



NOC Marine Drug and Alcohol Policy

Version 3.0

All NOC Policies and Procedures apply to NOC Innovations unless otherwise stated.

Version	Date	Author(s)	Comment	Approval
1.0	04.12.19	S.Buckley	Final – following amendments following TU feedback	NOC Board
2.0	01.07.24	P&S	Update Policy Owner, amend typos	AD NMF
3.0	08.05.25			ExCom

Policy Owner: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Updates: The effectiveness of policies and procedures is monitored on an ongoing basis. This ensures that regulatory/legal change, incident occurrence and/or stakeholder engagement is considered and incorporated as the policy owner may deem necessary. Additionally, NOC's policy framework and procedure are subject to an effectiveness review every 3 years, records of which will be kept by the Legal & Governance Team. For further information please contact NOC_governance@noc.ac.uk

Deletion Date: When a policy is superseded or no longer required.

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1. Scope

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) is committed through its National Marine Facilities (NMF) division to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all those working onboard its research ships, whether in port, in refit or at sea and whether they are employed by NOC or not. This commitment also extends not only to those working onboard but also to those who are working ashore in direct support of ship operations.

The NOC Marine Drug and Alcohol Policy (and supporting procedures) provide a framework for embedding safety and wellbeing for all those who work onboard; it applies to all seafarers embarked on a NOC-operated research ship and all other individuals who work onboard NOC operated ships, including those that work in support of mobilisations onboard. It also seeks to ensure the NOC values provide the guiding principles about the way we work and to help everyone make the appropriate decisions and choices.

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) states that a seafarer is any person, including a Captain, who is employed or engaged or works in any capacity on board a ship and whose normal place of work is on a ship.

NOC's definition of seafarer includes all NOC Marine Officers, Ratings and technicians and all scientists, visiting shore-based NOC staff, observers and contractors who have signed either a Seafarers Employment Agreement or Transitional Seafarers Employment Agreement and who have signed on the list of crew or are directly engaged in the ship's business. To review the full details of all definitions referenced within the policy, please refer to the NOC Marine Drug and Alcohol Procedures.

As such, the policy applies to all NOC employees (not just seafarers) and all others when they are working onboard NOC operated ships or ashore in direct support of mobilisations.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework which supports a positive culture in which drug and alcohol misuse does not occur, is challenged and reported if it does, and sets out clearly what is unacceptable and the consequences of a failure to comply. It thus provides a framework within which responsible alcohol use may take place and drug, alcohol and other substance misuse is dealt with to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all those who work onboard. This approach is in line with the NOC Values of Empowerment, Integrity and Excellence as guiding principles about the way that we work and to help individuals make the right decisions and choices.

More specifically, the purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure the safety of all who work onboard NOC ships, the ultimate objective being to prevent injury or loss of life, avoid damage to ships, ship systems and the environment, loss or disruption of science, and to deter unacceptable and unwanted behaviours where drug or alcohol impairment could be a contributory factor.
- Promote the safety and personal health and welfare of all seafarers working onboard NOC ships and all individuals working ashore in direct support of ship mobilisations.
- Ensure effective measures are in place to minimise potential risks faced by all seafarers onboard NOC ships or when ashore and the potential risks posed to other seafarers, ships, port infrastructure and the environment that could arise through impairment resulting from drugs

and/or alcohol use.

- Ensure effective communication and engagement with all those working onboard, offering opportunities for genuine dialogue concerning drug and alcohol issues or concerns.
- Encourage NOC seafarers with an alcohol or drug related dependency or problem to disclose this at the earliest opportunity to ensure they can be provided with advice, information and, if necessary, help with getting treatment.
- Ensure full access is available to a confidential employee assistance programme (EAP) and/or other welfare support that is available to all employees, and to provide counselling and signposting to other appropriate services.
- Provide onboard welfare and support to those working onboard NOC operated research vessels as transitional seafarers from collaborating organisations.
- Commit to ensuring all discussions take place in private, and that confidentiality will be respected.
- Establish clear procedures for the management of alcohol use and drug and alcohol misuse by individuals; these procedures should be read in full conjunction with this policy. These procedures include:
 - A. where individuals require support to overcome alcohol and drug dependency, details of the support mechanisms available to those who have reported a problem
 - B. those for investigation, disciplinary actions or consequences where there is misconduct or serious misconduct, or where an employee's efficiency at work becomes affected through consumption of alcohol or drug/substance abuse.

