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Guidelines for Participation in Cruises on Research Vessels of the GEOMAR Helmholtz Center for Ocean Research Kiel

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Deutsche Bank AG Kiel

SWIFT/BIC

DEUTDEDB210

IBAN

DE 69210700240144800000

Tax ID 2029745781 VAT ID
DE281295378

Content

1	Working Hours	3
1.1	Availability of crew members :	3
1.2	Working Hours for Expedition Participants:	4
2	Authority to Issue Instructions by the Expedition Leadership and Ship's Command	4
3	Safety	4
3.1	Emergency Contact Information:	4
3.2	Ship Safety Training Course:	5
4	Health	5
4.1	Health Care Information Sheet for FS ALKOR:	5
4.2	Medical Care:	5
4.3	Vaccination Records & Blood Types:	5
4.4	Pregnancy:	5
4.5	Psychological Counseling Service – “TELUS Health”:	6
4.6	Initiative: For a Positive Working Environment at Sea:	6
5	Insurance	7
6	Business Trip Request / Approval of Participation in the Voyage	8
6.1	Travel Documents:	8
6.2	Childcare options during business trips:	8
7	Export Control and Customs Clearance	8
8	Cruise Planning & Embarkation	9
9	Leisure & Meals on Board	9
9.1	Notes on allergies and dietary requirements:	9
9.2	Cafeteria:	10
10	Communication between Land and Ship	10
10.1	Phone and Email:	10
10.2	Internet access:	11
10.3	Network Access:	11
10.4	Mail:	12
11	Cruise Reports	12
12	Acknowledgment of Receipt (separate attachment)	

1 Working Hours

1.1 Availability of crew members :

For both the crew and the scientists, the legal provisions regarding working hours and rest periods apply; for the crew, the regulations set forth in the Maritime Labor Convention (MLC) 2006, which governs the working and living conditions of seafarers worldwide, apply. A “Overview of Onboard Work Organization” is posted on all ships, which also explicitly outlines the general conditions.

- **FS ALKOR**

For scientific operations on the FS ALKOR, this means:

- 24-hour research operations are only possible with light equipment (W 2, CTD, etc.).
- The use of complex or heavy research equipment (W 3, W 7, crane operations, heavy-duty sounding lines, moorings, ROV, JAGO, etc.) is permitted between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- Changes to the core working hours are possible but require advance planning and will result in corresponding rest periods for the deck crew.

- **FK LITTORINA**

For the FK LITTORINA, there are three scenarios to choose from regarding working hours for the scientific team and crew:

1. Day trips and multi-day trips:

A daily work schedule from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. is generally possible.

This means a daily work schedule, for example, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with a maximum of 10 hours of work per day for the crew. The workday generally begins and ends at the port.

2. Multi-day voyages with night work:

With two navigators on board, the vessel can sail continuously from Monday at 7:00 a.m. to Sunday at 7:00 a.m. without having to make a stop in port. Afterward, the vessel must remain in port from Sunday at 7:00 a.m. to Monday at 7:00 a.m. to allow the crew complete rest.

3. Multi-day voyages lasting more than six days:

If no additional day of layover in port is to be included, a second officer (navigator) must be employed, which occupies one cabin. Therefore, only up to four scientists may participate in the research expedition.

- **On the scheduled last day of the research cruise, the ship is generally scheduled to arrive in port at 8:00 a.m.** All participants are asked to vacate their cabins during the morning and to leave the ship by 5:00 p.m. at the latest.

1.2 Working Hours for Expedition Participants:

The working hours of expedition participants are governed primarily by statutory provisions regarding working hours and rest periods.

Please understand these regulations primarily as protective measures designed to ensure your personal

safety. Further details regarding working hours on expeditions are governed by the relevant service agreement. You can find it here: [Details: Service Agreement on Working Hours for Expeditions](#)

You can also obtain further information from the GEOMAR Human Resources team or from [the Human Resources and Legal Department on the intranet](#).

2 Authority to Issue Instructions by the Expedition Leadership and Ship's Command

While on board and during the voyage, every participant is subject to the instructions of the expedition leadership and ship's command, or their designated representatives. The detailed document can be found here: [Application and Embarkation Procedures](#)

3 Safety

The institutes and the shipping company operate the ships in such a way as to avoid or minimize risks as much as possible. Nevertheless, it is inherent in the nature of voyages on research vessels that there are residual risks of injury, which in some circumstances may result in permanent damage or even death. To minimize these residual risks, the guidelines on onboard safety and [health care](#) must be followed.

