



## Mariners Medico Guide: Saving those precious minutes when life is at stake

The Mariners Medico Guide (MMG) was introduced to seafarers in October 2022. Since its release, the app has been downloaded more than 35,000 times. General Manager at Pacific Carriers Limited (PCL), Capt. Gaurav Kapoor, describes the MMG as an extremely useful tool in critical situations where immediate response is needed.

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Capt. Gaurav Kapoor recalls two situations where the MMG app helped the crew manage medical conditions on board. Using the app, the masters could provide accurate explanations of the symptoms to the medical officers. In both cases, proper first aid was administered to treat a burn injury and a skin allergy.

“The most standout feature of the app is its user experience, which makes navigating within the app easy. It gives the user the initial response to medical emergencies, which is critical in such situations,” says Capt. Gaurav Kapoor.



## Easy to use and reliable

PCL introduced and broadcasted the app to fleet vessels in 2023. According to him, it has been very well received by masters and crew. However, he emphasizes the importance of reiterating the existence of the app, along with its benefits and uses, to the seafarers. Capt. Kapoor finds the medical information in the MMG to be up-to-date, easy to use, and reliable.

“Yes, once the app is loaded with primary symptoms, causes, diagnosis, and treatment that seafarers are usually exposed to, it’s all about how best the user can extract useful information from it,” says Capt. Kapoor.

Capt. Kapoor further mentions, “The search feature is extremely helpful as it allows users to diagnose pertinent conditions using existing symptoms. Additionally, it can also be used in a reverse manner to start the treatment as soon as the condition is diagnosed and concluded”.

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**“Yes, of course, this is a tool which benefits both the patient as well as first aid”**

provider and it gives a second opinion guidance in addition to ship master's medical guide. It serves as a "One stop" solution to handle illnesses and injuries onboard vessels," says HSSEQ General Manager at PCL.

## Better prepared seafarers

The MMG is a collaboration between the marine insurance company Gard, Haukeland University Hospital in Norway, and the Norwegian Maritime Authority. Doctors working with Norway's telemedicine emergency service at sea, Radio Medico, writes, updates and develops the content of the guide.

Radio Medico is part of the Norwegian Centre for Maritime Medicine and Diving Medicine at Haukeland University Hospital. The service is provided in collaboration with the Telenor Coastal Radio and the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in Norway.

Jon Magnus Haga, Head of the Norwegian Centre for Maritime Medicine and Diving Medicine, and on-call doctor at Radio Medico, states that his impression is that the guide helps seafarers contact them more quickly about acute conditions.

"When seafarers find what we call a "red flag", an ominous symptom, my experience is that clear instructions in the guide help seafarers act more quickly and call for assistance when necessary. We also find that seafarers are better prepared when they call us. This can significantly impact the ability to provide the best possible treatment for the person concerned," explains Haga.



## Best possible dialogue

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Haga also highlights the linguistic advantages of using the MMG, where a significant part of the value is related to having the same basic references when describing conditions and treatment.

“For me as an on-call doctor, it is much easier to explain complex procedures and give instructions on medication dosages when I can refer to the guide, rather than explaining everything verbally over the phone. The guide has already been downloaded to the callers’ mobile phones, and they have direct access to it. I believe that the guide leads to better utilization of our healthcare services for seafarers, improved quality of healthcare on board, and increased safety at sea,” says Haga.

## Approved by The Norwegian Maritime Authority

The purpose of the MMG is to protect the lives and wellbeing of seafarers and improve onboard safety. As an app, the guide improves swift accessibility to up-to-date medical advice through digitalization.

The guide was approved by The Norwegian Maritime Authority in 2022, along with several international flag states. These endorsements are a testament to the project's quality and potential impact. The guide is significant evidence of how teamwork and continuous improvement lead to enhancing safety culture at sea and reducing injuries and lost lives among seafarers.

The guide is instructive, and symptom-based. It contains visuals of medical conditions and procedures. The guide works both with and without the internet, making it usable anywhere on the ship, even when far out at sea. It is completely free for the maritime industry.

The goal is for the guide to work in conjunction with the telemedicine assistance services (TMAS), such as Radio Medico, and contribute to the best possible healthcare on board and the best possible dialogue with TMAS.

“We greatly appreciate the excellent collaboration with Gard on health and safety at sea, protecting the lives of both for Norwegian and international seafarers around the world,” says Jon Magnus Haga.

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