

Mercy Ships

Volunteer Guidebook





Volunteer Guidebook

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In addition to the resources in myMercy , this Guidebook will provide you with important details about serving onboard. We want all crew to feel supported and prepared from the moment they submit an application until they arrive safely home after volunteering. We are here to help.	18
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1. Training & Support

Training in the US

Foundations of Mercy Ships is a 3-day course held at the International Support Center in Texas three times per year. If you attend this optional training, you'll walk away with an understanding of the mission and history of Mercy Ships, as well as what to expect onboard as a volunteer.

On Boarding is required for crew accepted to volunteer for 12 or more months. Serving for extended periods can be challenging, and we want every crew member making this investment to walk onboard fully prepared for their commitment and aligned with our mission.

Training in Europe

Introduction to Mercy Ships is a weekend-long course offered in the Netherlands three times per year, with similar content to the Foundations of Mercy Ships course in Texas.

Mercy Ships International Offices

Our crew come from all over the world and are supported by our international staff. While your application is handled by the Human Resources team at our International Support Center in Texas, we have 16 other offices around the world with devoted crew coordinators ready to help you throughout your Mercy Ships journey.

Maritime Training

Since our crew are living and working onboard, naturally some positions require certain licenses or maritime training. All non-medical crew joining for more than six months are encouraged to join us for **Basic Training** and **Crowd Management**. - and we arrange all the details for you.

Some maritime crew in our Deck and Engineering departments may also qualify for assistance with other, more advanced training. This is typically requested once you are onboard.

Onboard Training & Orientations

Immediately upon arrival onboard, you'll officially embark and collect your ID. Our Reception and Hospitality teams will be there to help you - and they even provide snacks! You will receive a new crew handbook to help you as you adjust to life on a ship, and within 24 hours, you'll be taken on a complete ship tour.

Incoming crew all undergo new crew orientation within one week of arrival, which includes a basic safety and security familiarisation specific to both the vessel and the country in which it is docked.

Crew also undergo an on-the-job orientation on their first day of work.



2. Ship Life

Think of the ship as a small town. There's obviously a hospital, but there's so much more! Meals are served in the **dining room** daily, provided by our Galley Team. There is also a **crew galley** if you want to make your favorite dish!

You can make an appointment in our small **Hair Salon** for a haircut or colour (for a small fee), enjoy a hot beverage at our **Starbucks™ Café**, or visit the **library** and find a good book or movie to borrow! You can grab a snack from the **concessions stand**, buy some laundry tablets from the **convenience store**, withdraw some cash from the **Crew Bank** before a trip to a local market, or go workout in the small **gym** - all onboard. There's even a **pool** - don't forget your bathing suit!

If you're feeling poorly, don't worry - our Crew Physician, Crew Dentist, and Pharmacists are there to help you recover.¹

Work and Time Off

Our crew are some of the hardest working people on the planet. We have a big job to do, and our crew are up to the task! Different teams onboard have different schedules and shifts, including some weekends. More role-specific information can be found in [myMercy](#) if you're curious, but your specific schedule will be communicated to you upon arrival. Most crew work 40-45 hours per week.

In addition to the weekend/no-shift days during the week, we also have a three-day weekend scheduled typically every six weeks to allow crew extra time off. Though some will still be on-shift during this time, the ship shuts down to focus only on essential business duties.

¹ More serious issues may have to be addressed in your home country. Due to legal and liability issues, Mercy Ships does not perform elective surgeries for crew.

Spiritual Life

While shorter term crew are not required to be Christians, all crew are expected to respect and support the mission and core values of Mercy Ships. And while crew come from many different nations with different denominational backgrounds, it is important to come together as a community, supporting the mission of Mercy Ships together.

All crew are expected to attend departmental or community meetings onboard, which often include worship, prayer, and biblical references, in addition to ordinary business announcements and updates. Integrating our love of God with our passion for bringing hope and healing is what makes Mercy Ships such a unique community!

There are many ways to enrich your own spiritual health while onboard, and we encourage all crew to take advantage of these opportunities for small groups, visiting local churches, and more!

Community of Faith

A Community of Faith is a group of individuals who choose to live, work, and worship together in community, sacrificially serving common values and purpose.

Mercy Ships follows the 2,000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the world's forgotten poor. Shorter-term volunteers (onboard for a year or less) come to serve, learn, and grow alongside our Community of Faith that constitutes the core of life with Mercy Ships.

All serving with Mercy Ships worldwide are expected to:

Respect Mercy Ships Core Values.

- Love God
- Love and serve others
- Be people of integrity
- Be people of excellence in all we say and do

Abide by the Code of Conduct.

It is our goal to see all crew grow in their faith, love, character, skills, and competence, no matter how long their service or tenure.

Code of Conduct

As an international, faith-based charity, our foundation rests on an integrated biblical worldview of service to others and a personal relationship with Jesus. The Code of Conduct's purpose is to ensure the safety of staff and crew, as well as protect the reputation of Mercy Ships. As we typically serve in Muslim-majority areas, we choose to take a more conservative approach to our Code of Conduct. A summary is included in this Guidebook; however, it can also be found [here](#) (Navigator) in full. All accepted crew are required to sign the document as an agreement before they arrive onboard. Any violations are handled by the Human Resources department and could result in a warning or dismissal.

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, & Smoking

All Mercy Ships locations are alcohol-, drug-, and smoke-free environments.

While ashore, at a restaurant, consuming beer or wine in moderation is generally acceptable. Excessive drinking is not tolerated, and crew are not to visit bars, nightclubs, discos, or similar establishments. Crew suspected of intoxication may be asked to take a breathalyser test. Under no circumstances should crew operate vehicles (owned by Mercy Ships or otherwise) after drinking.

We are a drug-free organisation and have a zero-tolerance policy relating to possession or abuse of drugs, including prescription drugs.

Smoking cigarettes, “vapes”/e-cigarettes, or similar items is considered taboo for many African Christians, so while we do permit smoking ashore, we do ask that you find a discreet area that is out of sight. No smoking is allowed onboard.

Sexual Conduct & Harrassment

Crew are not to engage in sexual activity outside of legal marriage between a husband and wife. Crew are not permitted to be alone in a cabin with someone of the opposite sex (aside from their spouse or child) after 10 PM. A man and woman who are not married to each other should not travel alone together overnight or share accommodations, nor should a mixed group of men and women share the same accommodations.

Pornography in any form is not allowed.

Mercy Ships has a zero-tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment (both verbal and physical).

Child Safety

At Mercy Ships, we take children's safety very seriously. Our policies are in place to protect both crew children as well as local children & patients. These rules are in effect at all times, for all crew and staff. Once accepted, you'll be asked to read and sign the Child Safety Code of Conduct as well as complete a brief child safety training online.

Dress Code

Modest apparel is essential in community life. All staff and crew are expected to honour each other in their choice of attire. For more information, refer to the full Dress Code on page 11 of this Guidebook.

Violence

Fighting and attempting bodily harm or injury will not be tolerated.

Betting & Gambling

Betting and gambling for individual monetary gain on Mercy Ships premises is prohibited.

Other

Other offenses requiring disciplinary action include destroying or defacing Mercy Ships property, theft or dishonesty, violation of safety rules or common safety practices, misuse of confidential information, and unauthorised use of Mercy Ships property, finances, or equipment.

3. What to Expect

Accommodations

Housing is a big challenge onboard, but we try to utilise this fixed resource to the best of our ability. Most cabins have self-contained bathrooms and also have a window or porthole. All cabins are furnished with beds, a small cabinet/closet for each crew member, and access to WiFi. Crew are responsible for cleaning their own bathrooms and cabin spaces.

Cabin assignments are based on the volunteer's length of commitment. Single crew can expect to stay in a multi-berth cabin (with 6, 8, or 12 beds), and incoming crew should expect to start off on the top bunk in their cabins. We do our best to facilitate special needs, but each person is encouraged to rise to the challenge of sharing space with other crew from different countries, cultures, and with different sleeping habits or schedules.

Cabins can be decorated and personalised by hanging pictures and other items using magnets or sticky tack.

Each cabinet is approximately 7 feet tall and 20 inches wide / 2 meters tall and 51 centimeters wide, so crew should plan to be creative with their packing and storage! We recommend packing with a duffel bag as opposed to a hard-shell suitcase, as the soft/collapsible luggage is easier to stow away.

Electricity onboard is 220 volts/5Hz, and the entire ship is fitted with British-style three-prong electrical outlets. Some electronics, including most laptops, come with dual voltage power supplies and may not need a transformer. However, any appliance that does not already have a British plug attached will require an adaptor - which can be purchased onboard or brought from home.

Meals

Our amazing Food Services crew makes and serves cooked meals in our dining room three times per day and twice on the weekends (with your lunch offerings set out for you during breakfast to take away). The menu is on a planned, 8-week rolling schedule, utilising ingredients sourced both locally as well as shipped from Europe. While fresh foods are usually offered daily, we are unable to fully cater to vegetarians, vegans, or to those on gluten-free diets.

Our Crew Galley is available to all crew for personal cooking. Food and supplies can be purchased at a local market or in the convenience store onboard, Pier 99.

It is helpful to bring or buy a container to store your lunch on the weekends, your meals from the Crew Galley, or meals to eat later (if you're a shift worker).

There is typically a good selection of local restaurants from which to choose, should you want to go out for any meals. Recommended restaurants can be found in country information binders in the lounge.

All food and water provided onboard is safe for consumption.

Fun, Games, and Time Off

The community onboard is both hard-working and fun! They love getting together, playing games, putting together “watch parties” for big sports matches and televised events, organising movie nights, beach or hiking trips, and more. Once onboard you will be shown an activity binder where you can sign up to join in!

Of course, sometimes the best fun is impromptu. Take a walk through the Midship Lounge after work, and you’re sure to find a few groups jumping into a game. In fact, you may want to bring your favorite game with you to share with others!

Throughout the year, there are usually also fun events taking place - creative cooking competitions, BBQs on the dock, karaoke in the Midship Lounge, fashion shows featuring clothing by local seamstresses and tailors, and even video competitions. Your creative ideas are welcome!