For safety reasons, the consumption of high-proof alcohol (>20 percent) is prohibited on board all ships.

When working, especially on deck, personal safety equipment must be worn at all times (hard hat, safety shoes, coveralls if necessary). When working near an open railing or stern door, work life jackets must be worn. These will be provided by the ship's crew if needed. In all other respects, the ship's regulations must be followed.

3.1 Emergency Contact Information:

Each passenger may provide the ship's crew with an address where a close relative or friend should be notified in case of an emergency.

3.2 Ship Safety Training Course:

It is recommended that every passenger participate in the 1-day vessel safety course (approved by BG Verkehr). Further information can be found on the intranet under HSE Events.

4 Health

An internal review (February 8, 2022) has determined that a medical examination for seagoing fitness is not required. The HSE Department and the Vessel Coordination Office recommend such an examination. However, from a legal standpoint, it is not necessary.

Participants should be aware that work at sea can be strenuous—especially work on deck—and should assess their own physical condition accordingly. It is recommended that, prior to longer voyages with ALKOR, you undergo a medical and dental examination, mentioning the upcoming voyage. If, after this, you have any doubts about whether your health allows you to handle the physical demands, you should cancel your participation.

4.1 Health Care Information Sheet for FS ALKOR:

Before every voyage with ALKOR, each participant must confirm that they have read the [Health Care Information Sheet for FS ALKOR](#). This is done digitally in [“Marine Facilities Planning.”](#)

4.2 Medical Care:

There is no doctor on board. However, the ship is equipped with the legally required first-aid kit containing the necessary medications for sudden illnesses and emergencies. Participants who take medication regularly should please bring a sufficient supply with them.

4.3 Vaccination Records & Blood Types:

Upon request, important information from your vaccination record or regarding your blood type, etc., can be provided to the trip organizers for use in an emergency. This information will be treated confidentially.

4.4 Pregnancy:

According to the rules of the workers' compensation association, pregnant crew members are not permitted to go to sea. To protect those affected and for liability reasons, these rules also apply to all other participants.

4.5 [Psychological Counseling Service – “TELUS Health”:](#)

A professional counseling service, “TELUS Health,” is available. You can contact the experts for professional or personal concerns. In an emergency, the service is available 24/7 and, upon request, in English. More information is also available on the intranet under [“Counseling Service for Employees.”](#) and GEOMAR staff [members](#).



Login credentials are required. They are as follows:

Username: geomar
Password: corrente4geomar

4.6 [Initiative: For a Positive Working Environment at Sea:](#)

Please refer to the [information sheet](#) for general information and guidelines on addressing sexual violence. The demands of work on board are high, and strangers must quickly become efficient teams who will live and work together on a ship for several weeks. This can lead to conflicts of various kinds. Expedition leaders and ship’s officers can then use these [general rules](#) as a guide, and those affected as well as witnesses have the opportunity to seek a conversation in a safe space. Please contact gender-diversity@geomar.de.

5 Insurance

For participants (excluding crew) aboard the research vessels ALKOR and LITTORINA, the Briesse shipping company has taken out accident and international health insurance.

Note: Trip participants who wish to take a vacation at the destination **before** or **after** the trip segment must ensure they have their own insurance coverage for this period as well as for their arrival and departure, since this time and these trips are no longer considered part of the business trip.

Accident Insurance: (R+V Versicherung - 65181 Wiesbaden)

This coverage applies to accidents that occur both during and outside of working hours (e.g., during free time on board or while ashore at the port).

No insurance coverage applies to accidents suffered by the insured person due to mental or consciousness disorders—including those resulting from intoxication—as well as strokes, epileptic seizures, or other convulsive seizures affecting the insured person's entire body. However, insurance coverage applies if these disorders or seizures were caused by an accident covered under this policy.

The insurance begins 96 hours before arrival on the ship and ends 96 hours after disembarking at the end of the cruise. This is intended to ensure that travel to and from the ship is covered.

Excerpt from the list of benefits (per person):

Disability (Base Amount)	EUR 100,000
In the event of total disability	EUR 300,000
	(300% progression)
Accidental Death	EUR 20,000
Accident Services	EUR 15,000
Costs for cosmetic surgery	EUR 15,000

International Health Insurance: (Barmenia Versicherungen, 42094 Wuppertal)

This provides insurance coverage for medically necessary treatment of an insured person due to illness or the consequences of an accident once the insured person crosses the border of the country from which they are departing or originally departed on behalf of the policyholder and/or upon boarding a research vessel. Illnesses and accidents resulting from intentional acts are not covered. The insurance covers all trip participants, regardless of their nationality or permanent residence, for a trip duration of up to 90 days. If the planned departure is delayed and no other insurance coverage is available, coverage is provided for a maximum of 20 days. In the event of an early return, temporary insurance coverage is also provided for a period of 20 days, up to the day of the originally planned end of the trip, provided that no other insurance coverage exists.

