



MERCY SHIPS

On Boarding Guidebook

International Support Center

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On Boarding Overview and Course Synopsis

Overview

Mercy Ships On Boarding is an interactive training program designed to provide insight and understanding of Mercy Ships Culture and Core Values, and how to uphold, support and promote our organizational culture. Mercy Ships believes that *how* and *why* is just as important as *what* we do.

The On Boarding program consists of the following courses:

- Basic Training – *not required for every participant. If BT is required, it will be noted in your Acceptance Letter.*
- Foundations of Mercy Ships (FMS)
- Mercy Ships Compliance & Systems Training
- Gateway – 3 weeks
- Field Practice – 2 weeks

Cost: Mercy Ships will cover your costs during the program, including housing and meals while on campus. Mercy Ships will *NOT* cover your travel expenses to and from the International Support Center.

Field Practice Airfare: \$375.00 non-refundable deposit is due upon enrollment. Mercy Ships will arrange and purchase airfare for all participants participating in the field practice phase of On Boarding. You will be responsible for reimbursing Mercy Ships the balance due on your airfare (minus the \$375.00 deposit) on or before the first day of On Boarding.

Basic Training Week

The Basic Training (BT) is a mandatory minimum requirement for safety familiarization, and instruction for all seafarers. The Mercy Ships BT course is approved by the US Coast Guard and satisfies the Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). The five and half-day training consists of five courses:

Personal Safety and Social Responsibility (PSSR) - The PSSR course focuses on life on board a ship, hazards, work environments, safety equipment – tools, personal communication and relationships, plus other topics. This is concluded with a written test.

Elementary First Aid (with Adult CPR) – This course is covered with the American Red Cross

Standard First Aid with Adult CPR / AED courses, which give you a great starting point for responding to medical emergencies. To successfully complete the CPR portion, you will need to perform CPR on a mannequin (dummy) from a kneeling position for several minutes. This portion is concluded with both a practical assessment and a written test.

Basic Fire Fighting – The topics of the Basic Fire Fighting course include fire prevention, what makes up a fire, how to fight the fire, fire safety, safety equipment, fire fighter gear and communication. The practical exercises are done at our fire-training field with full fire-fighting gear, weighing over 30 pounds. While wearing this SCBA, students will kneel, crawl, drag a heavy firehoses and drag a 165 pound mannequin all while in an extremely hot environment. This portion is concluded with both a practical assessment and a written test.

Personal Survival Techniques (sea survival) - The PST course is designed to teach you essential skills for water survival - such as you might encounter if abandoning ship during an emergency at sea. Please advise us if you face any challenges in swimming. Practical in-water exercises will be conducted at an indoor swimming pool. Skills must be properly performed for a passing grade for this course.

Proficiency in Security Awareness (PSA) – The Security Awareness training is a 4-hour course that must be undertaken by all seafarers employed or engaged in any capacity on ships that are required to comply with the ISPS Code. The course subjects will include: How to contribute to the enhancement of maritime security through heightened awareness, & how to recognize security threats, understanding the need for, and methods of maintaining security awareness and vigilance.

The fire-fighting, swimming pool and CPR practical efforts are strenuous. It is our firm desire not to have any injuries while we are training. If for any reason you have any concerns about being able to physically perform these exercises, please communicate this to your Placement Facilitator now.

Our students have found a new sense of confidence after attending this course. It is our hope you will find our instructors to be helpful and thorough as you prepare to join the ETM community on board!

Foundations Week

Foundations of Mercy Ships (FMS) - Providing you with the Who, What and Why of Mercy Ships

- Opening Session – Who is Mercy Ships?
- Message from the Founder via Skype

- Mission, Vision and Values

- Five Whys of Mercy Ships
- Philosophy of Service and International Programs ○
Transitions
- Organizational Structure
- Overview of Human Resources & Crew Commitments ○
Community of Faith
- Living in Community (Video Dr. Gary Parker)
- Incarnational Message (Video Don Stephens)

Preparing you for Your Service

- Connect and train with your corresponding department, as needed
- Gain understanding of departmental organization between ISC and ship
- Complete Compliance and Departmental Training

Preparing you for the Ship Community

- Attend FMS sessions *Living in Community*
- Families meet with Academy Administrator and Academy Director to discuss on board school and family life

Preparing you for Personal Transitions

- Attend Process of Transition

Gateway

Faith Foundations Week

Purpose of Faith Foundations Week

Understand that God wants to be personally and fully known by us, so that we can follow His example