During the course of a field service, Mercy Ships partners with local organisations and churches to provide opportunities for crew to join meaningful projects within the community. You can sign up to join our Mercy Ministries programs in the activity binder, with opportunities typically offered on the weekends, with some availability during the week if you are not on-shift. You can also visit local churches on Sundays and during their services throughout the week.

Self-Care

Living onboard in a foreign country can be challenging. You’re working and living in a confined space, away from family and the familiarity of home. The parts of life onboard that make it unique and joyful can also be the same things that sometimes make it difficult. We want every crew member to feel like a valued part of the community, with healthy boundaries, and space to rest when needed!

Being an introvert onboard can be a challenge, as “alone time” can be hard to come by! Extroverts don’t get off so easily, though! It may actually be *more* common for extroverts to experience community burnout as there are seemingly endless opportunities to be around others. We encourage all crew to make a conscious effort to take measure of how they are feeling and seek out time to rest and be alone when necessary.

For crew who need a little help, advice, or nudge in the right direction, our Transition Facilitator and Chaplain Counselor are available to “unpack” your experience and to check in with you.

Staying in touch

The **ship** has a US based satellite phone system. Personal calls can be made from your cabin; however, you'll need a phone card if you want to call out. Mobile phones may be brought with you, but check with your service provider for network coverage/availability. Our shop onboard, Pier 99, sells both calling cards and local SIM cards.

Though we have an internet café onboard, you're encouraged to bring your personal laptop, tablet, and/or phone with you and connect to the WiFi, with access points in all cabins and in most common/public areas. Please note, the internet can sometimes become slow - at which time we may restrict applications such as Skype, FaceTime, YouTube/streaming services, and the like to limit bandwidth.

Letters and parcels are regularly forwarded to the ship by regular postal mail if first sent to the International Support Center in Texas or the European Distribution Center in the Netherlands, though it may take several weeks for it to arrive to the ship. Any mail delivered weighing over 1 ounce will be charged at the rate of \$0.55 US per 1 ounce/28 grams. Crew serving for longer periods can also send items via container (which takes several months to pack and arrive), for which there is no charge by weight.

Anything larger than a standard envelope sent for crew mail needs to have a detailed list of all contents on the outside of the parcel (otherwise we'll have to open it!). Items we can't send on include aerosol containers, bleach, poisons, nail polish or polish remover, perfumes, detergent, ammonia, disinfectants, and batteries.

Crew can also send letters home via other crew who are departing. US and UK postage stamps are available onboard.

Africa Mercy phone number:

+001.954.538.6110

Africa Mercy mail should be addressed to one of the following:

Sent to the International Support Center by USPS:

[Full Crew Member Name & Department]
Mercy Ships AFM - Crew Mail (or) Container
P.O. Box 2020
Lindale, TX 75771-2020
USA

Sent to the International Support Center by FedEx, UPS, or DHL:

[Full Crew Member Name & Department]
Mercy Ships AFM - Crew Mail (or) Container
15862 State Highway 110 N
Lindale, TX 75771-5932
USA

Sent to the European Distribution Center:

[Full Crew Member Name & Department]
Mercy Ships AFM - Crew Mail (or) Container
Ridderkerkstraat 20
3076 JW Rotterdam
THE NETHERLANDS

4. Dress & Uniform Guidelines

General Rules

- Knees must be covered when standing or sitting.
- Undergarments should never show, nor skin between trousers and top.
- Tight trousers (jeans/leggings) are only allowed under a dress, long tunic, or top reaching mid-thigh; otherwise, trousers need to be loose-fitting.
- Spaghetti-straps and low necklines are not allowed.
- Shorts that reach the knees may be worn outside of business hours (8 AM - 5 PM), except in reception, during patient interaction in the hospital or on deck 7, and during official functions onboard.
- Proper footwear must be worn at all times, unless in your cabin or at the pool. All crew should bring a pair of nicer closed-toe shoes for church and special occasions.
- Tattoos and body piercings can carry negative connotations in West Africa; therefore, crew are encouraged to keep them covered if possible.

Sporting Activities

- For sport onboard, clothing may be tighter-fitting than what's allowed for normal wear. Do cover up or change directly afterward.
- For sport ashore, clothing must be loose-fitting. Basketball shorts are appropriate, but lycra/spandex and other form-fitting clothing are not. When travelling to and from exercise/sport, sweat pants or a long wrap should be worn over shorts.

Guidelines for Women

- For official functions, business meetings, and church, wearing a looser fitting dress, top with loose-fitting slacks/trousers, or a business suit with closed-toed shoes is appropriate.
- When going ashore or during patient interactions, dresses are best, and no shorts should be worn.
- When onboard, tops should be loose-fitting and *can* be sleeveless as long as long as they aren't thin-strapped.
- When swimming, suits/bathing costumes should be a modest one-piece or 'tankini' with no visible skin between the top and bottom. Clothing needs to be worn over the bathing suit to and from the pool (not just a towel!).

Guidelines for Men

- For official functions, business meetings, and church, wearing long slacks/trousers with a shirt and tie with closed-toed dress shoes is appropriate.
- When going ashore or during patient interactions, long slacks/trousers with a loose-fitting top can be worn.
- While enjoying the pool, wear boxer or shorts-style swim trunks - no super short or tight-fitting swimwear, please! Clothing needs to be worn over the bathing suit to and from the pool (not just a towel!).
- Earrings on men are considered taboo in many parts of West Africa and should be taken off if possible.
- Men with long hair may find they are better received with their hair tied back or worn in a bun.

