

Translated from Finnish

Legally binding only in Finnish and Swedish

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland

Government Decree on the Living Environment for Seafarers on Board Ships

(103/2025)

By decision of the Government, the following is enacted under section 11, subsection 5 and section 13, subsection 2 of the Act on the Working and Living Environment and Catering for Seafarers on Board Ships (395/2012):

Section 1

Scope of application

This Decree applies to Finnish ships.

However, this Decree does not apply to:

- 1) state vessels used for defence and coast guard operations;
- 2) hydrofoils, hovercraft and historic ships;
- 3) pleasure yachts;
- 4) fishing vessels.

Section 2

Headroom in seafarer accommodation and location of the accommodation

The accommodation shall have sufficient headroom. The minimum headroom for spaces where full and free movement is necessary shall not be less than 2.03 metres. However, this minimum headroom requirement shall not apply to ships acquired second-hand from abroad when modifying the spaces would not be practicable or reasonable.

Accommodation spaces may not be used as a passage to work stations and accommodation may not be in direct contact with work spaces. Free passage from passenger spaces to seafarers' accommodation shall not be provided.

Sleeping rooms shall be situated wholly above the load line amidships or aft so that they have natural daylight. Where this is not possible due to the size, type or purpose of the ship, sleeping rooms may be located in the fore part of the ship, but in no case forward of the collision bulkhead. Sleeping rooms may not be situated beneath a deck from which a substantial noise hazard arises.

Section 3

Sleeping rooms and day rooms

In single-berth sleeping rooms the floor area shall not be less than 4.5 square metres in ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage; 5.5 square metres in ships of 3, 000 gross tonnage or over but less than 10,000 gross tonnage; and 7 square metres in ships of 10,000 gross tonnage or over.

On passenger ships and special purpose ships the floor area of sleeping rooms for seafarers not performing the duties of the ships' officers shall not be less than 7.5 square metres in rooms accommodating two persons; 11.5 square metres in rooms accommodating three persons; and 14.5 square metres in rooms accommodating four persons. On such ships other than passenger ships and special purpose ships which are of less than 1,000 gross tonnage and in the case of which the occupational safety and health authority has permitted a derogation under section 11, subsection 2 of the Act on the Living and Working Environment and Catering for Seafarers on Board Ships (395/2012), sleeping rooms may be occupied by a maximum of two seafarers on condition that the floor area of the sleeping room is not less than 7 square metres.

Ship's officers shall have a day room adjoining their sleeping room whenever possible. However, on ships of 3,000 gross tonnage or over, the master, the chief engineer and the chief navigating officer shall always have, in addition to their sleeping rooms, an adjoining day room. When a seafarer performing the duties of ship's officer is not provided with an adjoining day room in addition to the sleeping room, the floor area of the sleeping room shall not be less than 8.5 square metres in passenger ships and special purpose ships and not less than 7.5 square metres in other ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage; 8.5 square metres in ships of 3, 000 gross tonnage or over but less than 10,000 gross tonnage; and 10.0 square metres in ships of 10,000 gross tonnage or over.

Separate sleeping rooms shall be provided for men and for women.

The provisions of this section concerning sleeping rooms shall not apply to ships of less than 200 gross tonnage when this is justified, taking into account the size of the ship and the number of seafarers on board, nor to ships acquired second-hand from abroad when modifying the spaces would not be practicable or reasonable.

Section 4

Furnishing of sleeping rooms

Each sleeping room shall be provided with a berth for each seafarer occupying the sleeping room. The berth shall be at least 1.98 metres long and 0.80 metres broad. In addition, each sleeping room shall have, for each occupant, a lockable clothes locker that is fitted with a shelf and has a minimum volume of 475 litres as well as a drawer or equivalent space of not less than 56 litres. Where the drawer is incorporated in the clothes locker, their combined minimum volume shall be 500 litres.

Each sleeping room or day room shall be equipped with a table and a seat for each person occupying the room. Sleeping rooms shall also be fitted with a mirror, a cabinet for personal items, a book rack and a sufficient number of coat hooks. Berths in sleeping rooms with more than one berth shall be fitted with curtains.

In ships of 500 gross tonnage or over, an extra clothes locker shall be provided in sleeping rooms where regularly changing staff are placed. Exemption from this may be granted if it is necessary from the technical point of view and equipment of the same standard can be provided in some other way.

In the case of ships of less than 500 gross tonnage or special purpose ships, exemption from the requirement for sleeping room equipment may be granted if it is necessary from the technical point of view and equipment of the same standard can be provided in some other way.

