



**GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN  
MINISTRY OF MARITIME AFFAIRS  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL PORTS & SHIPPING  
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Karachi, 22 August' 2025

No.3 (3)/2021-CNS

## **Circular No. 007/2025**

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**Notice to all ship owners, Operators, crewing Agents, Masters, Officers, Ratings, and those concerned with maritime Trade**

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**SUBJECT: COOKERY AND FOOD HANDLING CERTIFICATE REQUIRED TO BE IN LINE WITH MLC 2006 (ILO STANDARD).**

**PURPOSE:**

This circular serves to inform all stakeholders that the Directorate General of Ports and Shipping (DGPS) is seeking to bring all the Cookery and Food handling certificates in line with MLC 2006 (as amended).

This has come to the knowledge of Directorate General of Port and shipping that there are different formats of Cookery and food handling certificates issued by various training institutes for employment as cook on board ships. Which is causing issues to shipowners and shipping companies as this deficiency may lead to the detention of vessel during PSC inspections causing severe monetary and reputation loss to the company.

**Followings are the guidelines to obtain cookery and food handling certificate as per MLC 2006 (as amended).**

Commercial vessels operating more than 60 Nautical miles offshore or with 10+ crew members must have a certified cook under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006 as amended).

**Regulation 3.2 – Food and catering**

This is to ensure that seafarers have access to good quality food and drinking water provided under regulated hygienic conditions.

1. Each Member shall ensure that ships that fly its flag carry on board and serve food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity that adequately covers the requirements of the ship and takes into account the differing cultural and religious backgrounds.

2. Seafarers on board a ship shall be provided with food free of charge during the period of engagement.
3. Seafarers employed as ships' cooks with responsibility for food preparation must be trained and qualified for their position on board ship.

### **Standard A3.2 and Guideline B3.2.2 in the MLC 2006 (as amended)**

The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006) establishes comprehensive standards for seafarers' working and living conditions.

Regulation 3.2 specifically addresses food and catering standards. This regulation is supported by two important components: Standard A3.2 (the mandatory requirements) and Guideline B3.2.2 (non-mandatory recommendations).

### **Standard A3.2: Mandatory Food and Catering Requirements**

Standard A3.2 sets out the compulsory provisions that flag states must implement regarding food and catering on ships. The key requirements include:

1. **Food Quality and Quantity:** Ships must carry and serve food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity that adequately covers the requirements of the ship and takes into account differing cultural and religious backgrounds. The 2022 amendments specifically require that food supplies be based on the number of seafarers, their religious requirements, cultural practices, and the duration/nature of the voyage.
2. **Free Provision:** Seafarers must be provided with food free of charge during their period of engagement.
3. **Catering Department Standards:** The organization and equipment of the catering department must permit the provision of adequate, varied and balanced meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions.
4. **Ship's Cook Qualifications:** Seafarers employed as ship's cooks with responsibility for food preparation must be trained and qualified for their position. This includes having practical cookery skills, knowledge of food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock management, and environmental protection in catering.
5. **Documented Inspections:** The Master must carry out frequent documented inspections of food and drinking water supplies regarding their quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety.

### **Following are Cookery certificate Requirements:**

To serve as a ship's cook, one must:

**Be at least 18 years old.**

**Hold a valid cookery certificate** issued by an institute recognized by the Marine Administration (Directorate General port and shipping) and countersigned by Chief Nautical surveyor.

**Experience Recognition:** All those seafarers who have worked as cooks aboard ships and whose certificate is not as per MLC 2006 standard should have their experience recognized by a refresher course which covers those aspects of MLC 2006 which otherwise have not been addressed in their Previous Cookery course.

This course may extend over three days of training and should be completed in DGPS approved institute and countersigned by Chief Nautical Surveyor.

All those Cooks who are already sailing on board are exempted until they sign off from the vessel. However, they must complete training course before joining the next vessel.

### **Complete approved training covers.**

Practical cookery

Food hygiene and personal hygiene

Food storage and stock control

Catering health and safety

Environmental protection in food handling

On ships with fewer than 10 crew members, a fully qualified cook may not be mandatory. However, **anyone handling food must still be trained in hygiene and food safety.**

### **Food Handling Requirements**

All catering staff, even if not certified cooks, must:

Be properly trained or instructed for their roles.

#### **Understand:**

Safe food storage practices.

Hygiene in galley and food preparation areas.

Handling potable water and waste.

Participate in documented inspections of food storage and preparation areas, typically overseen by the Master.

All cooks must complete their Basic safety courses as required by STCW.

Compliance is enforced through **flag state inspections** and **port state controls**.

Non-compliance can lead to detention.

This Circular is issued with the approval of Director General Port & shipping,  
Karachi



(Capt. Arif Jawaid)  
Chief Nautical Surveyor

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