The Norwegian Maritime Authority

Together for safety at sea in a clean environment
Preface

The Norwegian Maritime Authority's vision is "Together for safety at sea in a clean environment". Our principal objective is to make Norway "an attractive flag state with the highest safety standards to protect life, health, the environment and property".

1 January 2012 the Norwegian Maritime Directorate merged with the Norwegian Ship Registers to form the Norwegian Maritime Authority. In accordance with the Government’s maritime strategy, we will continue our efforts to ensure that the Norwegian Ship Registers NIS and NOR are competitive and attractive quality registers and actively promote Norway as a flag state for Norwegian and foreign owners.

Ensuring that vessels are safe and environmentally friendly is one of the Norwegian Maritime Authority's main objectives. To this end, we will attach greater importance to active prevention of accidents, and we shall be a visible and clear initiator in the international regulatory work. We will further develop risk-based supervision, so that our supervisory work targets those areas that will provide the greatest benefits in terms of safety and the environment. The Norwegian Maritime Authority will continue its active efforts to ensure that seafarers are highly qualified and have good working and living conditions.

A good reputation is essential for the Norwegian Maritime Authority’s credibility as a supervisory authority and ship register, as well as to recruit and retain employees. Providing good service to our users is therefore an important priority. This brochure describes our focus areas in the coming years.

Olav Akselsen
Director General of Shipping and Navigation

The Norwegian Maritime Authority – responsibilities and authority

The Norwegian Maritime Authority is the administrative and authoritative body for issues related to safety on Norwegian-registered vessels and foreign vessels in Norwegian ports. The Authority is subordinate to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (NHD), and its activities are determined by political decisions, allocations, orders, and international obligations.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea states that ensuring safety at sea is the duty of the state under whose flag the ship is registered (the flag state). In Norway, the Norwegian Maritime Authority is the designated supervisory authority. In line with international agreements, the Authority also oversees foreign vessels calling at Norwegian ports.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s vision is “Together for safety at sea in a clean environment”, and the Authority’s principal objective is to promote Norway as an “attractive flag state with the highest safety standards to protect life, health, the environment and property”.

The Authority’s central responsibilities include:

• supervision of working and living conditions on board and issuing certificates for seafarers
• administration of the tax refund scheme for seafarers
• supervision of Norwegian-registered vessels and their owners, in addition to issuing certificates
• supervision of foreign ships calling at Norwegian ports
• developing Norwegian and international legislation
• registration of ships and rights in ships, as well as promotion of the Norwegian International Ship Register (NIS) and the Norwegian Ordinary Ship Register (NOR)
• recording and follow-up of accidents
In matters concerning pollution from ships and protection of the marine environment, the Authority is subordinate to the Ministry of the Environment (MD). The Norwegian Maritime Authority collaborates with and assists the Norwegian Coastal Administration in matters related to the technical aspects of ships in oil spill clean-up operations. The Authority assists the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority (Ptil) in the supervision of mobile offshore units on the Norwegian continental shelf. In addition, the Authority assists the police in investigations of criminal offences linked to the Ship Safety and Security Act and assists the Accident Investigation Board Norway (AIBH) with investigations of accidents.

Work related to checking documentation is largely done by employees at our head office in Haugesund, while most of the inspections are performed by the Authority’s stations along the coast. The stations and head office also conduct audits of vessels, shipping companies, classification societies, approved enterprises and others who perform supervisory tasks on behalf of the Authority. This is done through system audits, vertical audits, unannounced inspections and periodic inspections.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority shall actively promote Norway as an attractive flag state. In addition, the Authority shall ensure the legal protection of rights and due process by ensuring that the ship registers NIS and NOR are accurate and up-to-date.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority gives high priority to its international work and plays a leading role on behalf of Norway in a number of international bodies. Most of the regulations in the shipping industry are developed in international bodies such as the UN’s International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). As one of the world’s leading maritime nations, Norway wishes to be a leader in promoting safe and environmentally friendly shipping, and the Authority plays an important role in the development of new international regulations. Decisions made by the EU and shipping organizations are increasingly exerting influence on Norwegian maritime regulations. Consequently, one of the Norwegian Maritime Authority’s main responsibilities is ensuring proper domestic follow-up and adaptation when international rules are implemented into Norwegian legislation.