Objectives:

- 1) Increase biblical understanding of God's Nature and Character
- 2) Recognize the strength of diversity within the Body of Christ
- 3) Explore the various ways God communicates and our response to Him.
- 4) Recognize that the Kingdom of God applies to all cultures and areas of life

Personal / Interpersonal Week

Purpose of Personal/Interpersonal Week

Expand our understanding of what it looks like to love and serve people

Objectives:

- 1) Know the basis for our identity and value in Christ
- 2) Understand that we are uniquely designed to fulfill God's purposes for our lives
- 3) Commit to living purposefully and proactively
- 4) Develop a biblical understanding of the value of community and our role in it.
- 5) Acquire the practical tools for living effectively in community.

Worldview Week

Purpose of Worldview Week

Understanding and aligning ourselves with a biblical worldview

Objectives:

- 1) Understanding biblical principles of development
- 2) Understanding the major worldview categories
- 3) Understanding culture and its influence and impact individually and organizationally

Field Practice

Purpose of Field Practice

Opportunity to put what was taught in Gateway into practice

Objectives:

- 1) Engage and participate in working with people from a different culture towards common goals (Culture)
- 2) Engage and experience living and working in community (Community)
- 3) Practice following the model of Jesus in a practical way (Faith Foundations)

Airfare to Africa:

You are responsible for the cost of your airfare to the field practice location and/or the ship; however Mercy Ships will arrange your airfare if you are participating in the field practice portion of On Boarding to ensure the group can travel together. A non-refundable deposit of \$375.00 is required to be paid before Mercy Ships will purchase your airfare. The \$375 deposit will be used towards the purchase price of your airfare and Mercy Ships will bill you for the remaining balance due. In the event you need to cancel your airfare, the \$375.00 deposit should cover any cancellation fees.

The airfare to the field practice location is typically less than \$2000.00

Pre-Arrival Information

INSURANCE

Additional health insurance is required for your time on board the ship(s) during long-term service with Mercy Ships but is not required during your time in Texas. Please note, however, that emergency health care in the States can be expensive. Any costs incurred will be the responsibility of the individual. Therefore, you may want to acquire health insurance until you leave on the field practice and then begin your new policy once on board the ship. Or you may consider purchasing a short term/travel policy for your time in Texas. Please check with your travel agent or health insurance provider for more information. During field practice, travel insurance is included that covers emergency evacuation and repatriation costs in case of an accident.

MEDICATION

If you require special medication, please bring a sufficient supply with you for the length of the entire program including enough for field practice. Bring an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses in case you need to replace them.

Immunization Requirements

All required immunizations for shipboard service (see immunization and Malaria Prevention the Mercy Ships Volunteer Guidebook) should be completed before coming the On Boarding program.

Please note that the hepatitis vaccinations are a series, therefore you should start as soon as possible.

TRAVEL TO THE ISC

If you are arriving by air, we are able to pick you up at **Tyler Pounds Regional Airport** in Tyler, Texas (**TYR**). You can fly to the Tyler (TYR) airport connecting through Dallas Fort Worth Airport (DFW). **American Airlines** (American Eagle) flies from Dallas to Tyler.

Should you choose to terminate your flight at the Dallas Fort Worth airport (DFW), or Dallas Love Field airport (DAL), you will need to make your own arrangements to the Mercy Ships International Support Center. The drive from the Dallas airports to the International Operations Center is about two hours

Recommended transportation options are as follows:

- Ed Woolever is an independent, trusted driver who provides transportation for Mercy Ships crew and staff (upon availability). Ed charges \$90.00 for a one-way trip to/from the airports in Dallas, the same price as the East Texas Shuttle Service (below). To schedule a pick up, email Ed at: ed.woolever@mercyships.org
- The Airport Shuttle of East Texas will pick you up at either airport in Dallas and bring you directly to Mercy Ships International Operations Center. For shuttle service schedule, please go to <http://www.shuttleofeasttx.com>, or call (903) 534-3688. Reservations and cancellations MUST be made at least 48 hours in advance.
- If you decide to rent a car from either of the Dallas airports, we will be glad to follow you to the Tyler airport to return your rental.

International Support Center (ISC) Campus Information

LOCATION

Mercy Ships International Support Center (ISC) is located about halfway between Dallas, Texas and Shreveport, Louisiana, on Highway 110N, about 1 ¼ miles north of I-20 (exit 548). We are located on 430 acres of rolling hills, tall trees, and ponds.