If you've already been accepted as crew and you've completed your Staff Confidentiality Agreement, you have access to the full dress code in Navigator, which includes "pro-tips" from crew, as well as "do" and "don't" photographs that will help you as you prepare!

[Link to full Dress Code](#)

What's with the Dress Code?

While over half of the population in West Africa are under the age of 25 and live with exposure to Western media and culture, older generations and those from rural areas may not agree with what they perceive to be negative influences coming from the West, which some associate with immorality. To show respect for the culture while Mercy Ships are guests in the country, we've adapted this more conservative dress code, applicable to all crew, guests, and visitors age 13 and older.

Thank you in advance for supporting these guidelines!

Uniforms for Reception, Purser, & Hospitality

You'll need to bring 2-3 white uniform shirts, 1-2 sets of black trousers (and/or black skirts that fall below the knee when standing and sitting), and black, close-toed dress shoes.

Epaulettes will be provided for you onboard.

We do keep a selection of white uniform shirts onboard, but there's no guarantee we will have the appropriate sizes for everyone. Many online retailers sell these shirts, including Amazon.

Uniforms for Housekeeping

A uniform will be provided for you onboard. You'll want to bring some comfortable trainers / tennis shoes you don't mind getting a little dirty.



Uniforms for Galley & Dining Room

An apron and a uniform shirt and trousers will be provided for you onboard, though you should bring undershirts/tops to wear underneath your uniform shirt. If you choose not to wear the issued trousers, you can wear your own, as long as they reach to your ankles and can get a little wet or dirty!

You'll be provided with a uniform cap or hat to wear during shifts.

Non-slip shoes are important! We have a small selection of overshoes onboard but cannot accommodate wide sizes or guarantee we will have the appropriate sizes available for everyone. You can purchase non-slip shoes from any retailer as long as they don't have holes in the top of the shoe.

Uniforms for Deck & Engineering

Officers and engineers should bring at least one pair of khaki trousers and a khaki shirt with epaulettes for general work and on-duty days, as well as one pair of black slacks.

There is a selection of coveralls, steel-toed boots, and white epaulette shirts kept onboard, but we cannot guarantee we will have the appropriate sizes available for everyone. With this in mind, you may want to bring your own coveralls and/or steel-toed boots with you.

Mercy Ships will provide one set of epaulettes for each uniform.

Uniforms for Hospital

You will be provided with scrubs, but you may want to bring a pair of your own for our "Crazy Scrub" Fridays!

5. What to Bring / Packing Lists

Clothing

Clothing onboard is conservative yet casual (refer to Dress Code on page 11). You'll want to bring some nicer clothing for special occasions and church, especially if you're staying for an extended period. Due to the limited space in the cabins, the rule of thumb is to pack enough clothing for 7-10 days.

Shoes

Consider bringing a pair of dress shoes, trainers, "flats"/casual shoes, and sandals. What you bring depends on your preferences, role onboard, and length of service.

