5. Every effort should be given to ensuring that the forwarding of seafarers' mail is as reliable and expeditious as possible. Efforts should also be considered for avoiding seafarers being required to pay additional postage when mail has to be re-addressed owing to circumstances beyond their control.

6. Measures should be considered to ensure, subject to any applicable national or international laws or regulations, that whenever possible and reasonable seafarers are expeditiously granted permission to have their partners, relatives and friends as visitors on board their ship when in port. Such measures should meet any concerns for security clearances.

7. Consideration should be given to the possibility of allowing seafarers to be accompanied by their partners on occasional voyages where this is practicable and reasonable. Such partners should carry adequate insurance cover against accident and illness; the shipowners should give every assistance to the seafarer to effect such insurance.

Guideline B3.1.12 – Prevention of noise and vibration

1. Accommodation and recreational and catering facilities should be located as far as practicable from the engines, steering gear rooms, deck winches, ventilation, heating and air-conditioning equipment and other noisy machinery and apparatus.

2. Acoustic insulation or other appropriate sound-absorbing materials should be used in the construction and finishing of bulkheads, deckheads and decks within the sound-producing spaces as well as self-closing noise-isolating doors for machinery spaces.

3. Engine rooms and other machinery spaces should be provided, wherever practicable, with soundproof centralized control rooms for engine-room personnel. Working spaces, such as the machine shop, should be insulated, as far as practicable, from the general engine-room noise and measures should be taken to reduce noise in the operation of machinery.

4. The limits for noise levels for working and living spaces should be in conformity with the ILO international guidelines on exposure levels, including those in the ILO code of practice entitled *Ambient factors in the workplace*, 2001, and, where applicable, the specific protection recommended by the International Maritime Organization, and with any subsequent amending and supplementary instruments for acceptable noise levels on board ships. A copy of the applicable instruments in English or the working language of the ship should be carried on board and should be accessible to seafarers.

5. No accommodation or recreational or catering facilities should be exposed to excessive vibration.

Regulation 3.2 – Food and catering

Purpose: To ensure that seafarers have access to good quality food and drinking water provided under regulated hygienic conditions

1. Each Member shall ensure that ships that fly its flag carry on board and serve food and drinking water of appropriate quality, nutritional value and quantity that adequately covers the requirements of the ship and takes into account the differing cultural and religious backgrounds.

2. Seafarers on board a ship shall be provided with food free of charge during the period of engagement.

3. Seafarers employed as ships' cooks with responsibility for food preparation must be trained and qualified for their position on board ship.

Standard A3.2 – Food and catering

1. Each Member shall adopt laws and regulations or other measures to provide minimum standards for the quantity and quality of food and drinking water and for the catering standards that apply to meals provided to seafarers on ships that fly its flag, and shall undertake educational activities to promote awareness and implementation of the standards referred to in this paragraph.

2. Each Member shall ensure that ships that fly its flag meet the following minimum standards:

(a) food and drinking water supplies, having regard to the number of seafarers on board, their religious requirements and cultural practices as they pertain to food, and the duration and nature of the voyage, shall be suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety;

(b) the organization and equipment of the catering department shall be such as to permit the provision to the seafarers of adequate, varied and nutritious meals prepared and served in hygienic conditions; and

(c) catering staff shall be properly trained or instructed for their positions.

3. Shipowners shall ensure that seafarers who are engaged as ships' cooks are trained, qualified and found competent for the position in accordance with requirements set out in the laws and regulations of the Member concerned.

4. The requirements under paragraph 3 of this Standard shall include a completion of a training course approved or recognized by the competent authority, which covers practical cookery, food and personal hygiene, food storage, stock control, and environmental protection and catering health and safety.

5. On ships operating with a prescribed manning of less than ten which, by virtue of the size of the crew or the trading pattern, may not be required by the competent authority to carry a fully qualified cook, anyone processing food in the galley shall be trained or instructed in areas including food and personal hygiene as well as handling and storage of food on board ship.

6. In circumstances of exceptional necessity, the competent authority may issue a dispensation permitting a non-fully qualified cook to serve in a specified ship for a specified limited period, until the next convenient port of call or for a period not exceeding one month, provided that the person to whom the dispensation is issued is trained or instructed in areas including food and personal hygene as well as handling and storage of food on board ship.

7. In accordance with the ongoing compliance procedures under Title 5, the competent authority shall require that frequent documented inspections be carried out on board ships, by or under the authority of the master, with respect to: