

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS, MARINE AND
NATURAL RESOURCES

Outline Sectoral Plan under the Disability Bill 2004

BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
ARNA FHOILSIÚ AG OIFIG AN tSOLÁTHAIR
Le ceannach díreach ón
OIFIG DHÍOLTA FOILSEACHÁN RIALTAIS,
TEACH SUN ALLIANCE, SRÁID THEACH LAIGHEAN, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,
nó tríd an bpost ó
FOILSEACHÁIN RIALTAIS, AN RANNÓG POST-TRÁCHTA,
51 FAICHE STIABHNA, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 2,
(Teil: 01 - 6476834/35/36/37; Fax: 01 - 6476843)
nó trí aon díoltóir leabhar.

DUBLIN
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE
To be purchased directly from the
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALE OFFICE,
SUN ALLIANCE HOUSE, MOLESWORTH STREET, DUBLIN 2,
or by mail order from
GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS, POSTAL TRADE SECTION,
51 ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN, DUBLIN 2,
(Tel: 01 - 6476834/35/36/37; Fax: 01 - 6476843)
or through any bookseller.

(Prn. 1622)

€3.00

September 2004

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Preface	5
Introduction	7
Passenger Ships	8
International Ferryports	10
Disability Awareness Training	11
Cooperation with Other Bodies and Passenger Service Providers ...	12
Monitoring of Compliance	13
Complaints Procedure	14
Regional Port and Harbour Authorities	15

Preface by Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

It gives me great pleasure to publish the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources' Outline Sectoral Plan for Accessible Transport for Passenger Ships and Ports. Together with the sectoral plans from a number of other Departments, this plan is now being issued to coincide with the publication of the Disability Bill 2004.

This outline plan has been prepared having regard to the requirements of the Disability Bill. It covers the operators of passenger ships on voyages within the State or to and from the State, the international ferryports which serve these passenger ships and, where applicable, regional ports and harbours.

The outline plan was developed following consultation with passenger ship owners and companies, State commercial port companies, State harbour authorities and the National Disability Authority. Now that it has been published I would ask all interested parties to examine it and submit to me any views you may have. I intend to review the plan periodically and amend it if considered necessary.

I consider that the timeframes for accessibility provided for in the plan are challenging and demonstrate a genuine commitment to ensuring accessibility for the mobility and sensory impaired to marine passenger transport services within the earliest timescale feasible.

Dermot Ahern T.D.
Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources

September 2004

Introduction

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources is committed to the comprehensive development of accessible marine transport passenger services for the greatest number, and the widest categories possible, of people with mobility or sensory impairments, in the shortest possible time, having regard to resource, technical, legal and other constraints.

Preparation of Action Plan

The Department has developed this plan in consultation with passenger ship owners and companies, State commercial port companies, State harbour authorities and the National Disability Authority (NDA). It is envisaged that there will be further consultation with passenger ship owners to lead the companies to implement and monitor these new measures.

Review of the Action Plan

In this plan, the Department has set targets for achieving accessible passenger services in the marine transport sector. These targets and the plan in general may need to be reviewed in the light of economic conditions and changes in marine transport technologies and compliance with the Plan. Accordingly, the plan will be reviewed on a periodic basis, kept up to date and amended as necessary.

Definitions for the purposes of this Action Plan

Having regard to the services provided in the marine transport passenger sector for the purposes of the Action Plan we are using the term “People with mobility or sensory impairments”. This term means people with physical, sensory, learning or cognitive impairments, whether permanent or temporary, and others whose access to marine transport passenger services is constrained on account of their age, because of accompanying children, because they are carrying luggage or shopping, etc.

Application

This plan covers the operators of passenger ships on voyages within the State or to and from the State, the international ferryports which serve these passenger ships and, where applicable, regional ports and harbours.

Passenger Ships

A passenger ship is a vessel carrying more than 12 passengers. There are approximately 100 passenger ships operating in or to and from the State. Their capacity varies in size from 30 — 2,000 passengers and ranges from large ro-ro ferries to small waterbuses that operate on inshore lakes and rivers. With the exception of one vessel, all passenger ships are privately owned and operated. The type of services provided range from international voyages to sightseeing tours and commuter services between islands and the mainland. To operate a passenger ship, the ship must be in possession of a current passenger ship certificate. To obtain a certificate, the ship is surveyed on an annual basis to ensure compliance with statutory safety requirements for construction and safety equipment.