In addition to the international regulatory work, the Norwegian Maritime Authority also develops comprehensive national legislation. The Authority administers a number of national laws and some 130 regulations, which, in conjunction with the international regulations, comprise one of the largest sets of public legislations.

The Authority is responsible for supervising various types of vessels including cargo ships, offshore vessels, passenger vessels, fishing vessels, mobile offshore units and pleasure crafts. For NIS registered ships, the classification societies have been authorized to act on behalf of the NMA. Norway currently has agreements with seven different classification societies.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority conducts extensive awareness-raising and preventive work to actively promote a culture of safety at sea; the NMA’s Safety at Sea Conference, meetings with users, participation at conferences and trade fairs, various campaigns, the Safe Boating campaign, the Welfare Service and active use of various dedicated communication channels.
Our core values

**Integrity**
We work towards obtaining a high degree of confidence with our users to ensure impartial and correct consideration of cases, mutual exchange of information and predictability.

**Accountability**
Our responsibility is to develop rules and regulations for the purpose of increasing safety at sea. We cooperate with the maritime industry in Norway, the maritime administrations of other countries and international forums to improve safety at sea. It is the responsibility of the shipping companies to ensure that the applicable regulations are fully complied with on each vessel.

**Loyalty and openness**
Our loyalty lies first and foremost with safety at sea and the applicable laws and regulations. Through openness and respect, we will show loyalty to our users and colleagues.

**Confidence**
The working environment is to be safe, secure, pleasant and predictable for all employees. All employees will be valued and respected for their unique contribution to the safety work. Through trust, responsibility and clear objectives we develop our workforce.

**Service**
Good service means that we give quick and precise answers to questions and make the necessary information readily available through our communication channels. Predictability and accessibility for our users is important to ensure good, constructive collaboration.
The Norwegian Maritime Authority shall be a visible central participant in the development of maritime activities in Norway. The Authority’s main task is to ensure that all matters relating to safety, the environment and the registration of ships are handled in a satisfactory manner, so that vessels can operate safely. The Authority’s work is based on the Government’s maritime strategy and is a contributing factor in ensuring that Norway is a leading maritime nation.

The Authority shall contribute to the Norwegian flag being regarded as attractive for Norwegian and foreign shipping companies, owners and the people who work on board.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s work is governed by the Norwegian Ship Safety and Security Act. This states that the shipping company is responsible for ensuring that ships are operated in accordance with laws and regulations, and that a safety management system is established to safeguards this. The Act allows the Norwegian Maritime Authority to use various forms of supervision and inspection as methods in its supervision work. The Norwegian Maritime Authority is going to give greater priority to ensuring compliance with the requirements concerning safety management systems and active prevention of accidents. In line with international developments, the Authority is going to focus more on a culture of safety and safety management systems and less on detailed checks in our supervisory work.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority will contribute to enhanced focus on safety management for all those engaged in maritime activity. The aim of this strategy is to further develop risk-based supervision, so that efforts are directed towards those areas that provide the greatest safety and environmental benefits. Through analysis and knowledge, the supervisory work shall be adapted to the risk profile.

It is the shipping company that is responsible for life, health, the environment and property. The Norwegian Maritime Authority will give priority to increased supervision of shipping companies and vessels that do not comply with the regulations and do not take safety seriously. Risk-based supervision will therefore determine the Norwegian Maritime Authority’s targets and strategies. The objective of this work is continual improvement of safety performance.
Goals and strategies

Goal 1 - Highly qualified seafarers with good working and living conditions

The Authority will follow up manning, seafarers’ qualifications and supervise working and living conditions on board. In cooperation with the maritime industry, awareness-raising activities shall be carried out to actively promote a culture of safety in the industry. The Authority shall develop user-friendly, effective solutions for issuing and renewing personal certificates. The reimbursement scheme for the employment of seafarers shall be administered in accordance with the Ministry of Trade and Industry’s guidelines. A modern and efficient welfare service adapted to new solutions shall ensure good living conditions.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- scheduled audits of educational institutions
- maximum processing time for personal certificates of no longer than four weeks
- safety campaigns
- introduction of new international rules on working and living conditions of seafarers – the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) – and supervision of compliance therewith
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- annual random spot checks of bunkers and ballast water
- performance of port state control and host state control of assigned vessels in accordance with the Paris MoU
- audits and other planned supervision of relevant maritime activity
- annual campaigns targeting selected types of vessels
- annual random spot checks of bunkers and ballast water
- prompt certification of all vessels that meet the requirements
- arrangements to promote greater use of random spot checks in connection with certification and inspection of newbuildings and converted ships
- reduction in the number of injuries and accidents
- reduction in the number of violations of rules

Goal 2 - Safe and environmentally friendly vessels

The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s work shall be guided by the principle of risk-based supervision. The Authority will conduct statutory supervisions, document control and certification. Audits will be preformed and relevant maritime activities followed up. User-friendly IT solutions shall be developed for inspection work and the systematization of findings from supervisory activities. The Authority shall initiate measures to reduce pollution from vessels. The Norwegian Maritime Authority shall be open to innovative new technical and operational solutions.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- follow up on risk-based supervision will be started once the report on this has been concluded
- reduction in the number of vessels detained in connection with flag state and port state controls
- Norway shall be among the top ten on the White List (Paris MoU) by 2015
- performance of port state control and host state control of assigned vessels in accordance with the Paris MoU
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Goal 3 - NIS and NOR shall be attractive quality registers

As flag state, the Norwegian Maritime Authority also fulfills the functions of an assets register. Registration ensures legal protection which is maintained by keeping correct and updated registers.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- all cases and documents are considered upon receipt and at the latest within one workday
- quality assurances are carried out in order to ensure that all documents meet the statutory and regulatory provisions
- coordination with data from other public records by continuously updating the registers and through periodic bulk checks

Goal 4 - Clear, user-friendly and accessible legislation

The Authority shall be a visible and clear initiator in international regulatory work. The Authority’s development of national rules and regulations shall be based on input from competent sources, experience and impact assessment. The Authority wishes to develop the “ABC” system where: Part A organizes and simplifies the regulations, making them easier to use and navigate; Part B records administrative practices that make it possible to link decisions to the relevant individual regulations; and Part C is a guide to Parts A and B. The regulations will be made available online.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- development of the ABC system during the strategy period
- completion of the restructuring of relevant regulations by 2013
- incorporation of new international legislation into Norwegian law within given deadlines
- new rules for vessels under 24 metres
- active participation in relevant international bodies

// “Island Wellserver” is registered in NOR. Photo: Harald M. Valderhaug.
Goal 5 - Quality in all areas

The Authority shall have a certified quality management system. Knowledge from analyses and awareness-raising activities shall be communicated in appropriate forums. The Authority will attach importance to continuous monitoring, improvement and rationalization of its services. Employees will provide good service based on the main principles of openness and accessibility and communicate in clear, plain and user-friendly language. All matters are to be handled in compliance with the prevailing regulations applicable to government administrations.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- A certified quality management system in place in all the Authority’s operational units by May 2012
- Up-to-date and user-friendly service declaration
- Processing times in accordance with the provisions of the Norwegian Public Administration Act and the Authority’s service declaration
- Adherence to the Authority’s language policy
- No procedural errors that result in reversal of decisions, detention of ships or loss of rights and priority
- Introduction of a new system for personal certificates, the reimbursement scheme and a new case filing system in 2012
- No misconduct or breach of the rules on public procurements
- Measures to improve and simplify our services to the maritime industry
- Arrangement of the NMA’s annual Safety at Sea Conference
- Awareness-raising activities and campaigns