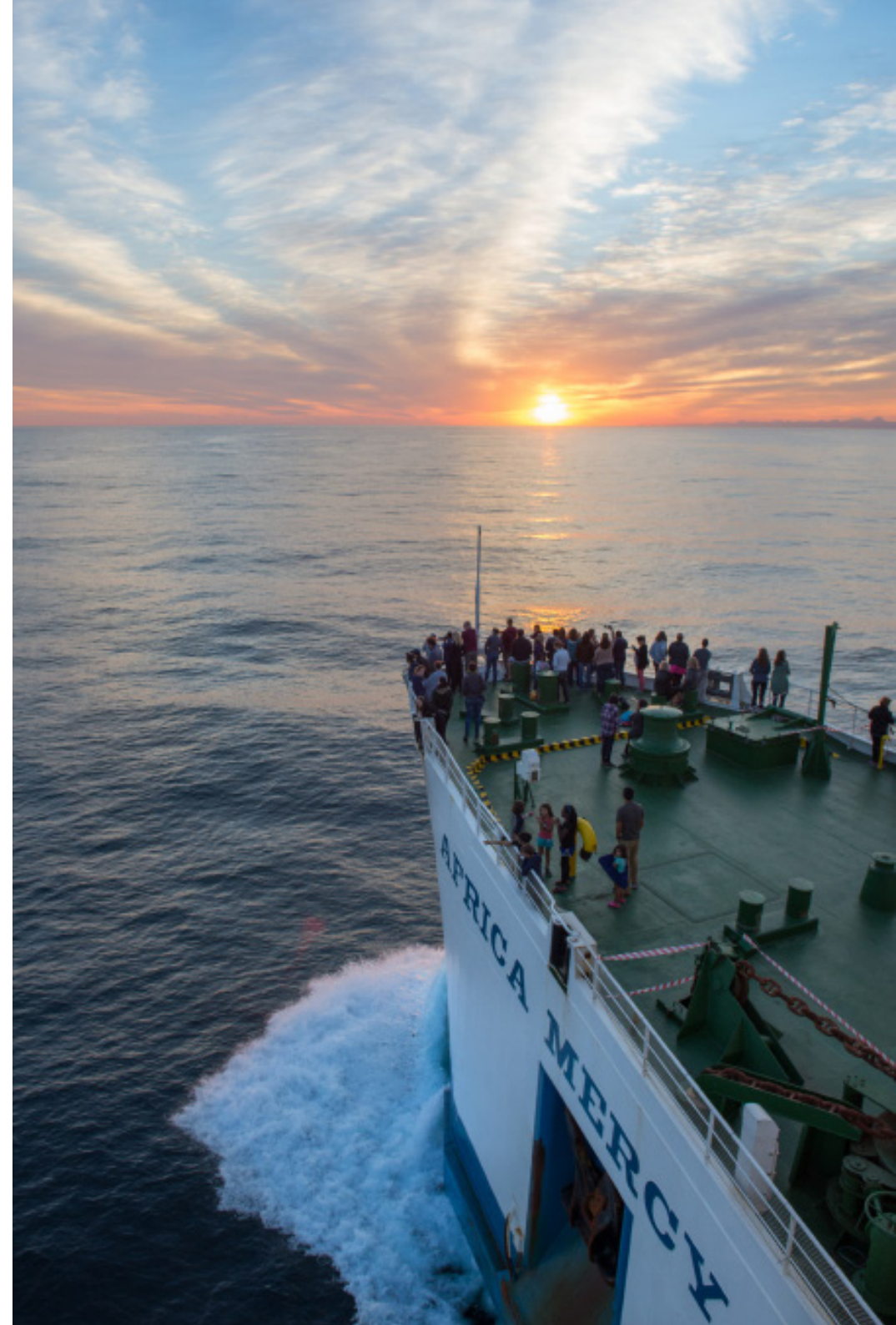
Toiletries

We sell a range of toiletries in Pier 99, but the selection is limited and may vary. If you have preferred brands, you may want to bring these with you as we can't guarantee stock onboard.

Remember nail polish, polish remover, hair colour, and perfumes cannot be shipped in the post due to hazardous materials regulations - so you might want to bring these with you if you use them.

Luggage

Duffel bags or collapsable luggage are preferred as they're easier to store.



Consider Bringing...

- 3+ washable, cloth face masks
- Laundry bag
- Small flashlight / headtorch
- Sunglasses
- Mosquito spray*
- Sunscreen / Sunblock*
- Sleeping bag / travel hammock if you want to travel / camp ashore
- Travel mug*
- Glass or plastic take-away containers
- Phone card*
- Electrical adaptor for the British plugs onboard*
- Electrical adaptor for the EU plugs ashore
- Non-prescription/over-the-counter medications*
- Backpack or secure bag
- Beach / travel towel

- Ear plugs
- Magnets or sticky tack*
- Battery-powered alarm clock
- Throw blanket (The ship can be quite chilly!)
- A favorite game
- Personal photos, etc. with which you may want to personalise your bunk-space
- Hanging bedside pocket
- Small hair-wrap drying towel

**denotes items also sold in Pier 99 or the Pharmacy*

We provide...

- One bath towel
- One fitted sheet
- One duvet with a cover
- One pillow
- One pillowcase

Don't Bring...

- Large suitcases
- Large musical instruments
- Firearms or any sort of weapons
- Candles
- Cordless appliances using butane-fuel
- Products containing bleach
- Expensive jewelry and electronics
- Medical supplies for donation
- Gifts for patients

6. Vaccinations / TB Testing and Medication

Mandatory immunisations for adult crew:

- **Yellow Fever** (single dose within lifetime)
- **Hepatitis B** (series of 3)
- **MMR - Measles, Mumps, Rubella** (series of 2)
- **Tetanus/Diphtheria** (one dose within last 10 years)
- **Tuberculosis Test or Chest X-Ray** (completed at least 12 months prior to joining - Chest X-Ray valid for 5 years)

Additional mandatory immunisations for Hospital, Dental, & Engineering crew:

- **Typhoid** (oral in last 5 years/injection in last 2 years)
- **Hepatitis A** (series of 2)

Recommended immunisations for adult crew:

- **Typhoid** (oral in last 5 years/injection in last 2 years)
- **Hepatitis A** (series of 2)
- **Pertussis**
- **Polio Booster** (within last 10 years)
- **Meningitis ACWY** (within last 5 years)
- **Rabies** (series of 3)
- **HIB (Haemophilus Influenza Type B) Booster**

For additional details regarding these requirements, please refer to the immunisation checklist you will be sent after you receive your official offer letter or contact our Medical Review Facilitator at medical.review.facil@mercyships.org.



Prescription Medications

If you take specific medication for a chronic condition, then we recommend you please bring a supply to last the entirety of your stay; however, if you are serving longer than a year, please bring a supply to last 6 months, and contact our pharmacist onboard at **pharmacist.afm@mercyships.org** to see if they can stock their medicines appropriately. When preparing your hand luggage pre-departure, we also highly recommend keeping at least a two-week supply in your carry-on luggage when travelling, in case your checked baggage is lost or delayed.

Malaria Medication

Malaria is a common cause of illness and a potential cause of death in travellers to Africa. Prophylaxis medication should be taken to help in the prevention of the disease. It is your responsibility to take proper precautions, and we advise that you cover yourself against malaria at all times.

You will need to consult with your primary care physician to determine which prophylaxis is best for you. You should begin taking malaria prophylaxis as prescribed before arriving, and bring a supply to last the entirety of your stay, or up to three months. If you bring a three-month supply, you can purchase any needed supplements for the rest of your commitment from the Pharmacy at a discounted price. Those who do not bring a three-month supply can purchase prophylaxis from the Pharmacy at full-price.

The Pharmacy onboard stocks Doxycycline, Mefloquine, and Atovaquone/Proguanil/Malarone. If you elect to take a different anti-malarial, you need to bring enough with you for the entirety of your commitment.


7. Commitment Levels

Each position has a preferred minimum commitment length that determines the ideal Commitment Level for each volunteer.

The Commitment Level then determines factors such as what training is required, what your crew fees will be each month, how much time off you accrue, and more.


We want to honour those who make longer commitments, and those faithful members of the Mercy Ships family who rejoin as crew regularly by providing crew fee discounts, offering more time off, and other benefits.

Those with Level 3 and 4 commitments are also part of our Community of Faith as a legally organized religious order.

		VOLUNTEER POSITION COMMITMENT STRUCTURE	
		Shorter Term Service (Up to 12 Months)	
COMMITMENT		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
CREW FEES (USD)		2 weeks to 3 months	3 to 12 months
WITH DISCOUNT	After 1st Visit	\$700	\$650
	After 4th Visit	\$550	\$500
	For Attending On Boarding†	\$350	\$350
REQUIRED TRAINING		n/a	Equipping to Serve*
PTO BENEFIT / ACCRUAL		n/a	Accrued at .055/day, 10 days maximum
INSURANCE		Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is encouraged.	Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is encouraged.

*Equipping to Serve is a course facilitated onboard the ship.

†On Boarding is a course facilitated at the International Support Center in Texas, USA.

		VOLUNTEER POSITION COMMITMENT STRUCTURE	
		Community of Faith (12+ Months)	
COMMITMENT		LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
CREW FEES (USD)		12 to 24 months	24+ months
After 24 months of consecutive service		\$350	\$250
REQUIRED TRAINING		\$250	\$250
PTO BENEFIT / ACCRUAL		On Boarding†	On Boarding†
INSURANCE		1st year: 20 days/5 weeks maximum	30 days/6 weeks maximum
RE-ENTRY SAVINGS		After 1st year: 25 days/5 weeks maximum	
SUBSIDIZED TRAVEL		Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is encouraged.	Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is encouraged.
		Contribute after 1 year, matched after 4 years of continuous service.	Contribute after 1 year, matched after 4 years of continuous service.
		Eligible to apply after 3 years of continuous service.	Eligible to apply after 3 years of continuous service.

†On Boarding is a course facilitated at the International Support Center in Texas, USA.

8. Money Matters

Crew Fees

Crew fees help cover operational expenses onboard so we can maximise the impact of donations by putting 75% directly into programmatic expenses, like the cost of surgery for a patient who needs it.

Crew fees are paid monthly with a base of USD \$700.

Discounts

As noted in the previous section regarding Commitment Levels, discounts are given to crew who

- make longer commitments
- have completed On Boarding previously
- are returning alumni
- children/minors
- those from “Tier II” countries¹

We are committed to keeping crew fees as low as possible, but crew can expect crew fees to increase 2-5% each year.

¹ Countries with an average income of lower than 25K annually are classified as Tier II and subject to a 50% discount on crew fees.

ADULTS			
LEVEL	COMMITMENT	TIER I	TIER II
1	2 weeks to 12 weeks	\$700	\$350
2	12 weeks to 12 months	\$650	\$325
3	12 to 24 months	\$350	\$175
4	24+ months	\$250	\$125
CHILDREN			
Note: Children under two years old are not charged crew fees.			
LEVEL	COMMITMENT	TIER I	TIER II
1	2 weeks to 12 months	\$100	\$50
2			
3	12+ months	\$50	\$25
4			
TIER I NATIONS			
Any nation not in this list is considered Tier II.			
Europe		Asia	Americas / Africa / South Pacific
Belgium	Luxembourg	Bahrain	Australia
Cyprus	Malta	Brunei	Canada
Denmark	Netherlands	Hong Kong	New Zealand
Estonia	Norway	Israel	Seychelles
Finland	San Marino	Japan	United States
France	Slovakia	Kuwait	
Germany	Slovenia	Oman	
Iceland	Spain	Qatar	
Ireland	Sweden	Singapore	
Italy	Switzerland	South Korea	
Lithuania	United Kingdom	Taiwan	
		United Arab Emirates	

Budgets & fundraising

Are you trying to wrap your head around budgeting, crew fees, and fundraising for your time onboard? The FinACE team is here to help!

FinACE stands for Financial Accountability, Coaching, and Encouragement, and it is their goal to ensure each volunteer is financially prepared for their service onboard.

Whether or not you are fundraising, the FinACE team is here to walk you through budgeting, expenses, financial planning, tax implications, and more.

Crew coordinators working in our international Mercy Ships offices may also provide additional information to you as appropriate, depending on your country of residence and/or citizenship.¹

Processing donations through Mercy Ships

Once you've received your offer letter to join, you can elect to process donations through Mercy Ships. We would then assign you a special code to give your donors, ensuring any gifts made for you through Mercy Ships are tax deductible.

Paying your crew fees

If your commitment is three months or less, your crew fees are due in one sum once you arrive onboard. Otherwise, crew fees are paid at the beginning of each month and can be paid by credit card, personal check, or transfer from your Crew Bank account.

¹ Refer to Appendix A for Mercy Ship international office contact information



What can the Crew Bank do for me?

What is the Crew Bank?

The Crew Bank is a service provided to all crew serving onboard. It operates very much like any other bank. You're even able to monitor your balance and spending activity from your computer! However, our Crew Bank isn't connected to any outside banking network.

How do I set up an account?

When you arrive onboard, you'll check in with our Finance team, and an account will be opened for you.

What can you do with your crew account?

You can pay your crew fees, make deposits, request cash withdrawals, transfer money to other crew accounts, and pay for purchases in Pier 99 and the Café.

In what ways can money be deposited into the account?

- Support from donors, received by Mercy Ships
- Bank transfers (wire transfers or EFTs)
- Personal check (USD, GBP, EUR, or CAN)
- Credit card with 3% added fee (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover)
- Cash (USD, GBP, EUR, or local African currency)
- Traveler's checks (USD, GBP, EUR)

Can I cash a personal check in the Crew Bank that is made out to me?

Yes, you can endorse it, and it can be deposited into your Crew Bank account. There are no fees or charges for this; however, if the check is from one of your supporters, they cannot be issued a receipt for their donation since the check is not made out to Mercy Ships.

How can I take money out of my account?

You can withdraw money by accessing your account online or by going to the Crew Bank onboard in person during its hours of operation. You can buy money in the local currency of the nation we are visiting, USD, GBP, or EUR at the exchange rate of the date of purchase.

What currency is used onboard?

US Dollars are used for transactions such as crew fees, deposits into your account, and purchases in Pier 99 and the Café. If you are not from the US and plan to use your card to make a deposit, you should tell your credit card company that you will have some transactions processed through the US so your account isn't flagged or locked!

9. Insurance

Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

Evacuation and repatriation insurance is provided to all crew through Talent Trust Consultants (TTC), and you'll be automatically enrolled in the program.

What is evacuation and repatriation insurance?

The costs incurred¹ will be paid for (or reimbursed) by TTC in the event that you're injured or seriously sick and we are not able to treat you onboard or in a local hospital. However, benefits are only applicable in the event of an **emergency** situation, so we strongly encourage all crew serving one year or less to also enroll in a medical insurance policy (with TTC or another provider). Crew committing to more than one year onboard are **required** to have a medical insurance policy.

¹ To a certain amount - refer to table on the right.

Crew Evacuation and Repatriation Policy Benefits

- Worldwide: US \$250,000 per year
- Emergency evacuation to nearest appropriate facility: Full Refund
- Repatriation to home country: Full Refund
- Return of mortal remains: US \$15,000
- Multilingual Medical Helpline: 24 Hours
- Choice of hospitals and physicians: unrestricted
- Emergency medical \$ for additional expenses: Full refund
- Emergency medical (inside home country): Up to US \$150,000
- Hospital cash benefit: US \$25 per day
- Pre-existing conditions: Coverage if not ongoing at the date of entry
- Claims processing: Scan and email
- Policy Excess: Nil

For further information, please visit www.talent-trust.com

Evacuation and Repatriation FAQs

When does coverage begin and end?

Coverage begins when the crew member starts travelling by air to the ship and once they arrive back in their home country.

If a crew member takes a 'side trip' on the way to or from the ship, are they covered? For example, a Canadian travels to Egypt for two weeks prior to travelling to the ship's location.

No, a side trip would not be covered by this policy. In this example, the trip to Egypt is not covered, and the time *in* Egypt is not covered; however, the policy would begin as soon as the volunteer started travelling from Egypt to the ship's location.

Does this policy cover crew when they go on vacation?

The policy will cover crew when they go on vacation as long as they are still Mercy Ships crew.

Does this policy cover crew when they take a Leave of Absence (LOA)?

No, an LOA would not be covered by this policy. Coverage would resume when the crew travelled to the ship or from the ship to their destination.

Does the standard policy cover pre-existing conditions?

The policy will cover **new** incidences of a pre-existing condition, but it will not provide coverage for ongoing medical treatment related to a condition for which you may be currently seeking treatment.

What determines if a crew member needs to be evacuated and to where would they be evacuated?

Evacuations are conducted only for emergency situations where appropriate medical care cannot be found in the policy member's current location. This decision is made in consultation with medical services on the ground/ship and with the emergency evacuation providers. The definition of an emergency does require that the treatment is necessary on an in-patient basis.

Crew being evacuated would be transported to the nearest in-patient facility that can address the needs of the emergency (typically in South Africa or continental Europe).

How much medical/health insurance coverage is included?

In the event the crew needs to be evacuated from the ship, US \$250,000 is the standard coverage. This is further limited to US \$150,000 for emergency cover in the event of an evacuation or repatriation to the member's home country.

