

What to consider (Location) for Ship Medical Facilities

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Introduction: The design and construction of adequate medical facilities is complex. The building of modern ships requires substantial engineering capabilities as well as advanced technology. The construction of an optimal medical facility does not necessarily increase costs. On the contrary, it can have economic benefits. The ILO (International Labour Organization) convention 92 states that all ships with a crew of 15 or more and engaged in voyages of three days or more must have dedicated medical facilities. For fishing vessels the ILO convention C126 states that all ships of more than 500 tons (or 150 ft) are required to have a sick bay.

Method: these recommendations are based upon existing regulations, experience and best medical practice. The majority of the recommendations in this article are derived from conventions.

Result: A ship is an enclosed society containing all essential functions for both crew and passengers for a period of time. In addition, modern ships have gyms, television, computers with satellite connections and other facilities allowing the crew approximately the same levels of comfort and recreation as on-shore.

The following elements should be considered when locating the ship hospital (with dedicated facilities)

- 1) The ability to carry an injured person on a stretcher from the most likely places of injury to the hospital.
- 2) The ability to evacuate patients by helicopter
- 3) The sick bay shall have a separate water closet,
- 4) It must be possible to regulate the temperature,
- 5) There should be a cabin nearby to accommodate patients during long term care.
- 6) It should be possible to turn the nearby sleeping room into an isolation ward facility.
- 7) The hospital shall have a minimum of two outlets for emergency power.

In ships with less than 15 persons on board and less than 500 tons, there are no requirements for dedicated medical facilities. It is, however, necessary to be able to accommodate and treat injured and sick people. At least one cabin should comply with the following requirements:

- 1) It must be possible to transport a person on a stretcher from likely sites of injury into the cabin and the berth.
- 2) There must be a connected bathroom with shower or bath. This should not be shared by other people during the period of illness.

The result is ships with thoroughly evaluated design and construction solutions for maritime use.

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