

# Introduction

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The IMO/WHO/ILO *Medical First Aid Guide for Use in Accidents Involving Dangerous Goods* (MFAG) refers to the substances, material and articles covered by the *International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code* (IMDG Code) and the materials covered by appendix B of the *International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes Code* (IMSBC Code). It is intended to provide advice necessary for initial management of chemical poisoning and diagnosis within the limits of the facilities available at sea.

This Guide should be used in conjunction with the information provided in the IMDG Code, the IMSBC Code, the Emergency Procedures for Ships Carrying Dangerous Goods (EmS), the *International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk* (IBC Code), and the *International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk* (IGC Code).

The MFAG itself gives general information about the particular toxic effects likely to be encountered. The treatment recommended in this Guide is specified in the appropriate tables and more comprehensive in the appropriate sections of the Appendices. However, differences exist between countries on certain types of treatment and where these differences occur they are indicated in the relevant national medical guide.

Treatments in this guide cater for the accidental human consequences of the carriage of dangerous goods at sea. Accidental ingestion of toxic substances during voyage is rare. The guide does not cover ingestion by intention.

Minor accidents involving chemicals do not usually cause severe effects provided that the appropriate first aid measures are taken. Although the number of reported serious accidents is small, accidents involving those chemicals which are toxic or corrosive may be dangerous, and must be regarded as being potentially serious until either the affected person has completely recovered, or medical advice to the contrary has been obtained.

Information on the treatment of illnesses which are of a general nature and not predominantly concerned with chemical poisoning may be found in the ILO/IMO/WHO *International Medical Guide for Ships* (IMGS).