Section 5

Materials, insulation and drainage

The materials used to construct internal bulkheads, panelling and sheeting, floors and joinings shall be suitable for the purpose and conducive to ensuring a healthy environment.

The accommodation shall be fitted with adequate insulation and appropriate drainage.

No penetrations for hydraulic, gas or steam pipes or other similar pipes may be run through the accommodation unless necessary from the technical point of view.

Section 6

Ventilation

The accommodation shall be fitted with forced ventilation. Ventilation shall be adequate in consideration of the intended use of the space. The ventilation system for sleeping rooms and mess rooms should be adjustable so as to maintain satisfactory air quality and ensure a sufficiency of air movement in all conditions of weather and climate. Exhaust air from the sanitary accommodation and the hospital accommodation shall be led straight to the open air.

The forced ventilation system shall be kept operational. The ventilation equipment shall be cleaned regularly to remove any dirt and other impurities. The equipment shall function so as not to cause harm or danger to the seafarers' health.

Section 7

Heating and air conditioning

Heating shall be adequate in consideration of the ship's trading area. The temperature shall be about 20 degrees centigrade. Heat should be spread evenly in the space so that no hazard will arise from it.

The accommodation on ships of 200 gross tonnage or more shall have air conditioning unless the ship is regularly engaged in trade where temperate climatic conditions do not require this.

Section 8

Lighting

The accommodation shall have sufficient general lighting and if necessary spotlighting, and emergency lighting in the passageways of the accommodation. A reading light shall be fitted at the head of the bed. In addition, the sleeping room or the day room shall have a table-top lamp.

The lighting shall be of consistent colour and as close to natural light as possible. The lighting may not cause glare, harmful shadow formation or any other impediment to sight.

Section 9

Noise

A-weighted sound pressure level for noise in accommodation shall be measured on new ships and on ships acquired second-hand from abroad when such measurement has not been carried out previously. The noise level shall also be measured whenever material repairs or modifications are done on the ship. The measurement report shall be kept on the ship.

A-weighted sound-pressure level for noise in accommodation shall not exceed the values given in Annex 2.

A-weighted sound-pressure level for noise in the accommodation shall be measured in compliance with the provisions included in Resolution MSC.337(91) of the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization, taking into account however the size of the ship.

Section 10

Insulation of airborne sound

The minimum airborne sound insulation between accommodation and other spaces shall comply with at least the following sound reduction index:

- 1) 30 decibels between sleeping rooms;
- 2) 45 decibels between sleeping rooms and noisy spaces having an A-weighted sound pressure level of not more than 85 decibels;
- 3) 30 decibels between sleeping room and corridor.

A deviation of 3 decibels from the sound reduction indices laid down in subsection 1 is permitted on ships.

The ship's airborne sound insulation shall be measured whenever it is detected or there is cause to suspect that the insulation does not comply with the sound reduction indices laid down in this section.

Section 11

Recreational facilities

All ships shall have a space or spaces on open deck to which the seafarers can have access when off duty, which are of adequate area having regard to the size of the ship and the number of seafarers on board. Appropriate recreational facilities, amenities and services, including social connectivity, shall additionally be provided for seafarers who live on the ship.

Ships of 500 gross tonnage or over shall have appropriately located and outfitted separate recreational facilities. Ships of 5,000 gross tonnage or over shall additionally be provided with a properly equipped common room and separate facilities for leisure activities and physical exercise.

Section 12

Mess rooms

The ship's mess rooms shall be located apart from the sleeping rooms and as close as practicable to the galley.

Mess rooms shall be of adequate size and comfort and properly furnished and equipped, taking account of the number of seafarers likely to use them at any one time. In ships other than passenger ships, the mess room shall have at least 1.5 square metres of space for each person eating there.

The mess rooms shall have natural daylight.

In the case of ships of less than 200 gross tonnage or of special purpose ships of less than 3,000 gross tonnage, exemption from the requirements for mess rooms may be granted if it is necessary from the technical point of view.

Section 13

Sanitary facilities

Ships shall have appropriately outfitted sanitary facilities. The facilities or the use of the facilities shall be arranged separately for men and for women.

Ships having at least 200 gross tonnage, except for passenger ships, shall have a washbasin in each sleeping room, unless the washbasin is situated in the private sanitary facility adjoining the sleeping room.

A minimum of one toilet, one wash basin and one tub or shower for every six persons or less who do not have personal facilities shall be provided.