COMPUTER/EMAIL ACCESS

The dormitories and most public places at the ISC have wireless access. The electric voltage in the United States is 110. For the European participants joining us, it is best to come with appliances that can be switched from 220 to 110 volts.

TELEPHONE

Most mobile/cell phones receive good coverage at the ISC.

SPECIAL DIETS

If you have a special diet, please bring whatever foods and dietary items necessary. You may use the refrigerator in your dormitory to store food marked with your name.

DRESS

Dress on campus is casual.

- The weather changes frequently and layering clothes often works best.
- A raincoat or umbrella helps protect against the rain.
- Summer: Temperatures can reach above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Jeans, walking shorts (no short shorts allowed), t-shirts, other 'church camp' casual types of clothing are suitable. (Please don't bring low cut and spaghetti strap tops.) For the pool, you can bring a modest, one-piece bathing

suit for both men and women. (Two-piece bathing suits are not allowed.) For indoor air conditioning, you may want a sweater or windbreaker.

In Addition you may wish to bring a robe as the bathrooms are located in the center of the dormitory.

MAIL

During On Boarding please use the following address formats when sending items to the ISC:

U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Your

Name

Mercy Ships –On Boarding

P.O. Box 2020

Lindale, TX 75771, USA

UPS, FedEx, or DHL

Your Name

Mercy Ships – On Boarding

15862 Hwy 110 N

Lindale, TX 75771, USA

The mail will be delivered to the classroom for you. Stamps can be purchased at the mailroom. Mail Room hours are 12:30-2:00 PM. There is a mail receptacle as you are exiting the campus where you can drop your outgoing mail.

HOUSING

Accommodations are dormitory style. Family and couple rooms are available. Bedding and towels are provided. Laundry facilities are located in most dormitories.

SWIMMING POOL

The pool is available to everyone on the campus during the summer months (June-August). Please bring a modest, one-piece bathing suit. Two-piece bathing suits and Speedos are not allowed. Children must be supervised at all times when they are at the pool.

FORBIDDEN ITEMS

- Firearms are NOT allowed on the campus.
- Smoking is NOT allowed on the campus.
- Alcoholic beverages are NOT allowed on the campus.
- Pets are NOT allowed on campus or in dorms.

SHOPPING RUNS

We provide weekly transportation for shopping.

What to Bring for On Boarding

CLASSROOM PHASE:

- Bible
- Insect repellent
- Sunscreen
- Clothing. While attending Gateway, the dress code is casual. You may want to bring 'church clothes' for Sundays and any special events. Temperatures in winter range from 20-70 degrees Fahrenheit, so be sure to bring a warm coat as well as long-sleeved shirts or sweaters. In contrast, temperatures in May through September range from 80-100 degrees Fahrenheit. Long shorts, capris, and t-shirts are appropriate. Modest apparel is essential to community life. All Mercy Ships Crew and volunteers are encouraged to honor each other in their choice of attire. During summer time it can be chilly inside due to the air-conditioning, so you still might want to bring a cardigan or light jacket.
- Swimsuits. Basic safety training includes a pool practical. Many like to wear a t-shirt or cover-up during this exercise but the facility does not allow any cotton clothing in the pool. If you would like to wear a t-shirt or shorts over your swimsuit, please bring something made from Polyester or Lycra (exercise gear). There is an outdoor pool on the campus.
- Walking shoes or athletic shoes. If you are planning on using the gym while here, no black soles are allowed on the basketball or squash (racquetball) courts.
- Personal toiletries
- If you are a light sleeper you may want to bring earplugs and/or an eye mask.
- American adapter for your plugs if you are from outside the USA. Please note that the voltage in the USA is 110AC

** Sheets, blankets, pillows and towels are provided.

Optional Items

- Umbrella
- Pool towel
- Flashlight
- Raincoat
- Sewing kit
- Laptop
- Shower shoes

FIELD PRACTICE PHASE

- Bible
- Passport and Yellow Fever card are required to be on your person
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Sun block

- Mosquito repellent
- Work clothing (there is a good chance that clothing will be ruined depending on activities)
- Appropriate clothing according to dress code (see note below)
- Sturdy tennis shoes or work shoes and a pair of dress shoes for church
- Strap-on sandals or water shoes
- Toiletries (shampoo, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.)
- One pool/beach towel per person
- Sunglasses
- Baseball cap or hat
- Wet wipes
- Small backpack or waist pack
- Appropriate swim wear; one-piece suits for women and boxer or shorts-type swimsuits for men
- Twine for a clothes line in your room and clothes pins to dry laundry • Leather work gloves
- Notebook and pen
- Water bottle
- Towel
- Travel food (no chocolates that melt)
- Rain gear (rainy season generally January – April)

Optional, but helpful:

- Pocket knife / multi-purpose tool (cannot be in carry-on luggage)
- A musical instrument for worship, if you play one
- Daily diary or journal
- Picture of your family
- Some past participants have also brought tea, washcloths, games, cards, books, Ziploc plastic bags, duct tape, Gatorade type powder, reading light, and/or a personal coffee cup

Note: Dress code is depending on the country we serve in and you can find the latest one in the Volunteer Guidebook. (You find the link to the Volunteer Guidebook in your Welcome letter from Human Resources)

Smoking or drinking alcohol is not permitted during field practice due to cultural sensitivities.

Remember – Everything you bring with you to On Boarding needs to go with you to the ship or be shipped home.

Field Practice Health and Travel Guide

Health

On Boarding Field Practice occurs off-ship in countries Mercy Ships serves. Accommodations commonly lack air-conditioning, electrical outlets, food choices, personal space, and other comforts available aboard our ships. Field Practice activities often include physical work projects that can be challenging for

those with physical limitations. Additionally, access to healthcare is limited, particularly when a Mercy Ships ship is not currently in country. Therefore, please inform the On Boarding Director of any conditions that require the use of electrically powered equipment, for instance a CPAP machine, or if you have a physical condition that would make it difficult to live in very basic environment.

Together we can discuss if the upcoming Field Practice a good fit for you, or if you would qualify for an alternative Field Practice on board the vessel.

MEDICATION

Please consider bringing the following prescription/non-prescription medications:

- Anti-Malarial
- Preferred pain reliever for minor aches and pains
- Antidiarrheal
- Cough drops
- Cold or sinus medication
- Laxatives
- Motion sickness medicine

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Field service can be challenging, but also a lot of fun. Together, we can make this a special time in your life, as well as for the whole team. Our own attitudes will be partially responsible for this. Here are some tips to help us to be better prepared.

1. **Dress code:** Please adhere to the provided dress code.
2. **Contact lenses:** Consider the practicality of wearing and cleaning your lenses based on the conditions you will be living and working in. You may want a spare pair of glasses.
3. **Carry-on luggage:** Pack some necessities in your carry-on luggage in case your suitcase does not arrive at the airport the same time you do. Bring any medication that you need and include some toiletries. Airlines may have restrictions against certain items; be sure to check before going to the airport. If you bring two suitcases (you may need to pay for the second), pack one with field service essentials since the other may need to be stored.
4. **Passport copy:** Know where your passport is at all times. They are a valuable item on the black market. Pack a copy of your passport in your suitcase. Gateway staff will carry a copy of your passport as well.
5. **Flight itinerary:** A copy of your itinerary will be given to you to carry in your carry-on luggage.
6. **Valuables:** Leave them at home. Married couples may consider wearing one simple 'wedding' band instead of their wedding set.
7. **Remember you will represent Mercy Ships:** As a group, we will stand out. Be respectful to your team members as well as to others. Represent Mercy Ships well at all time.

8. **Communication with home:** Make sure that before you leave on your trip, you let your loved ones know of your travel itinerary in case they need to get a hold of you. There may be times when you will not be able to be reached easily: however staff will have a cell phone and will be in regular contact with the ISC.
9. **Have a flexible attitude:** During the entire field practice, remember to have a flexible attitude. Expect to be uncomfortable, to eat strange foods, to be delayed, and not to get good rest. We, as your Mercy Ships field service team leaders, will try our best to make it a safe and enjoyable experience for you, but sometimes things are out of our control, such as weather, breakdowns, change of schedules, etc. A healthy sense of humor and good attitude will be valuable qualities to help you and the rest of the team as you walk through new and challenging experiences.

Shipping Container

Personal Crew Effects Requiring Shipment to the Field

To support the efforts of our long-term staff, Mercy Ships allows crew members that are transitioning to the ship, the ability to ship personal items within regularly scheduled cargo containers. Since personal materials are considered “non-Mission-Critical items”, materials are shipped based on “Space availability” within the container. It is the policy of Mercy Ships Shipping Department to attach a **Bill of Material or Manifest** (Excel Spreadsheet) to assist with Custom’s Declarations. This information is posted on Navigator, for your review, and will list your materials, if they are within. If your materials are not listed, it simply means there was no room, and materials will remain staged in the warehouse until space is available (usually the next container).

Address for shipping items to the Africa Mercy via Container:

Via the ISC, Texas:

Crew Member Full Name & Department Mercy
Ships – AFM – Container OR Crew Mail P.O.
Box 2020 OR 15862 State Highway 110 N.
Lindale, TX 75771, USA

Via Mercy Ships Holland (MSNL)

Crew Member Full Name & Department
Mercy Ships – AFM – Container OR Crew Mail
Ridderkerkstraat 20
3076 JW Rotterdam
The Netherlands

There is no charge for shipping Personal Crew Effects to the ship via Container...BUT...any materials that need to be transported from the field to place of origination (home) will not be the responsibility of Mercy Ships. Therefore, *please consider the amount of material that you originally ship to the field... you may not be able to bring it back home.*

- Mercy Ships does not ship items back from the field, so if you ship items out to the field and then want to ship them back at the end of your time of serving with us, it would be up to yourself to organize that directly with a shipping agency. Most crew sell or give away many of their larger personal effects to other crew on board before departure.
- Remember, most field location have limited storage for personal materials; therefore, consider that when planning outbound volume. You may not have enough room in your cabinet to store!

SHIPPING REGULATIONS

1. All personal effects must be delivered to shipping location (10) days prior to a scheduled container shipment (check Navigator for schedules).
 - Items should be placed in a shipping box or suitcase; marked to the attention of parties receiving at its destination and have all materials within listed as a packing slip. Please don't try to hide content by not listing... we do spot check to ensure Mercy Ships complies with all outbound shipping regulations.
 - All materials will be staged by the Warehouse Manager, listed on the manifest and loaded into the container. Please don't simply drop-off materials and hope we find it. Check Navigator to see if your materials made a given shipment.
 - Time sensitive material will need to ship via the Mercy Ships mail room, all materials are shipped through an express carrier that allows arrival within 5-10 working days. There is a charge for shipping via the mail room... by weight and volume. See 'Mail Room' page on Navigator for pricing prior to deciding how to ship (cargo container or express services).
 - All materials not time sensitive can be shipped within a Mercy Ships Cargo Container – estimated transport duration is 6-8 weeks, depending on the Field Service location.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Personal Crew Effects, having HazMat Conditions WILL NOT be shipped.

What is Considered Hazardous?

Hazardous Materials typically reflect items as follows:

- **FLAMMABLE** (some cleaning solutions, cosmetics, etc.)
- **TOXIC** (some metal cleaners drain cleaners, spot rust removers, oven cleaners).
- **CORROSIVE** Bleach, etc.)
- Contain **Alcohol** at any level within its chemical compound (hand sanitizer, nail polish remover, etc.)
- Anything needing **compressed gas to dispense** (hairspray, cooking spray, etc.)

As within Mail Room policy – if we find hazardous materials within any shipping box, it will be removed and materials will be disposed of. Original cost for reimbursement will not be offered.

The above are only guidelines and are subject to revision based on possible new regulations in the future from Homeland Security or Custom's Agencies within the Port of Call. Please check back to this section prior to shipping items to the field.

Family Information

For the participants who are attending with their children, the campus is a wonderful place to explore with lots of open spaces. Along with new opportunities, there may be challenges, as well. We strongly encourage you to include your children in the planning and decision-making process as you prepare to come, in order to help them have a positive experience in a new environment. Children over 2 years of age need to be taken care of by an adult.

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

With children under five years old, you will need to bring a nanny. In the event a nanny is not an option, Mercy Ships will consider each case individually before a final decision is made.

NANNY

Mercy Ships requires that the nanny also complete a Mercy Ships application before coming. Children will need supervision from registration day through the date the family leaves for the On Boarding field practicum. An On Boarding staff member will make sure the nanny meets his/her departure time from the Tyler airport or shuttle.

KIDS ON BOARDING PROGRAM

Kids On Boarding (KOB) is our children's program and is designed for children ages 5 – 12. KOB meets during regular On Boarding class hours. The KOB theme each week will parallel the adult On Boarding program, and includes a local field trip off campus one day a week. The parents will be required to pay an extra fee for any excursions during KOB.