



**What does it  
take to become a  
Deck Officer?**



Responsible for rendering support in the navigation, manoeuvring and safe handling of the ship; communications between ship and shore; the handling and delivery of cargo; and the operation of all lifesaving devices, the role of a Deck Officer is vital on board a seagoing vessel. Graduates start off as cadets and on completing requisite sea-time and examination, go on to become a third officer, then a second officer, a chief officer, and then captain.

### **Skills and Knowledge**

Candidates wishing to follow the path of Deck Officer training must have a Grade 12 certificate with good grades in English, Mathematics and Science. They would also be required to undergo a medical and an eyesight test. A Deck Officer is a vital member of the ship's management team – responsible for making decisions on steering the ship, controlling navigation and communications. So it's important to be a good team player, decisive, calm and someone who inspires confidence in others. You'll be interested in technology and have good mathematical, written and verbal skills. Overall – confidence, enthusiasm and self-reliance are essential.

### **Training**

To become a Deck Officer, you have to study Nautical Science. It consists of three main elements, namely, navigation and ship handling, safe operation of a ship, and handling cargo. Subjects covered at different levels include Navigation and Systems; Ship Stability and Naval Architecture;; Maritime Law; Maritime Distress and Safety Systems; and Engine Theory. Other requirements include mandatory safety courses and compulsory sea-time onboard vessels, according to Namibian Manning Regulations. Courses leading to qualification are approved by the Directorate of Maritime Affairs and are offered by the Namibian Fisheries and Maritime Institute, in line with the International Maritime Organisation's Conventions on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers.

### **Working Conditions**

Deck Officers may work on deck, below deck or on the bridge of a range of different ships. Your day-to-day tasks will vary depending on your rank. At an



entry level, you'll deal with safety equipment and lifeboats and carry out watch duties. Other tasks that come with seetime, experience and promotion include navigation, using radar and satellite systems, deck operations and maintenance, cargo handling and storage. You'll work shifts, known as watches, that vary according to the size of ship. On a large ship, you'll usually work four hours on duty, and eight hours off. Your time at sea could vary from a few days to several months. Periods of leave also vary.

## Job Prospects

Sustained growth in the local fisheries, logistics and marine mining sectors is creating more and more employment opportunities for Deck Officers. Onshore, experienced Deck Officers can also land jobs in the management department of shipping companies. However it is advisable to sail for a few years and amass experience before shifting to onshore jobs.


You too can live your passion and become a Deck Officer. If you are a team player and have strong mathematical aptitude, you are a good candidate.


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- NAVIGATION + MANOEUVRING
  - SAFE HANDLING + SHIP OPERATIONS
  - CARGO ADMINISTRATION
  - LIFESAVING DEVICES


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- NAVIGATION
  - MARITIME LAW
  - SAFETY + SEATIME
  - INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS

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- MATHEMATICAL APTITUDE
  - EXCELLENT EYESIGHT
  - TEAM PLAYER
  - ENTHUSIASM

We need more Namibians skilled in this work to allow us to take charge of our marine resources and to Namibianise this sector.



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- DECK, BELOW-DECK, BRIDGE
  - LONG SEA-BASED JOURNEYS
  - HIGH RISK ENVIRONMENT
  - MENTAL STRENGTH

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- FISHERIES + LOGISTICS
  - MARINE MINING
  - OFFSHORE VS. ONSHORE
  - CONSULTING