If it was determined that sufficient medical coverage can be received in-country (versus being evacuated), who would cover those costs? For example, if a crew had a compound fracture in the Canary Islands, and it was determined that the hospital there could provide sufficient treatment, would the evacuation and repatriation policy cover these expenses?

The evacuation and repatriation policy does still cover emergency medical costs in the event that treatment is needed, but an evacuation is not necessary.

Health Insurance

For crew joining for **less** than a year

If you're coming for less than a year, we really recommend you consider additional health insurance during your time onboard. Mercy Ships recommends the **Top-Up Plan from TTc**, in which you can enroll by applying for the **Outreach program** at www.talent-trust.com.

You can also purchase short-term travel insurance in most countries and is typically an option when purchasing your airfare through travel agents. Cost is variable depending on what type of coverage you elect.



For crew joining for **more** than a year

If you're joining for one year or more, you're required to obtain health insurance before your arrival that includes adequate coverage of medical costs worldwide, including pre-existing conditions.

Again, TTc is our preferred provider and offers two different coverage options, depending on your particular situation. Both options meet our requirements. By enrolling in TTc, you will be billed monthly through Mercy Ships.

However, you may be able to find a policy with a different company that meets the requirements, and who also cover pre-existing conditions. Other options to consider may be:

- Gallagher Charitable International Insurance Services

www.travelwithgallagher.com

- World Nomads

www.worldnomads.com

- IMG

www.imglobal.com

- SALT

www.saltinsurance.com

10. Flights & Travel

Are you ready to arrange your travel? Remember to confirm your plans with your volunteer coordinator before you purchase any tickets!

Country-specific travel information

Please refer to the country-specific guidebooks.

Ticket refund policy

Flexibility is key!

Because the ships' schedules can change, we strongly recommend that all crew purchase changeable and/or refundable tickets. Mercy Ships cannot offer refunds or financial assistance with extra costs incurred for changing or cancelling airline tickets when caused by a change in the ships' schedules.

Travel agents

Mercy Ships recommends **Raptim & Key Travel** as partnering travel agents. They can help secure seaman or humanitarian fares and have access to our discount with Brussels Airlines offering lower fares, increased luggage allowance, lounge access, and more!



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After arranging your flights

Once you've purchased your flights, complete the Pre-Arrival form and submit it to your volunteer coordinator. You're almost done!

Immigration and visas

After we've received your flight information and immunisation information, we'll send the immigration documents you'll need to enter the country where the ship is. This could be a visa waiver, or a free visa - it just depends on the country. Because this documentation will be given to you before your arrival, **we need your flight information and passport copy at least four weeks prior to your travel date.**

Once we send your immigration documents, you'll print them and travel with them. You can always call either the Purser onboard or the HR offices in Texas, USA if you encounter any issues.

- Purser, answered 24/7: +1 954 538 6110
- HR, answered 0800-1700 CST Monday-Friday: +1 903 939 7000

Arriving in-country

Upon arrival, your documentation will be processed by the immigration authorities, and you'll collect your baggage. A Mercy Ships representative will be waiting to collect you and bring you onboard.

Bon Voyage!



11. Ship Tips

- Practice taking **short showers** before you arrive! We try to conserve water as much as possible - try making it a personal contest to get the lowest time!
- Need to do your washing? You can utilise the washing machines for your **laundry** by signing up for a time. Be careful not to be late, though!
- Many departments onboard work with other crew as well as local **Day Crew** we hire on-location. Most of our amazing Day Crew work as translators, but they also help in the galley, with housekeeping, down in the engine room, and more!
- Along with a small welcome basket in your cabin, when you arrive you'll also receive a **Nalgene water bottle** - don't lose it!
- **Fire drills** are completed frequently onboard. Be prepared (on Thursdays, hint, hint)!
- The privacy and dignity of our patients is very important to us; therefore, **personal cameras** are not allowed in the HOPE Center or in the hospital. Photos taken by our Communications team are available for you to utilise within your newsletters and fundraising materials.
- Please don't bring **gifts or donations for patients** onboard. If you have a donation, let your volunteer coordinator know, and they will connect you with the right person!

What does *Pier 99* offer?

- Soap & sanitiser, body wash, shampoo, conditioner
- Razors, shaving cream
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss
- Lotions, sun creams, bugspray
- Feminine hygiene products
- Washing powder/laundry soap
- Dish soap, sponges, all-purpose cleaners
- Tweezers, nail clippers
- Lip balms
- Nail polish remover
- Trash bags, Ziploc bags, hand towels
- Magnets, Envelopes, Batteries
- Basic stationery supplies
- Phone cards
- UK power adaptors, basic computer supplies
- Balloons, wrapping paper
- Branded shirts, lanyards, mugs
- Locally-crafted souvenirs
- Chocolates, candies, gum/mints
- Chips/Crisps, crackers
- Cake mix, cookie/bisquit mix
- Granola bars, trail mix, popcorn
- Canned soups
- Basic baking and cooking supplies
- Assorted sodas and juices

This is a sampling of items typically available in Pier 99, our convenience store onboard. All items are subject to availability.

12. Support from Mercy Ships offices

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Thank you.

This life-changing work wouldn't be possible without the passion and selfless commitment from our volunteers.