Goal 6 - Attractive workplace

The employees are the Authority’s most important resource. The Authority will work systematically on EHS issues, focusing on ensuring a healthy and meaningful work situation. Recruitment of people with the accurate skills and systematic development of the employee’s skills are essential to achieve the objectives defined in the strategic plan. Systems shall be put in place to ensure personal and professional development, as well as attractive and flexible schemes tailored to the employees’ different phases of life. The Authority shall be user-oriented, maintain a clear focus on targets, results, collaboration and coordination, competence, learning and development as well as participation and involvement.

Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:
- Active use of the competence management system (KOMPIS)
- Opportunities for skills enhancement and active use of the NMA’s scholarship scheme
- Development and implementation of a plan for parallel career paths
- Employees with special needs shall, whenever possible, be offered adapted solutions
- Completion of the planned management development programme
- Sickness absence shall be lower than the average rate in the public sector
- Systematic EHS work
- Identification of reasons for termination of employment
Performance in this area will be measured against the following criteria:

- regular user satisfaction surveys
- active communication with our users in accordance with the communication plan
- high level of service
- continuous development of user friendly websites
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- A good reputation is essential for the Authority’s credibility as a supervisory authority and ship register, and to recruit and retain employees. A good reputation is also important to ensure that Norway is perceived as a quality flag and a competitive and attractive option for Norwegian and foreign shipowners and the maritime industry as a whole. A good reputation is an absolute requirement from our superior authorities and the maritime industry. Reputation is the users’ and society’s perception of the quality of our services and is thus the total sum of the other main objectives. The Authority strives to achieve active communication with our users, to offer good electronic solutions, correct processing of applications and to promote simpler, more coordinated maritime management.

User-friendly service

**Electronic submission of drawings**

In March 2012, the Norwegian Maritime Authority switched to online submission and processing of drawings. The Authority now encourages the industry to submit drawings electronically as e-mail attachments. This is a convenient and user-friendly system and is expected to result in faster and more efficient processing. In addition, electronic submission of drawings provides environmental benefits, due to the reduced need for paper copies. Now the only paper copies of drawings needed are those for display in the vessel.

**Electronic submission of forms**

From March 2011, users have been able to use our electronic form submission service. Logging in via the e-government portal Altinn, users can submit a range of forms related to vessels and accidents. We are constantly working on making new types of forms available for electronic submission. It is still possible to complete printed forms and submit them by post, but more and more users are switching to electronic forms because of the benefits this affords. You can find out which forms can be completed and submitted online on our website www.sjofartsdir.no, under the heading “Forms”. Here there is also a link to the Altinn log-in page.

**Applications for personal certificates**

From October 2012, it will be possible for seafarers to apply for personal certificates using our e-forms service, logging in via the Altinn portal. This will simplify and improve the efficiency of application processing, to the benefit of our users. Required documentation of qualifications (medical certificates, certificates from educational institutions, and documents from the shipping companies) are submitted to our database by the issuer and coordinated with applications for a personal certificate. In addition, the certificate fee can now be paid online upon submission of an application, further reducing application processing time.

**The seafarer reimbursement scheme**

From the 6th term in 2012, six application forms in the reimbursement scheme for seafarers will be replaced by a single online form, available on our e-forms webpage, with log-in via the Altinn portal. The application form provides information and assistance on completing the form and the required documentation. Electronic submission of forms via Altinn will also help assure the quality of administrative procedures, reduce processing times and allow electronic responses to applications and inquiries, all of which will benefit our users.
More knowledge – safer sailing

It is essential to exercise good seamanship when you are at sea. The curriculum for the boating licence exam provides fundamental knowledge about good seamanship, operating and looking after boats, and the rules that apply at sea. On passing the final exam (“båtførerproven”), you receive a boating licence for pleasure craft (“båtførerbevis”). Although the preparatory course for the boating licence exam is not obligatory, most candidates will find it useful and informative to take this course prior to taking the exam.

Individuals born in or after 1980 are required to have a boating licence to operate a boat that is longer than 8 metres or with an engine of 25 HP or more. However, the Norwegian Maritime Authority urges everyone who is going to operate a pleasure craft to obtain a boating licence.

The company Norsk Test AS has a list of places where you can take the boating licence exam and the bodies that issue Norwegian boating licences on behalf of the Norwegian Maritime Authority. Read more about the Norwegian boating licence on www.sjofartsdir.no and www.norsktest.no.
The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s website www.sjofartsdir.no is the Authority’s main online portal. A new website was launched on 2 January 2012 in connection with the merger of the Norwegian Maritime Directorate and the Norwegian Ship Registers. The objective is for the website to be a user-friendly portal where the Authority’s users can find relevant and necessary information. The new website organizes content under four main headings: seafarers, vessels, accidents and safety, and the environment. In addition, it provides links to regulations, a wide range of government circulars, documents from consultative hearings, news, vacancies, etc.

The Safe Boating campaign aims to prevent accidents involving pleasure crafts and has a separate web page: www.sjovett.no. Here you will find information about the boating licence exam, where to hire life jackets, the Safe Boating rules and other relevant Safe Boating content. You can also order free information leaflets on Safe Boating, and teaching material for use in schools on the website.

www.yrkesfisker.no is an online portal for commercial fishermen. This website contains important information relating to regulations, checklists, accident prevention on board and other safety-related information. The purpose of establishing a separate website for commercial fishermen is to make it easier to find the correct regulations and relevant information in order to ensure safety and improved working conditions on board.

The Norwegian Maritime Authority’s headquarter is in Haugesund. The Norwegian Ship Registers NIS/NOR are based in Bergen and there are 17 stations along the coast. Additionally, the NMA manages three welfare stations overseas. All in all the NMA employs approximately 330 people and roughly one-third of the personnel is at coastal stations.

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The stations in the Region North:
Trondheim, Rørvik, Sandnessjøen, Boda, Svolvær, Harstad, Tromsø, Hammerfest

The stations in the Region South:
Oslo, Larvik, Kristiansand, Stavanger, Haugesund, Bergen, Florø, Ålesund, Kristiansund
Norway as a quality flag

Norway has been a prominent maritime nation since the early 1900’s. Norwegian maritime and shipping law represents safety and professionalism and applies to all vessels registered in the Ship Registers NIS/NOR. Norway also offers a very competitive tax scheme for shipping companies.

The work done through the Norwegian Maritime Authority is part of the Norwegian Government’s maritime strategy, that Norway will continue to be a leading maritime nation. The goal is to ensure that Norway is an attractive flag for Norwegian and foreign shipowners.

With consular representation in 164 countries, Norwegian ships and crews are assured a high level of assistance all around the world. The consular stations issue and endorse certificates on behalf of the NMA and are often involved in connection with deliveries and change of flag. The Norwegian flag symbolizes quality, and Norway is one of the few countries approved by the Paris MoU as low risk in the new port state control regime.

The Ship Registers NIS / NOR are managed with a high level of service. Registration matters are answered the day they are received, and exact time are registered. Documents and enquiries are replied to the same day they are received and registrations are carried out at the actual time between the hours of 7 a.m. and midnight. This aids in the protection of legal rights for owners, mortgagees and property. As a legal protection registry, we must prevent delays in the system that may lead to loss of priority. The registers have a solid reputation of being professional, efficient and service-oriented.

Norway as a quality flag

Photo: Scanpix