6 Business Trip Request / Approval of Participation in the Voyage

To ensure full insurance coverage, every person scheduled to embark must submit a *business travel request to their institute* before each voyage on *GEOMAR research vessels*.

The following applies to GEOMAR staff:

A separate business travel request is not required for boat trips that begin with boarding in Kiel and end with disembarking in Kiel. Participants are personally responsible for obtaining approval from their supervisor to participate in the trip. In case of doubt, please contact the Travel Management Team or check the [Travel Portal on the GEOMAR Intranet](#)

6.1 Travel Documents:

A passport valid for at least 6 months after the end of the trip is mandatory. This also applies to trips in the international waters of Schengen countries.

For trips exclusively in national waters, a valid national ID card is sufficient.

A valid national ID card or passport must also be carried on **day trips** aboard the research cutter LITTORINA and the research vessel ALKOR.

To simplify the boarding process, passport or ID numbers — even for day trips — should be entered into the boarding folder at least 14 days before departure.

6.2 Childcare options during business trips:

GEOMAR staff can find detailed information on the intranet: [Family Portal – GEOMAR Intranet](#)

7 Export Control and Customs Clearance

Regarding export control and customs procedures, please refer to the “Export Control & Customs Information Sheet for Cruise Participation” on the GEOMAR website under [“Application and Embarkation Procedures”](#) or on the intranet: [Export Control & Customs - GEOMAR Intranet](#).

Please note: This information sheet also applies to cruises in the Baltic and North Seas

8 Cruise Planning & Embarkation

For ALKOR, cruise planning will be managed via [Marine Facilities Planning](#) (MFP) in the future. A boarding list will then be created using the MFP [Science Portal](#) for the embarkation of participants.

Until the system is fully implemented, planning will be handled via email and form templates, as is currently the case for LITTORINA.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the ship coordination team (researchvessels@geomar.de).

9 Leisure & Meals on Board

Leisure Activities: There are opportunities to exercise on board the ALKOR. Please speak with the crew regarding this.

There is a washing machine and a dryer on board the ALKOR.

A drinking water dispenser is available on both ships. Participants should bring their own water bottles to refill. Water bottles or glasses are available on board if needed.

On voyages aboard the ALKOR and LITTORINA, meals are provided free of charge to participants; this includes beverages such as coffee and tea, but not soft drinks. For GEOMAR employees, these complimentary meals are taxed by the institute's administration as a taxable benefit; the travel expense report or the embarkation folder serves as the basis for this. For GEOMAR-sponsored cruises, the institute also reviews on a case-by-case basis whether the costs of meals can be charged to specific projects.

On day trips, only lunch is provided.

For safety reasons, the consumption of high-proof alcohol (>20 percent) is prohibited on board all ships.

9.1 Notes on allergies and dietary requirements:

- **Vegetarian:** This option is available and will be provided based on the information provided at registration.
- **Vegan:** Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee vegan options. We therefore ask those with vegan dietary needs to plan for a vegetarian meal or, alternatively, to arrange for specific foods on their own. Of course, you may still note your preference, and the chef is always willing to accommodate all requests to the best of their ability.
- **Gluten-free:** The range of intolerances—from mild discomfort to serious health concerns

(celiac disease)—is so broad that we cannot assume responsibility. In this case, it is especially important that you take personal responsibility for meeting your own dietary needs.

- **(Nut) Allergy:** Please note this in the participant list of the “Boarding and Cruise Notification” under “Special Requirements.”

These notes are intended solely to prevent misunderstandings and do not imply any judgment.

9.2 Canteen:

ALKOR:

Since there is only a small store on board, canteen supplies are carried only in exceptional cases (such as on expeditions to the Mediterranean). However, the expedition leader may send a list of requests via email to the ship’s command in a timely manner—that is, at least one week before the start of the voyage. The ship’s command will then place the order through the ship’s supplier. It is also possible to purchase duty-free high-proof alcohol (within the limits of general customs regulations), but this will only be distributed by the designated crew member at the end of the research voyage when passengers disembark. The ordered goods must be purchased in full and paid for in cash in euros to the ship’s management. Foreign currencies, as well as debit or credit cards, are not accepted. It is often more cost-effective for participants to make their own purchases.

