



# Mercy Ships Volunteer Guidebook

You're headed to a ship.  
In a different country.  
Where you'll be working.  
And living.  
For weeks, months, or maybe even years.

What do you bring?  
How do you prepare?  
What is it like onboard?

In addition to the location-specific resources, this guidebook you with the important details you need to join us onboard a Mercy Ships vessel. We want all crew to feel supported and prepared for each step in their journey from the moment they submit an application to the moment they arrive safely home after volunteering. We are here to help.

**Together** we bring hope and healing.







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# Training and Support

## Training in the US

**Foundations of Mercy Ships** is a 3-day course held at the International Support Center in Texas several times per year. If you attend this optional training, you will 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 all crew planning to volunteer for 12+ months. Serving for extended periods can be challenging, and we want every crewmember making this life 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 as 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 applications are processed by our Human Resources team at our International Support Center in the US, 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 ships, 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** free of charge.

Some maritime crew in our Deck and Engineering departments may also qualify for assistance with other, more specialized training to maintain or advance their licences.

For all these training needs, our Maritime Training Center is here to help you find the right training and sort through logistics.

## Onboard Training & Orientations

Immediately upon arrival onboard, you will officially embark and collect your ID badge. Our Reception and Hospitality teams will be there to help you - and they even provide snacks! You will receive a crew handbook to orientate you on ship- and community-specifics to help you adjust to life and work onboard a ship. Within 24 hours, you'll receive a ship tour.

All incoming crew undergo new crew orientation with Human Resources the first Monday after arrival which includes a basic safety and security familiarization specific to both the vessel and the country and the country in which it is docked.

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

*Please note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some training may not be available, or may be available in a virtual or hybrid setting instead of fully in-person. For further details, please ask your Volunteer Coordinator.*



meet Bosun, Femi!



# Community Life and Expectations



meet the Silva family!

## Community of Faith

A Community of Faith is a group of individuals who choose to live, work, and worship together as a 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 (joining 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 abide by the Code of Conduct and follow the core values:

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

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

## Spiritual Life

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

All crew are expected to attend any community and departmental meetings onboard, which may include worship, prayer, or Biblical teaching in addition to regular business and organizational announcements. 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 whilst onboard, and we encourage all crew to take advantage of these opportunities for small groups, visiting local churches, and more.



# Community Life and Expectations ...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 all Mercy Ships personnel as well as protect the reputation of Mercy Ships. As we typically serve in more conservative nations, we take a conservative approach with our Code of Conduct. The following is a summary; however, the full document can also be found [here](#). All accepted crew are required to read and acknowledge this agreement prior to arrival onboard. Any violations are handled by the Human Resources team onboard and may lead to disciplinary measures, including warnings or even a dismissal from service.

## Alcohol, Drug Use, and 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 (Mercy Ships' owned or otherwise) after consuming alcohol.

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

Smoking cigarettes, "vapes"/e-cigarettes or similar items is considered taboo in many cultural contexts, so while we do permit smoking ashore, we do ask you find a discreet place to do so, out of sight. Smoking is never allowed onboard.

## Sexual Conduct and Harassment

Crew are not to engage in any 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 mixed groups of men and women share accommodations.

Pornography in any form is prohibited.

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

## Child Safety

At Mercy Ships, we take child safety very seriously. Our policies are in place to protect both the children of our long-term families as well as local children and patients. These rules are in effect at all times, for all Mercy Ships personnel. All personnel are required to read and acknowledge the Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct, as well as complete a brief training course online.

## Dress Code

Modest apparel is essential in community life. All staff and crew are expected to honor each other in their choice of attire. For specifics of the dress code, refer to page 9 in this guide.

## Violence

Fighting or attempting bodily harm or injury to any other individual will not be tolerated.

## Betting and Gambling

Betting or gambling for monetary gain on Mercy Ships premises is not permitted.

## Other

Other offences 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 unauthorized use of Mercy Ships property, finances, or equipment.



# What to Expect

## Work and Time Off

Our crew are some of the most hard-working people on the planet. We have a big job to do, and our crew are up for the task! Different teams onboard have different schedules and shifts, including some weekends. Most crew work between 40-45 hours per week.

In addition to the weekends/no-shift days during the week, we also schedule a three-day weekend about every six weeks to allow the crew additional time off. Though some may still be on-shift during this time, the ships shut down to focus only on essential business duties.

