

PREVENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL ACCIDENT AND DISEASES

Ministerial Conference on Fisheries Cooperation among African States
Bordering the Atlantic Ocean (ATLAFCO)

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OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Introduction
- Primary Legislation
- Fishing Regulations
- International Standards
- Gaps and Recommendations

Introduction

- Why occupational Health and safety to prevent accidents and diseases for seafarers?
- Seafarers face unique hazards: rough seas, isolation, heavy machinery and long hours of works
- Fishing vessels are particularly high-risk workplaces
- The Gambia has ratified key international maritime conventions
- Regulatory gaps persist — especially for small scale fisheries and small fishing vessels under 1,000 tons

Introduction

In 2018, MLC 2006 was Ratified by The Gambia

- MLC 2006 sets minimum standards for:

- ✓ Health & safety

- ✓ Welfare at work

- ✓ Working & living conditions

PRIMARY LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SEAFARERS IN THE GAMBIA

- Merchant Shipping Act, 2013
- Key Provisions for seafarers
 - Seafarer Welfare: Employment agreements, wages and protection of workers' rights
 - Occupational Safety: Specific regulations for safety, health and welfare
 - Safety at Sea: Implementation of SOLAS Convention (1974)
 - Crew Engagement: Legal framework for employment of seafarers

SPECIFIC SAFETY PROVISIONS

Part VIII- Seafarer welfare and engagement

- Seafarers' employment agreements
- Protection of workers' rights
- Occupational safety regulations (explicitly included)
- Health and welfare of workers
- Food and water provisions
- Holiday entitlements

Part X- Safety of life at sea

- Implements SOLAS 1974 (Safety of Life at Sea)
- Safety equipment requirements for cargo ships
- Surveyor appointments and inspection powers
- Passenger safety regulations
- Port state control measures

FISHERIES ACT, 2007

Fisheries Act, 2007 focuses on

- Fisheries management and conservation
- Licensing requirements
- Prohibited fishing methods
- Aquaculture regulation

Fisheries Act, 2007 does not explicitly address occupational health and safety for seafarers

- Safety of fisheries observers appointed to monitor fishing
- AIS as a regulatory requirement to avoid collision and assist monitoring
- Basic vessel registration conditions

FISHERIES ACT, 2007

Gaps in Fishing vessel safety in The Gambia

OHS Standards

The Crew Accommodation Regulations 2014 explicitly EXEMPT fishing vessels under 1,000 tons from their provisions.

Minimum sleeping space requirements

Ventilation standards

Sanitation requirements

Observer safety

Status for fishing vessels less than 1000 tons

Not applicable to small fishing vessels

Not applicable

Not applicable

Covered (indirectly via Fisheries Act)

INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS CORE OHS REQUIREMENTS UNDER MLC, 2006

Standards

Minimum Age

Hazardous Work

Medical Certification

Hours of Work / Rest

Accommodation

Requirements

No person under 16 shall work on a ship

Under-18s cannot perform hazardous work

Seafarers must hold valid medical certificates

Maximum working hours; minimum rest periods apply

Minimum space and living standards mandated

RECENT DEVELOPMENT, *New Mandatory Requirements — Effective 1 January 2026, GMA Maritime Notice 05/2026*

Seaman Discharge Book:

All seafarers working aboard Gambian registered vessels must obtain a Seaman Discharge Book from the Gambia Maritime Administration.

Medical Certificate

A valid Medical Certificate issued by the GMA is mandatory. Purpose: ensure compliance with national and international maritime safety and labour standards.

Enforcement Consequence

Non-compliance may result in crew members being rejected from Gambian vessels — direct operational impact on vessel owners.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Gambia Maritime Administration (GMA) has the following responsibilities:

Ship Registration, Maintains registry of all Gambian-flagged vessels

Seafarer Certification, Issues discharge books, medical certificates and competency certificates

Inspection and enforcement, Conducts port state control inspections and safety surveys

Convention Implementation, Implements obligations under IMO and ILO conventions, including MLC 2006

RECOMMENDATIONS

Vessel owners

- Ensure compliance with new 2026 medical certification requirements
- Apply accommodation standards voluntarily, even where exempt
- Provide appropriate safety training and equipment

Seafarers

- Obtain Seaman Discharge Book and Medical Certificate from GMA
- Know your rights under MLC 2006
- Report safety concerns to Gambia Maritime Administration

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

