**

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Hernias

A hernia (or ‘rupture’) occurs when an internal part of the body pushes through a weakness in the surrounding muscle or tissue wall.

Hernias in adults may arise as a result of the strain which raises the pressure in the tummy (abdomen), causing a weakness or tear in the abdominal wall. This can be caused by:

✦ Persistent coughing

✦ Being overweight

✦ Lifting, carrying or pushing heavy loads

✦ Straining on the toilet

**What are the symptoms?**

✦ A small lump or swelling, usually in the groin area

✦ Coughing is a common strain that brings them out

✦ Swellings often disappear when you lie down

✦ Hernias are not usually painful but can ache

✦ In time, the lump or swelling can become bigger

✦ Sometimes, in men, the swelling tracks down into the scrotum

Although having a hernia is not usually a serious condition, treatment to fix it is usually advised. A hernia can be fixed by a small operation.
Middle ear infection (otitis media)

Otitis media is an infection of the middle ear that causes inflammation (redness and swelling) and a build up of fluid behind the eardrum.

**Symptoms of a middle ear infection**

In most cases, the symptoms of a middle ear infection develop quickly and resolve in a few days and do not require any specific treatment. The main symptoms include:

✦ Ear ache
✦ A high temperature (fever)
✦ Being sick
✦ A lack of energy
✦ Slight hearing loss

However if you experience any of the following symptoms please seek medical advice:

✦ Symptoms showing no signs of improvement after two or three days
✦ A lot of pain
✦ A discharge of pus or fluid from the ear

**PARACETAMOL or IBUPROFEN** can be used to relieve pain and a high temperature.

Mouth Ulcers

Mouth ulcers are usually round or oval scores that commonly appear inside the mouth on the

✦ Cheeks
✦ Lips
✦ Tongue

Mouth ulcers can be painful, which can make it uncomfortable or eat, drink or brush your teeth.

Mouth ulcers don’t usually need to be treated because they tend to clear up by themselves within a week or two. However, if you experience any of the following please seek medical advice:

✦ Your mouth ulcer has lasted three weeks
✦ You keep getting mouth ulcers
✦ Your mouth ulcer becomes more painful or red – this could be a sign of a bacterial infection

**Is it mouth cancer?**

In a few cases, a long lasting mouth ulcer can be a sign of mouth cancer. Ulcers caused by mouth cancer usually appear on or under the tongue, although you can get them on other areas of the mouth.

Risk factors for mouth cancer include:

✦ Smoking or using products that contain tobacco
✦ Drinking alcohol
✦ Infection with the HPV virus – the virus that causes genital warts

In a few cases, a long lasting mouth ulcer could be mouth cancer.
Prostate Problems

Prostate problems are common in men, particularly in those over 50 years of age.

The prostate is a small gland found only in men, it produces a thick, white fluid that’s mixed with sperm to produce semen.

The prostate gland is about the size and shape of a walnut, but can become bigger due to:

✦ Prostate enlargement – common condition in men over 50 years of age
✦ Prostatitis – inflammation of the prostate
✦ Prostate cancer

If you experience any of the following symptoms you should seek medical advice:

✦ Difficulty starting or stopping urinating
✦ A weak flow of urine
✦ Straining when peeing
✦ Feeling like your not able to fully empty your bladder
✦ Prolonged dribbling after you’ve finished peeing
✦ Needing to pee more frequently or more suddenly
✦ Waking up frequently during the night to pee
✦ Pain when ejaculating

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI)

Many people with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) don’t get symptoms, so it’s worth getting tested even if you feel fine. If you think you have an STI, the earlier you get tested, the sooner treatment can be given if it’s needed.

An STI can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact, including vaginal, anal and oral sex. You can get or pass on an STI whoever you’re having sex with.

Many STIs can be cured by antibiotics. Some such as HIV, have no cure, but can be treated to prevent them getting worse.

You can’t tell by looking at someone (including yourself) whether they’ve got an infection, so it’s important to get a check-up if you’ve had unprotected sex or think you might be at risk.

Symptoms

Many people don’t notice symptoms when they have a STI. Left untreated STIs can affect your health. If you have any of the following symptoms seek medical advice:

✦ Pain when you pass urine.
✦ Itching, burning or tingling around the genitals
✦ Blisters, sores, spots or lumps around the genitals or anus
✦ Discharge from the penis
✦ Irritation of the urethra (the tube urine comes out of)
✦ Black powder or tiny white dots in your underwear – this could be droppings or eggs from pubic lice.

These symptoms don’t necessary mean you have an STI but it’s worth seeing a doctor so you can find out what’s causing the symptoms and get treated.
Smoking

Worldwide, tobacco kills 7 million people every year. Almost a million deaths are due to non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Smoking related deaths are mainly due to cancers, respiratory conditions, heart disease and stroke. If you are a long-term smoker, on average, your life expectancy is about 10 years less than a non-smoker.

The good news

Stopping smoking can make a big difference to your health. It is never too late to stop smoking to greatly benefit your health. If you stop smoking in middle age, before having cancer or some other serious disease, you avoid most of the increased risk of death due to smoking.

Help is available if you want to stop smoking but find it difficult.

The most important thing to do is to decide for yourself that this is something you want to do. The majority of smokers want to stop. Some do so easily but for others it’s a real struggle, as smoking is very addictive.

Stopping can make a huge difference to your health

Am I Having a Stroke?

Act FAST

FAST is an easy way to remember and identify the most common symptoms of a stroke. Recognition of stroke and seeking medical help rapidly is more likely to lead to a better recovery.

F – FACE: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face drop?

A – ARMS: Ask the persons to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downwards?

S – SPEECH: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is their speech slurred or strange?

T – TIME: If you observe any of these signs – report it immediately and insure medical assistance is given.
The Lighthouse Seafarers Mission

Is there to offer support for all Seafarers.

The centre provides comfortable seating – TV – Tea Coffee (free) – recreational facilities – telephone cards (internet) – all on a 24/7 basis – 365 days per year.

The Port Chaplain is always available to assist with seafarers welfare.

In addition we have comfortable, well equipped accommodation. We have a total of five beds in three rooms for Seafarers who have come ashore from the result of sickness, injury or need to return home.

If you as a seafarer have any issues regarding life or employment on board your vessel then the Port Chaplain will do all he can to assist you. Such help is totally confidential.

We have access to all the main worldwide seafaring organisations e.g. ISWAN – ITT and again will do all we can to help.

If you feel you need to leave your ship – please approach either your agent, owner or HM Customs when they come on board your vessel on arrival in either Port William, Berkeley Sound, Stanley Harbour or FIPASS (the dock). Failing that please ask to see the Port Chaplain and we will arrange to visit your vessel.

ALL seafarers have a right to leave their vessel if they wish to do so. YOU WILL BE TAKEN CARE OF AND YOUR RIGHTS UPHELD.

SUCH ACTIONS AS ‘JUMPING OVERBOARD’ is not the correct or best action to take.

The waters are cold even in summer and your chances of survival are very small.

Making a request to leave – to those stated above – will ensure we can care for you in a safe and proper manner.
Contact:
Port Chaplain - Maurice Lake - Mobile 51779 - Landline 22780
Email: lighthouse@horizon.co.fk