



OIL COMPANIES INTERNATIONAL MARINE FORUM

**GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF  
DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ONBOARD SHIP**

**June 1995**

*The OCIMF mission is to be recognised internationally as the foremost authority on the safe and environmentally responsible operation of oil tankers and terminals.*

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE CONTROL OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL ONBOARD SHIP**

Drug and alcohol abuse and its adverse effects on safety is one of the most significant social problems of our time. It is, appropriately, receiving attention both in the public eye and in government legislation. An example, specific to the marine industry, of government attention to this issue is the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) regulations on the testing of personnel on national and foreign flag ships.

Recognising the potentially serious impact of marine incidents, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), and the marine industry in general, have over the years developed guidance aimed at encouraging safe ship operation and protection of the environment. Whilst tanker companies have generally operated with strict policies related to drug and alcohol use onboard their ships, OCIMF considers it timely that the industry as a whole reassesses the control of drugs and alcohol onboard ships.

OCIMF recommends that shipping companies should have a clearly written policy on drug and alcohol abuse that is easily understood by seafarers as well as shore-based staff. In order to enforce their policy, companies should have rules of conduct and controls in place, with the objective that no seafarer will navigate a ship or operate its onboard equipment whilst impaired by drugs or alcohol. It is recommended that seafarers be subject to testing and screening for drugs and alcohol abuse by means of a combined programme of un-announced testing and routine medical examination. The frequency of this un-announced testing should be sufficient so as to serve as an effective deterrent to such abuse.

The misuse of legitimate drugs, or the use, possession, distribution or sale of illicit or un-prescribed controlled drugs on board ship cannot be condoned and should be prohibited. In addition, any use of a prescribed controlled drug which causes, or contributes to unacceptable job performance or unusual job behaviour should require the seafarer to be excused from duty until such times as he is repatriated, or treatment and its after-effects cease.

The suggested list of substances to be prohibited should include, but not be limited to, marijuana, cocaine, opiates, phencyclidine (PCP) and amphetamines and their derivatives. In this regard, the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) has published guidelines on recognition and detection of drug trafficking and abuse entitled "Drug Trafficking and Drug Abuse: Guidelines for Owners and Masters on Recognition and Detection".

Company policy should provide for control of onboard alcohol distribution and monitoring of consumption. This policy should support the principle that officers and ratings should not be impaired by alcohol when performing scheduled duties.

OCIMF recommends that officers and ratings observe a period of abstinence from alcohol prior to scheduled watchkeeping duty or work periods. This may be either a fixed period, such as the 4 hours required by the USCG, or a minimum period of 1 hour of abstinence for each unit of alcohol consumed (refer to table 1 for examples of approximate alcohol unit conversions). Whichever method is used to determine the abstinence period, the objective should always be to ensure that, prior to going on scheduled duty, the blood alcohol content of the seafarer is theoretically zero. Officers and ratings should be aware that local regulations may be in place and where this is the case, it is recommended that these be strictly adhered to where they exceed these guidelines.

Recognising that all seafarers must be able to respond at any time to an emergency situation, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) is considering including guidance to administrations on maximum permissible blood alcohol content (BAC) and abstinence periods in Part 'B' of the Code which is to be annexed to the revised STCW Convention.

However, whilst some administrations have already established national legislation in this regard, in the absence of national or international requirements, companies should advise seafarers in their employment of the maximum permissible blood alcohol content (BAC) permitted whilst on board their ships.

In the interest of health and safety, seafarers should be actively encouraged not to exceed consumption levels which could affect long term health. Information should be provided to seafarers on alcohol consumption in relation to impairment, its impact on behaviour and health, and the availability of rehabilitation programmes.

OCIMF is firmly of the opinion that it is in the best interest of all sectors of the maritime industry to positively respond to these guidelines and thus work to ensure a safe workplace for seafarers and to protect the safety and well being of the public and the environment.

	<b>Volume</b>	<b>Units</b>
<b>Beers, Cider and Lagers</b>		
<b>Extra Strength</b> (>4.0% <6.0% Alc. by Vol.)	10oz.	2.5
	30cl.	2.5
<b>Ordinary Strength</b> (>1.0% <4.0% Alc. by Vol.)	10oz.	1.0
	30cl.	1.0
<b>Low Alcohol</b> (>0.05% <1.0% Alc. by Vol.)	10oz.	0.5
	30cl.	0.5
<b>Table Wines, Others</b> (>6.0% <12% Alc. by Vol.)	10cl.	1.0
	1 litre bottle	10.0
<b>Sherry, Fortified Wines, Others</b> (>12% <16% Alc. by Vol.)	6cl.	1.0
	1 litre bottle	16.0
<b>Spirits, Liquor, Liqueurs, Others</b> (>16% <40% Alc. by Vol.)	1oz.	1.0
	3cl.	1.0
<b>Any Other Low Alcohol Beverage</b> (>0.05% <1.0% Alc. by Vol.)	10oz.	0.5
	30cl.	0.5

**TABLE 1: APPROXIMATE ALCOHOL UNIT CONVERSIONS**



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