Ships of 3,000 gross tonnage or over shall have their sanitary facilities within easy access of the navigating bridge and the machinery space or near the engine room control centre.

Ships of 500 gross tonnage or over shall have sanitary facilities in the immediate vicinity of the deck.

Hot and cold running fresh water shall be available in all sanitary facilities.

Section 14

Sauna facilities

Unless other arrangements are made for sauna bathing, ships of 500 gross tonnage or over shall be provided with sauna facilities.

The sauna facilities shall include a steam room, shower room and dressing room. The steam room door shall open outward at a mere push.

The provisions of this section concerning sauna facilities shall not apply to a ship acquired second-hand from abroad when the construction of sauna facilities on board the ship is not practicable or reasonable.

Section 15

Hospital accommodation

A ship shall be provided with hospital accommodation if the number of seafarers is at least 15 and if the ship in normal conditions is out at sea without interruption for over three days. The hospital accommodation may be used only for its intended purpose.

The hospital accommodation shall be easily accessible in all weather conditions. The berths, lighting, ventilation and heating shall be designed to facilitate the treatment and well-being of the occupants. Each berth shall be fitted with a device with which a ship's duty officer can be reached when necessary.

There shall be sanitary facilities adjoining the hospital accommodation or in its immediate vicinity.

Section 16

Laundry facilities

Ships of 200 gross tonnage or over shall provide seafarers with facilities for washing and drying their clothes and also ironing them when necessary in a laundry room or another space suited to the purpose unless laundry services are provided by other means. The facilities shall be of adequate capacity relative to the number of seafarers and the duration of the ship's ordinary voyage. The facilities shall be furnished with appropriate equipment.

Section 17

Lockers and other storage facilities and notice board

On ships of 500 gross tonnage or over, deck and engine-room personnel shall have outside their sleeping room a lockable personal locker for keeping their work clothes.

Ships of 500 gross tonnage or over shall have a separate space for drying seafarers' wet work clothes.

Ships shall have an appropriate space to keep cleaning equipment.

At least one locker or space that can be appropriately locked and sealed shall be provided for seafarers' undeclared goods, taking into account the ship's trading area.

An appropriate place for keeping documents on occupational safety and health cooperation and other documents on employment relations matters shall be provided on board.

Ships shall be provided with a notice board placed in a suitable location.

Section 18

Order and cleanliness

Order and cleanliness shall be observed in the accommodation. The accommodation shall be cleaned with sufficient regularity. The spaces shall be cleaned thoroughly three times a year when all seafarers change and when the risk of infection or some other reason so demands.

Sleeping rooms and day rooms shall be cleaned thoroughly when all persons placed in the room change.

Section 19

Protection from malaria-carrying mosquitoes

Ships regularly trading to ports infested with malaria-carrying mosquitoes shall be fitted with appropriate devices for protection from mosquitoes.

Section 20

Transitional provisions and entry into force

This Decree enters into force on 1 April 2025.

This Decree repeals the Government Decree on the Living Environment for Seafarers on Board Ships (825/2012), hereinafter 'repealed decree'.

Ships which were in use or finished on or before 1 January 2013, whose keel was laid on or before 30 April 2013 or which were acquired second-hand from abroad on or before 20 August 2023 shall be subject to the provisions in force at the time of this Decree's entry into force except for sections 7 and 12 of the repealed decree. However, the provisions of this Decree instead of those of the repealed decree shall apply to such a ship when the former are more lenient than the latter.

Where the A-weighted sound pressure level in the ship's accommodation has been measured in accordance with the provisions in force at the time of this Decree's entry into force, the measurement need not be repeated. Where material repairs or modifications are made to a ship within this Decree's scope of application after the Decree's entry into force, this Decree shall apply to the A-weighted sound pressure level values and their measurement.

Annex

A-WEIGHTED SOUND PRESSURE LEVEL VALUES IN ACCOMMODATION

	Ship's gross tonnage			
	less than 500	500 – 1,599	1,600 – 9,999	10,000 or over
	Maximum A-weighted sound pressure level			
Sleeping rooms*, day rooms and hospital accommodation	70 dB	65 dB	60 dB	55 dB
Mess rooms and common rooms and other indoor recreational and leisure facilities	75 dB	70 dB	65 dB	60 dB

* The A-weighted sound pressure level in the sleeping rooms of ships acquired second-hand from abroad may exceed the indicated values by no more than 5 decibels.