

For comments -- All the stakeholders are requested to send an email to [danieljohn-dgs@gov.in](mailto:danieljohn-dgs@gov.in); [anita.sinha71@gov.in](mailto:anita.sinha71@gov.in); & [crews-dgs@nic.in](mailto:crews-dgs@nic.in); on or before 03.03.2025.

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### **DGS Crew Circular XX of 2025**

**Subject: Guidelines for handling cases of deceased / missing seafarers and assistance to Next of Kin (NoK) - reg.**

1. Whereas, The Directorate has noticed that there has been increasing trend on the number of cases of seafarers going missing or found deceased in foreign ports or waters and often leading to a lot of distress to the Next of Kin (NoK). Thus, there is a need for necessitating the creation of a standardized guidelines for handling of such incidents and the assistance provided to NoK's thereof.
2. Due to lack of standard guidelines for handling such deceased / missing cases, there is uncertainty and inconsistency by shipping companies / RPS agencies handling such cases of seafarer's deaths during their employment. This has led to distressing situations where families / NoK are facing difficulties in repatriating remains or getting answers for their unanswered questions when the seafarers are reported to be deceased onboard or repatriated. There are further unique challenges of maritime incidents where the mortal remains may be lost at sea and the emotional need for families to visit the incident site for getting an in-depth insight of the incident cannot be undermined.
3. Whereas, in instances wherein seafarer loses their lives during the course of employment with the company including death from natural causes or a result of marine or some other peril, the concerned RPS agency / shipowners shall transport the mortal remains of the deceased seafarer to their NoK as per provisions enumerated under Rule 5 sub-rule (e) of Merchant Shipping Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers (RPS) Rules, 2016. Further, the RPS agency is mandated to report such incident to the Directorate General of Shipping at the earliest and not later than twenty - four (24) hours of receipt of such information.
4. Therefore, in the instance wherein the mortal remains of the seafarer is missing or unidentifiable by the NoK, the concerned RPS agency / shipowner / company at their own expenses, shall assist in travel arrangement's such as tickets, visa, stay (boarding / lodging), travel logistics etc. for the NoK or the blood relative(s) maximum two (02) numbers such as mother or

father or siblings along with company representative and government official as nominated from the Directorate to visit the country where such incident has happened to support the cause for getting more details on the incident and get further updates on the case locally on ground.

5. The concerned RPS agency / shipowner are not obligated to provide assistance for anyone other than the NoK or blood relative as aforementioned to accompany to the site being confidential and right of privacy matter of the seafarer. The Directorate's emphasis on blood relatives such as mother or father or sibling's requisite to travel to site is to facilitate rapid DNA identification of the deceased seafarer if and when required, thereby expediting the process of repatriating the mortal remains.

6. Any assistance and associated arrangements shall be strictly limited to the designated NoK or blood relative(s) and the required government official, as this ensures both swift identification through DNA testing when necessary and proper documentation of the process and the confidentiality part is protected.

7. This issues with the approval of the Director General of Shipping.

Capt. (Dr.) Daniel J Joseph  
Dy. Director General of Shipping