3. Policy

High Level Statement

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) through its National Marine Facilities division (NMF) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all those working on its research ships whether in port, in refit or at sea and whether they are employed by NOC or not.

In relation to the above, NOC supports and encourages a positive culture in which drug and alcohol misuse does not occur and is challenged and reported if it does. NOC does not permit possession and use of illegal drugs and does not permit misuse of prescribed or other legal medications, substances and alcohol.

NOC employees and others signed on to NOC operated ships will be treated fairly, consistently, and with respect, in line with NOC's values and in accordance with the current equality and diversity policy.

Support for a positive culture

NOC supports as an appropriate choice the avoidance or reduction in use of alcohol onboard and in port. In support, NOC will aim to provide interventions such as health promotion events, non-alcoholic drinks, and onboard wellbeing initiatives, training, resources (e.g. healthy lifestyle advice) and onboard social events. Where individuals have decided to avoid alcohol use, this choice should be respected by all on board.

NOC will ensure that all employees and others working aboard NOC-operated research ships (at sea or in port) are aware of the Marine Drug and Alcohol Policy, and the informal and formal routes open to them to resolve any issues of concern. Onboard the vessel, the Captain will be responsible for ensuring that all onboard are aware of the policy with the support of their officers and crew.

NOC will support all *seafarers* with regular drug and alcohol awareness training when onboard.

NOC recognise that some individuals may have become dependent on drugs and / or alcohol or consume drugs or alcohol to an extent that is detrimental to their health. NOC encourages *seafarers* with an alcohol or drug related dependency or problem to disclose this at the earliest opportunity to ensure they can be provided with the appropriate level(s) of support and assistance. In such circumstances, individuals may require treatment and support to overcome these difficulties.

NOC will fully support any person who is experiencing difficulties associated with drugs and / or alcohol misuse or associated illnesses where these are declared by the individual. Matter relating to such issues will be treated the same as any other illness but declaration does not absolve individuals from complying with the requirements of this policy below.

Requirements

No *seafarer* is to report for *duty* and sign the List of Crew or be signed on the List of Crew and on duty when impaired due to use of either drugs, alcohol and/or other substance misuse. This includes undertaking activities ashore such as demobilisation and mobilisation operations. Similarly, any other individual working onboard or working ashore during mobilisation and demobilisation operations but not signed on the List of Crew shall not be impaired due to the use of either drugs, alcohol and/or other substance misuse.

No *seafarer* when signed on the List of Crew or other individual working onboard is to be in possession of illegal drugs, illicit alcohol or other substances when onboard

No *seafarer* or other individual working onboard is to consume illegal drugs or illicit alcohol or misuse other substances whilst on onboard.

Any *seafarer* or other individual working onboard who suspects a colleague of misusing drugs (illegal, prescribed or 'over the counter') or of being under the influence of alcohol when onboard or working ashore on duty or in direct support to ship operations should report their concerns immediately to the Captain, Senior Officer or Chief Scientist.

Possession of prescribed drugs for their prescribed use by a seafarer or other individual working onboard (having been prescribed by a medical professional ashore, remotely or by the ship's Medical Officer) or 'over the counter' drugs for appropriate medical purposes is permitted subject to: (a) all individuals must seek advice from a health professional as to whether or not such medication will affect their ability to work safely, (b) the Captain and Line Managers onboard must be made aware of an individual's requirement to hold and use prescribed drugs and over the counter drugs . If an individual experiences significant side effects, they should inform the Captain, Ships Medical Officer or onboard Line Manager.

Prevention and control

NOC will avail itself of reasonable means to control drug and alcohol misuse including through right of search and a drug and alcohol testing regime. The latter will include periodic and unannounced testing for drug and alcohol misuse to deter, identify and determine the level, if any, of drug or

alcohol misuse.