Access to Passenger Ships

Domestic Passenger Ships

The plan covers domestic passenger ships i.e. ships on voyages within the State, as follows:

- (a) In accordance with Directive 2003/24/EC of 14 April 2003, amending Directive 98/18/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships, operators of all passenger ships of Classes A, B, C & D and all high-speed craft, used for public transport, the keel of which is laid or which are at a similar stage of construction, on or after 1 October 2004 shall comply, where practicable, with the guidelines in Annex III to the Directive on guidelines for persons with reduced mobility.
- (b) In accordance with Directive 2003/24/EC operators of existing passenger ships of Classes A, B, C & D and high-speed craft, used for public transport, the keel of which is laid or which are at a similar stage of construction before 1 October 2004, shall apply the guidelines in Annex III of the Directive, as far as reasonable and practicable in economic terms.
- (c) In the case of new and existing domestic passenger ships other than those covered by Directive 2003/24/EC the Department will work closely

with the operators of such vessels to ensure, as far as reasonable and practicable, that such ships will apply the guidelines contained in Annex III of Directive 2003/24/EC. It is envisaged that new passenger ships in this category will apply the guidelines during their construction. In the case of existing passenger ships in this category, it is envisaged that the timeframe for applying the guidelines will be on a phased basis between May 2007 and May 2009.

Passenger Ships engaged in international voyages

Passenger ships engaged in international voyages i.e. to or from the State, both Irish flagged and foreign flagged vessels, are governed by international agreements on shipping. The Department will meet with the operators of such vessels to ensure that they apply, as far as reasonable and practicable, the guidelines in Annex III of Directive 2003/24/EC and IMO Circular MSC/735 of 24/06/1996 (*Recommendation on the design and operation of passenger ships to respond to elderly and disabled persons' needs*), as appropriate. As these vessels already substantially comply with best international practice in this area, it is not envisaged that they will have a difficulty applying these guidelines.

European Directives can be accessed at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>

IMO Circulars can be accessed at <http://www.imo.org/home.asp>

The Department may, from time to time, issue Marine Notices relating to accessibility measures for passenger ships.

Information in relation to Passenger Ships

Details of all passenger ship certificates are available on the Department's website (www.dcmnr.gov.ie).

International Ferryports

The port authorities at the four international ferryports of Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare recognise the importance of delivering a high quality service to all passengers and continually strive to efficiently facilitate the business of ferry operators and to enhance the quality of the travel experience for all passengers.

Access to passenger services at international ferryports

These port authorities shall

ensure that passenger services provided by them within harbour areas are accessible, as far as reasonable and practicable, to people with mobility or sensory impairments by 31 December 2005.

designate at least one member of staff to be an access officer to provide guidance, co-ordination and assistance in relation to access to passenger services by people with mobility or sensory impairments.

ensure that passenger services provided by other service providers within harbour areas are accessible, as far as reasonable and practicable, to people with mobility or sensory impairments by 31 December 2005.

Access to public buildings at international ferryports

These port authorities shall ensure, as far as reasonable and practicable, that public buildings under their control are accessible to people with mobility or sensory impairments by 31 December 2007.

Disability Awareness Training

Passenger ships

Passenger ship owners, covered by the Sectoral Plan, should ensure that there are sufficient staff on board who have undergone disability awareness training appropriate to the size of the vessel and the type of service provided. Specific additional training should be provided for those staff with specific responsibilities in relation to evacuation and other emergency procedures.

International ferryports

Port authorities at the international ferryports of Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare shall arrange disability awareness training for their employees who are engaged in the provision of passenger services or who are otherwise responsible for the implementation of this plan. Specific additional training should be provided for those staff with specific responsibilities such as evacuation and other emergency procedures.

Cooperation with Other Bodies and Passenger Service Providers

Passenger ship operators, covered by the Sectoral Plan, and port authorities at the international ferryports shall co-operate with each other and the relevant local authorities to deliver the objectives of this plan which include:

the provision of clear, concise, accurate and timely information in accessible formats to the travelling public to cover marine transport passenger services, paying attention to the needs of people with mobility or sensory impairments at the pre-journey stage and during the trip;

the promotion of ease of access to services including means of embarking and disembarking.

Monitoring of Compliance

Passenger ships

Each operator, covered by the Sectoral Plan, will establish a procedure to manage compliance with the plan. During the course of the annual renewal survey for a Passenger Ship Certificate, the Maritime Safety Directorate will inspect the vessel for compliance with the Plan.

International ferryports

Each port authority at the international ferryports of Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare will establish procedures to manage compliance with the plan. The Department will establish a scheme to monitor the compliance of the port authorities with the plan.

Complaints Procedure

Passenger ships

Each operator, covered by the Sectoral Plan, will:

appoint an independent person who shall examine each complaint in relation to the failure of the operator in respect of a duty specified in this plan;

draw up complaints procedures, including time limits, available to persons who consider that they have been adversely affected by any failure on the part of the operator to comply with any aspect of the plan.

International ferryports

Each port authority at the international ferryports of Cork, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Rosslare shall:

appoint an independent person who shall examine each complaint and hear the views of parties in relation to an alleged failure of the port authority concerned in respect of a duty specified in this plan;

draw up complaints procedures, including time limits, available to persons who consider that they have been adversely affected by any failure on the part of the port authority to comply with any aspect of the plan.

Regional Port and Harbour Authorities

Future Exchequer funding in respect of passenger facilities at regional port and harbour authorities will be contingent on these authorities demonstrating compliance with best practice on accessibility to passenger services for the mobility or sensory impaired. These authorities will also be required to establish complaints and appeals structures similar to those for international ferryports.