There is an opportunity (subject to availability) to purchase ALKOR merchandise.

LITTORINA:

There is no canteen; please bring your own supplies.

10 Communication between Land and Ship

Communication with and from the ship can be conducted via telephone, email, or the Internet. At sea, the connection is typically established via satellite; in ports and in coastal areas, it can also be established via cell phone.

The [GEOMAR guidelines on the use of social media](#) must be followed.

Rules for email, internet, and telephone communication:

- Do not download or send large files
- No software updates

10.1 Phone and Email:

You can find the connections available on the ships on the website here:

Verbindungen zu den Schiffen ▲

10.2 [Internet access:](#)

ALKOR:

- **Access** via the onboard networks and vSAT. On ALKOR, internet is also available via Starlink. Each cruise participant will receive a voucher for a data allowance (the amount depends on the number of participants). This is primarily intended for work-related use. Please observe the rules for using personal computers (see below).
- **Costs:** Costs are covered by the institute via a flat rate. However, only a fixed bandwidth is available, so the transfer of extremely large data files and video calls is limited. A faster LTE connection is available in coastal areas.
- **Email:** Access is available via webmail using your personal home email address; therefore, special email addresses are no longer assigned, with the exception of the “Brücke” address (see above).

LITTORINA:

- **Access** via the ship’s onboard networks; in coastal areas via Wi-Fi or LTE; unlimited data within mobile network coverage in the EU.
- **For costs,** see ALKOR

10.3 [Network Access:](#)

All personal computers brought on board must meet minimum standards regarding the protection of others from computer viruses, etc. These standards are:

- A password must be set for the administrator on every computer
- Antivirus software that was updated immediately before the trip must be installed and actively running
- The operating system’s firewalls must be active
- The operating system updates must be up to date
- Only licensed or free software may be installed.

Please note: The voyage management and ship’s command, or a representative appointed by them, are authorized to verify that these conditions are met before a computer is connected to the ship’s network. If the conditions are not met, network access will be denied.

Please follow the checklist below from Briesse Schifffahrts GmbH & Co. KG:

[Network Access Checklist](#)

Before connecting your personal PC or laptop to the network, please note the following:

- Is a virus scanner installed?
- Is the antivirus software set to update automatically?
- Are the virus definitions up to date?
- Has the PC/laptop been scanned for viruses before connecting to the network?

- Is the administrator account protected by a password?
- Is Windows Firewall active, or is another firewall installed on the PC?
- Is the operating system up to date?
- (Service Packs). Are automatic updates disabled?
- Please check your external storage devices —such as USB drives and external hard drives—for viruses before connecting them to the network. USB drives are the most common source of malware intrusion in protected networks.

It is absolutely essential to use USB flash drives responsibly. USB flash drives can be immunized against malware! A program for immunizing USB flash drives is available on the external hard drive of the bridge PC for anyone interested.

Please report any virus incidents to the maintenance companies immediately.

// Reimar Wolf, Technical Inspector / Briese Schifffahrts GmbH & Co. KG

10.4 Mail:

For participants on ALKOR voyages with calls at foreign ports, mail can be sent via the agencies on board.

Recipient address, e.g.:

Harry Recipient FS
ALKOR
c/o [agency address here]

The agencies will be announced by the operations office or, if applicable, by the voyage management.

11 Cruise Reports

Depending on the duration and type of research cruise, the cruise management must prepare various reports documenting the work carried out on board and the findings obtained from it.

Expedition reports for the ALKOR and LITTORINA can be viewed in the OceanRep database at the following link: <http://oceanrep.geomar.de/>.

The Ship Coordination Office at GEOMAR must be notified when reports, data, or raw data are sent to relevant recipients. When submitting reports, reference should also be made, where appropriate, to other websites where additional information is available.

Weekly Report:

For multi-day cruises only: The weekly report documents the work carried out on board during the previous week (Monday–Sunday). It must be sent to the Ship Coordination Office on Monday of the new week. No specific form template is required.

Cruise Summary Report:

The cruise director must prepare and submit the “CSR” to the Federal Maritime and

Hydrographic Agency immediately after the cruise.

Report Following Short Cruises / Equipment Tests: (1 month after the cruise ends) Following a short cruise with ALKOR, a brief report (one A4 page) detailing the course of events and the success or failure of the cruise must be sent to the ship coordination team.

Cruise Report: (2 months after the cruise ends)

The work conducted during the voyage, as well as the samples collected and data gathered, are documented in detail here. Further details can be found under "[German Research Vessels Portal: Reports and Data](#)."