NOC, through the Captain, reserves the right to search all parts of a vessel and embarked equipment as well as all personal property onboard if there are reasonable grounds to suspect a *seafarer* or other individual onboard may be in possession of illegal drugs and / or illicit alcohol. The presence of the *seafarer* or individual concerned would be required at all such searches and they are entitled to be accompanied by a representative onboard of their choice.

For avoidance of doubt, if circumstances dictate, the Captain has the right to temporarily suspend permission for alcohol consumption onboard a NOC operated ship and report their decision to the NOC Head of Research Ship Operations. NOC also reserves its right, if circumstances dictate, to temporarily suspend or terminate permission for alcohol use onboard NOC ships.

On occasion, NOC may deem it appropriate that for the duration of certain expeditions or charters where there may be an expectation of a lower or zero prescribed alcohol limit, access to alcohol onboard will be removed.

On special occasions, a dispensation regarding the consumption of alcohol onboard or ashore while on *duty* may be granted by the Associate Director NMF and / or the Head of Research Ship Operations.

Failure to comply

Any seafarer, or individual working onboard or undertaking activities ashore (such as mobilisation or demobilisation operations), who is impaired or is suspected of being under the influence of either drugs, alcohol and/or other substance misuse will be restricted from carrying out any work duties onboard until the Captain is content they are fit for duty. The individual will be drug/alcohol tested as appropriate.

A breach of the NOC Marine Drug and Alcohol Policy, including a breach of the defined alcohol limits as set out in the supporting procedures, or refusal to take a test, is likely to lead to disciplinary procedure being invoked in accordance with the NOC Disciplinary Policy and the Code of Conduct for the Merchant Navy and may lead to summary dismissal from the ship by the Captain, dismissal from employment for staff employed by NOC, and denial of future access to NOC ships for those both employed and not employed by NOC.

Implementation

The NOC will ensure that all managers (including those onboard) responsible for implementing the policy and carrying out testing will receive appropriate training to undertake these duties.

All processes associated with this policy will be completed as quickly as possible and the seafarer will be kept updated at all stages by the responsible manager.

This policy is supported by NOC Marine Drug & Alcohol procedures which may vary from time to time. The procedures referred to within this policy are for guidance and are not contractual

Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals have a responsibility to treat others well and work within NOC's policies in which safety, health and wellbeing is a high priority.

Managers have an important role in the day-to-day management of staff with seagoing roles and

responsibilities.

NOC will provide Principal Investigators / Chief Scientists and managers with the guidance, support and training required to promote and effectively manage health and wellbeing issues, and support employees.

The NOC Marine Drug and Alcohol procedures refer to the roles and responsibilities of all staff in accordance with this policy.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis, and regularly evaluated for its effectiveness, fairness and equity by NOC Health and Safety and Wellbeing Committee and the Executive Committee.

The Chief Operating Officer and NOC People and Skills will be jointly responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy to identify any trends or lessons. Feedback from employees, trade union representatives/officials, and managers will be welcome.

The Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Annual Safety Management System (SMS) Review and reviewed as required to incorporate changes to UK legislation, STCW Regulations and / or wider NOC Policies.

5. Associated Documents

NOC's research ships operate in accordance with NOC's Safety Management System (SMS) as prescribed by the International Maritime Organisation's International Safety Management (ISM) Code. The SMS is operated via a standalone system available to both sea and shore-based staff.

The following policies and procedures should be read in conjunction with this policy;

NOC Disciplinary Policy

NOC Dignity at Work

Code of Conduct for the Merchant Navy

NOC Code of Conduct

NOC Health and Wellbeing Policy

NOC Marine Drug & Alcohol Procedure and processes, as follows:

- Unannounced Random Testing Process (Annex A to the procedures)
- 'For Cause' and Post Incident Drug and Alcohol Testing Process (Annex B to the procedures)
- Management and of the Ships Bars Policy
- Prescribed Over the Counter and Allergy Declaration Form
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)