The community onboard are hard-working, but they like to have fun! They love getting together, playing games, putting together 'watch parties' for big sports matches and televised events, organizing movie nights, beach or hiking trips, and so much more. Once onboard, you'll be shown the activity binder where you can sign up to join the organized events.

Of course, some of the best fun is impromptu! Walk through the common areas of the ships and you're sure to find a group for a game. Bring your favorite with you to teach to others!

Throughout the year, there are fun events taking place - creative cooking competitions, barbecues on the dock, karaoke, fashion shows featuring 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 organizations and churches to provide opportunities for crew to join meaningful projects within the community. This could include working with local orphanages, prisons, and charities, and sharing the 'Jesus Film' locally. You can also sign up to join our Mercy Ministries programs in the activity binder, with opportunities 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 crewmember to feel like a valued part of the community, with healthy boundaries, and space to rest when needed!

Being an introvert 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 check in with you as often as needed.

*Please note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some activities ashore (e.g., Mercy Ministries) may not be available depending on local ordinances and epidemiology.*

Meet Nate,  
Director of Clinical Services!





# What to Expect

Think of the ships as small towns. There is obviously a **hospital**, but there is 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 own dish! You can make an appointment in our small **Hair Salon** for a haircut or color (coloring for a small fee) , enjoy a hot beverage or snack in our **cafe**, or visit the **library** and find a new book or movie to borrow. Buy some groceries or laundry tablets from the **Ship Shop**, withdraw cash from the **Crew Bank** before you head to the local market, or exercise in the **gym** - all onboard! There's even a **pool** - don't forget your bathing suit!

If you're feeling poorly, don't worry. Our **Crew Clinic** team is here to help you recover.

## Accommodations

Housing is one of our biggest organizational challenges onboard, but we try to utilize this fixed resource to the best of our ability. All cabins are furnished with beds, a small closet/cabinet for each crewmember, and access to Wifi. Crew are expected to clean and keep their own cabin spaces tidy.

Cabin assignments are based on the crewmember's position and length of commitment. Single crew can expect to stay in a multi-berth cabin with other crew. We do our best to facilitate special needs/requests, but each person is encouraged to rise to the challenge of sharing space with others from different backgrounds, ages, and sleeping habits or schedules.

Cabins can be decorated or personalized by hanging pictures or other items with magnets (all walls onboard are magnetized) or with sticky tack.

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

## Electricity

Our ships are outfitted to accommodate electricity up to 230 V / 50 Hz, though the vessels use different electrical outlets (refer to the information on the right). Depending on where you are traveling from, crew should bring their own power adaptor to accommodate the electrical style of the vessel. Some electronics, including most laptops, come with dual-power supplies and may not need a transformer. However, any device or appliance that does not come with the appropriate plug requires an adaptor.

## Meals

Our amazing Food Services team makes and serves meals in our Dining Room three times a day and twice on weekends (with lunch offerings available to collect at breakfast). While some food is shipped from Europe, we buy most fresh ingredients locally. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee availability of certain foods to cater to specific diets.

Our Crew Galley is available for personal cooking, and you can buy ingredients locally or from the Ship Shop onboard.

All food and water onboard is safe for consumption.

# Global Mercy

Families will be accommodated in a 6-berth family cabin with a kitchenette and living area. The living quarters include a room with a double bed for the parents, and two rooms outfitted with bunk beds for the children.

Couples will be accommodated in a cabin with a double bed and kitchenette.

Single crew will be accommodated in a two-berth or single-berth cabin, depending on their length of commitment and position. All beds are twin sized and on the ground.

Most include a porthole or window. All cabins include a self-contained bathroom.

The *Global Mercy* uses the European-style, two-pronged plugs - 230 Volts / 50 Hz.

# Africa Mercy

Families will be accommodated in a 4- or 6-berth family cabin with a kitchenette and living area. The living quarters include a double bed for the parents, and one or two rooms outfitted with bunk beds for the children (depending on the size of the cabin - 4- or 6-berth).

Couples will be accommodated in a cabin with a double bed and kitchenette.

Single crew will be accommodated in a multi-berth or single-berth cabin, depending on their length of commitment and position. Most multi-berth cabins are furnished with bunk beds. (Note: We cannot guarantee bottom bunk requests!)

Most include a porthole or window. All cabins include a self-contained bathroom.

The *Africa Mercy* uses the British-style, three-pronged plugs - 230 Volts / 50 Hz.



# Staying in Touch

## Phones

Personal calls can be made from your cabin; however, you'll need a phone/calling card in order to make calls outside the ship. Mobile phones may be brought with you, but check with your service provider for network coverage/availability. Our Ship Shop has calling cards and SIM cards available for purchase.

The ships use a US-based satellite phone system.

- *Africa Mercy* phone: + 1 954 538 6110
- *Global Mercy* phone: + 1 954 932 9800

## Internet

Though we have internet cafés onboard, crew are encouraged to bring their personal laptops, tablets, or other personal devices with you. Wifi is available onboard throughout the vessels.

Connectivity and internet speed can sometimes be problematic depending on where the ships are located. Services such as Skype, video conferencing, movie/TV streaming, etc. can sometimes be slow and may be restricted to certain hours to reserve bandwidth.

## Mail

Letters and parcels are regularly forwarded to the vessels by regular postal mail if first sent to the International Support Center in the USA or the European Distribution Center in the Netherlands, though it may take several weeks to arrive onboard. Any mail delivered weighing more than 1 ounce/28 grams will be charged at the rate of \$0.55 USD per ounce/28 grams. Crew serving for longer periods can also send items via shipping container (which takes several months to pack and arrive on site), for which there is no charge to crew 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 cannot send include aerosols, bleach, poisons, nail polish and polish remover, perfumes, detergent, ammonia, disinfectants, and batteries.

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

# Mailing Addresses

## Sent to the International Support Center by standard post / USPS

[Full Crew Member Name & Department]  
Mercy Ships [Ship], [Mailing method - 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 [Ship], [Mailing method - crew mail or container]  
15862 State Highway 110 North  
Lindale, TX 75771-5932  
USA

## Sent to the European Distribution Center

[Full Crew Member Name & Department]  
Mercy Ships [Ship], [Mailing method - crew mail or container]  
Ridderkerkstraat 20  
3076 JW Rotterdam  
THE NETHERLANDS

### Example

Tabitha Jones  
Mercy Ships - Global Mercy (crew mail)  
Ridderkerstraat 20  
3076 JW Rotterdam  
THE NETHERLANDS



# Dress Code

## 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, except in reception, during patient interaction in the hospital or during official functions onboard.
- Proper footwear must be worn at all times, unless in your cabin or at the pool.
- Tattoos and body piercings can carry negative connotations while in field service locations; 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 sports ashore, clothing should be loose-fitting. Basketball shorts are appropriate, but Lycra/spandex and other form-fitting clothing are not. When travelling to and from the exercise/sport, sweat pants or a long wrap should be worn over shorts.

## Pool / Beach Activities

- Ladies - 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!).
- Men - 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!).

## Official Functions, Business Meetings, or Church

- Ladies - Wearing a looser-fitting dress, top with loose-fitting slacks/trousers, or a business suit with closed-toed shoes is appropriate.
- Men - Wearing long slacks/trousers with a shirt and closed-toed shoes is appropriate. Men with longer hair may find they are better received with their hair tied back or worn in a bun.

# Uniform Guidelines

## Uniforms for Hospital & Dental

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

## Uniforms for Galley & Dining Room

An apron and a uniform shirt and trousers will be provided for you onboard, though you should bring under-shirts/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 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 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 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.



# What to Bring / Packing List

## Clothing

Clothing onboard is be conservative and casual. You may want to bring some nicer clothing for special occasions and/or church, especially if you're coming for an extended period. A good 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 our Ship Shop, but the selection can be limited and may vary. If you have preferred brands, you may want to bring these with you as we cannot guarantee stock onboard.

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

## Luggage

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

### You must bring...

- 7+ washable, cloth face masks - must be 2+ layers and fastens over the ears or around the head, a supply of surgical masks or N95 masks, preferably.
- Personal medical thermometer

### Don't bring...

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

### We provide...

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

### Consider bringing...

- Laundry bag
- Small flashlight / head torch
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen / Sunblock
- Mosquito spray/insect repellent
- Travel mug
- Glass or plastic take-away containers
- Phone card
- Electrical adaptors
- Full supply of any prescription medications to cover your entire time in Antwerp
- 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 ships can be chilly!)
- A favorite game
- Personal photos, etc. with which you may want to personalize your bunk-space or hotel room
- Hanging bedside pocket
- Hair-wrap / drying towel
- Raincoat and/or umbrella



# Vaccinations, Medications, & Health

## Mandatory immunizations 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)
- **COVID-19** (series of 1 or 2)

## Additional mandatory immunizations for Hospital, Dental, and Engineering crew:

- **Typhoid** (oral (4 doses) in last 5 years / oral (3 doses) in last 3 years / injection in last 2 years)
- **Hepatitis A** (series of 2)

## Mandatory testing for all crew:

- **Tuberculosis Test** (completed no more than 12 months prior to joining) or **Chest X-Ray** (valid for 5 years)

## Recommended immunizations for adult crew:

- **Typhoid** (oral (4 doses) in last 5 years / oral (3 doses) in last 3 years / injection in last 2 years)
- **Hepatitis A** (series of 2)
- **Pertussis**
- **Polio booster**
- **Meningitis ACWY** (within last 5 years)
- **Rabies** (series of 3)
- **HIB (Haemophilus Influenza Type B) booster**
- **COVID-19 booster**

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



# Vaccinations, Medications, & Health



meet Security Guard Hit!

## 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 joining for longer than a year, bring a supply to last for six months and contact our pharmacist onboard to ensure they can stock their medicines appropriately for you.

When preparing your 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 for residents and travelers 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 onboard, 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.

For questions related to the available medications onboard, please feel free to contact our Pharmacy team.

- Africa Mercy: [pharmacist.afm@mercyships.org](mailto:pharmacist.afm@mercyships.org)
- Global Mercy: [pharmacist.glm@mercyships.org](mailto:pharmacist.glm@mercyships.org)



# Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

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

What is evacuation and repatriation insurance?

The costs incurred will be paid for (or reimbursed) by Talent Trust 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 (refer to FAQs on the right).

## Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance 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 France 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* France is not covered, and the time *in* France is not covered; however, the policy would begin as soon as the volunteer started travelling from France to the ship's location.

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.

If it was determined that sufficient medical coverage can be received in-country (versus being evacuated), who would cover those costs? For example, if you had a compound fracture while in Senegal, 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.

**Talent Trust**

### Crew Evacuation and Repatriation Policy Benefits

- Worldwide: US \$250,000 per year
- Emergency evacuation to nearest appropriate facility: Full Re-fund
- 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](http://www.talent-trust.com)



# Health Insurance

We encourage all crew to obtain a health insurance policy for their time with Mercy Ships; however, **this is required for any crew joining for one year or more.**

Health insurance must have adequate coverage of medical costs worldwide, including pre-existing conditions.

While we partner with and recommend Talent Trust as our insurance provider, you are welcome to investigate other insurance providers and select the one best for you. Below are a few options:

## Talent Trust

[www.talent-trust.com](http://www.talent-trust.com)

## Gallagher Charitable International Insurance Services

[www.travelwithgallagher.com](http://www.travelwithgallagher.com)

## World Nomads

[www.worldnomads.com](http://www.worldnomads.com)

## IMG

[www.imglobal.com](http://www.imglobal.com)

## SALT

[www.saltinsurance.com](http://www.saltinsurance.com)

Crew joining with national health insurance, may meet this health insurance requirement automatically. Please verify with your national health service to determine coverage.



meet Owen and Rik!

## For crew joining *less* than one year:

Mercy Ships recommends the Top-Up / Outreach plan from Talent Trust. You can enroll by applying for the **Outreach** program.

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 *more* than one year:

Talent Trust is our preferred provider and offers two different coverage options that meet our requirements depending on your situation (Alpha and Omega policies). By enrolling with Talent Trust, 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.

**Talent Trust**



# Commitment Levels and Crew Fees

## 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 honor those who make longer commitments, and those faithful members of the Mercy Ships family who rejoin as crew regularly by providing crew fee discounts and other benefits.

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

## Crew Fees

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

## Discounts

Crew fee discounts are given to crew who:


- make longer commitments
- have completed On Boarding training
- those from low or middle income countries (as defined by the World Bank)

Crew fees are paid by all adult crew (18+ years old).

		VOLUNTEER POSITION COMMITMENT STRUCTURE	
		Shorter Term Service (Up to 12 Months)	
		LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2
COMMITMENT		2 weeks to 3 months	3 to 12 months
CREW FEES (USD)		\$400	\$400
WITH DISCOUNT	For Attending On Boarding†	\$200	\$200
FINANCIAL AID		Available for Qualifying Maritime Roles	Available for Qualifying Maritime Roles
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)	
		LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
COMMITMENT		12 to 24 months	24+ months
CREW FEES (USD)		\$200	\$200
FINANCIAL AID		Available for Qualifying Maritime Roles	Available to All Level 4 Crew
REQUIRED TRAINING		On Boarding†	On Boarding†
PTO BENEFIT / ACCRUAL		1st year: 20 days/5 weeks maximum	30 days/6 weeks maximum
		After 1st year: 25 days/6 weeks maximum	
INSURANCE		Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is required.	Evacuation & Repatriation is covered by Mercy Ships. Health insurance is required.

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



# Money

## Budget Planning & Fundraising

Our Financial Support Team is available to assist every crewmember in developing their budget and aid in their fundraising efforts by providing materials and advice.

Once you've received an offer letter, the Financial Support Team will be in touch with you; however, you can reach out to them anytime. Click the money icon in your application portal to view our budget and fundraising tool-kit, or reach out to [financial.support@mercyships.org](mailto:financial.support@mercyships.org) anytime!

Crew coordinators working from our international Mercy Ships offices may also provide additional information to you as appropriate, depending on your country of residence and/or citizenship. Contact information for the international offices can be found by [clicking here](#).

## 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 to your donors, ensuring any gifts made for you through Mercy Ships are tax-deductible.

## Paying 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.

## Financial Support

Our Financial Support Program is offered to those in qualifying maritime roles and anyone joining in a Level 4 commitment.

Recipients receive \$1000 USD per month to cover crew fees, insurance costs, and other living expenses. Those receiving this benefit are expected to continue fundraising efforts and will meet with the Financial Support Team regularly for support.

# Matters

## Crew Bank FAQs

### 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, the Crew Bank is not connected to any outside banking network.

### How do I set up an account?

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

### What can you do with an account?

You can pay crew fees, make deposits, request cash withdrawals, transfer money to other crew accounts, and pay for purchases made in the Ship Shop or cafe.

### In what ways can money be deposited into the account?

- Support from donors, received by Mercy Ships
- Bank transfers (wire transfers or EFTs)
- Personal checks (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, endorsed check 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 donors, they cannot be issued a receipt for their donation since the check is not made out to Mercy Ships.

### How can I withdraw money from 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 the Ship Shop, and the cafe.





meet Payables Accountant, Moise!

## 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 utilize the washing machines for your **laundry** by signing up for a time slot. Be careful not to be late!
- Many departments onboard work with other crew as well as local ‘**Day Crew**’ we hire on-location. Many of our amazing Day Crew work as translators, but they also help in the galley, with housekeeping, 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** - stay hydrated!
- **Emergency drills** are completed frequently onboard. Be prepared (on Thursdays, hint, hint)!
- The privacy and dignity of our patients is very important to us; therefore, no photos taken on **personal cameras, phones**, etc. are allowed in the HOPE Center, clinics ashore, or in the hospital onboard. Photos taken by our Communications team are available for you to utilize within your newsletters and fundraising materials.
- Be considerate when taking photos, whether you are onboard or out in town. Out of respect, please **obtain permission** from any/all you are photographing to ensure they consent to being photographed.
- 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!

## Ship Shop

This is a sampling of items typically available in the Ship Shop. All items are subject to availability.

- soap, sanitizer, body wash, shampoo, conditioner
- razors, shaving cream
- toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss
- lotions, sun creams, bug spray
- feminine hygiene products
- washing powder/laundry tablets
- dish soap, sponges, all-purpose cleaners
- tweezers, nail clippers
- lip balms
- nail polish remover
- rubbish bags, Ziploc bags, hand towels
- magnets, envelopes, batteries
- basic stationary supplies
- phone cards
- power adaptors
- basic computer supplies
- balloons, wrapping paper
- branded t-shirts, lanyards, mugs
- locally-crafted souvenirs
- chocolates, candies, gum/mints
- chips/crisps, crackers
- cake mixes, cookie/biscuit mix
- granola bars, trail mix, popcorn
- canned soups
- basic baking and cooking supplies & ingredients
- assorted sodas and juices



# Mercy Ships Volunteer Guidebook

Thank you for your part in bringing hope and healing to people just like Mabouba and her family.

We couldn't operate without dedicated and passionate volunteers like you.



Mabouba