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Det Grønlandske Sundhedsvæsen

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Greenland's Healthcare System  
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# Greenland's Healthcare System

## Information for e.g. Visit Greenland, AECO, port agents, and cruise ships

### Introduction

Greenland's Healthcare System is present in all settlements in Greenland. However, many contacts occur via telemedicine, and there is a significant difference in the specific healthcare services available in different parts of the country. Some places only offer minor consultations, while others have small hospitals that lack resources to care for severely ill patients. The healthcare system in Greenland cannot be compared to other European healthcare systems, and the same services cannot be provided.

This memo specifies what the healthcare system can provide in terms of emergency medical assistance to tourists traveling in Greenland, as well as a guide for requesting medical assistance for an ill passenger while in Greenland.

Receiving healthcare services requires payment.

### Healthcare Services

Greenland's Healthcare System can only provide healthcare services to tourists at the same level as those provided to the country's citizens. Therefore, it is not possible to order or purchase other diagnostic measures or treatments in the healthcare system, apart from those offered to the country's citizens or as referred to by a doctor employed in the healthcare system.

It will always be the healthcare system's doctors who decide the course of treatment, regardless of what the ship's doctor or insurance company may wish.

**See page 2 for Procedure for requesting medical assistance**

**See pages 3-5 for Level of medical coverage expected in Greenland**



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## Procedure for requesting medical assistance from Greenland's Healthcare System

***If non-emergency\* medical assistance is required for a cruise tourist, follow these steps:***

1. The ship's doctor or responsible party contacts the port agent
  - a. and provide the patient's name, date of birth, and a contact phone number,
  - b. and sends the completed *Patient information form* (Appendix 1) with all required information to the port agent.
2. The port agent then contacts the local healthcare facility to book an appointment for the patient/tourist.
3. If the patient receives an appointment, the port agent sends the completed *Patient information form* (Appendix 1) with all required information to [turist@peqqik.gl](mailto:turist@peqqik.gl).

\*Non-emergencies can be treated at the next port of call

***If emergency medical assistance is needed for a cruise tourist, follow these steps:***

1. The ship's doctor calls Radio Medical Denmark, +45 75 45 67 66,
  - a. and sends *Radio Medical Record* (Appendix 2) to [RMD@rsyd.dk](mailto:RMD@rsyd.dk).
2. Radio Medical Denmark will then contact:
  - a. the on-call doctor at Queen Ingrid's Hospital, +299 55 99 55, who will devise the treatment plan and assess where the patient should be treated,
  - b. and provide the patient's name, date of birth, and a contact phone number.
3. The ship's doctor sends the completed *Patient information form* (Appendix 1) with all required information to [turist@peqqik.gl](mailto:turist@peqqik.gl) and to the port agent.
  - a. All communication regarding the finances of healthcare services will be handled by the healthcare system's finance department and the paying party.
4. The on-call doctor informs the receiving hospital that the tourist is on their way.
5. If the patient needs to be transferred, the on-call doctor contacts the patient travel coordination department.
6. It can be necessary to evacuate the patient, in which case Radio Medical Denmark will follow the SAR procedure.



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## Level of medical coverage that can be expected in Greenland

### Settlements

It is not possible to receive healthcare services in the settlements. There are no doctors or nurses present. Contact with the Healthcare System takes place via telemedicine over the phone.

If a tourist becomes seriously ill in a settlement, it should be expected that the individual will need to be transported to the nearest town. To ensure the best possible treatment, it is expected that there has been contact with the medical hotline at Queen Ingrid's Hospital, +299 55 99 55, to guarantee that the patient will be sent to the right place.

### Towns

- Qaanaaq
- Upernavik
- Uummannaq
- Qeqertarsuaq
- Qasigiannguit
- Maniitsoq
- Paamiut
- Narsaq
- Nanortalik

There is usually a doctor present at the health centers in the towns. However, there may be shorter periods when there is not a doctor in town. Therefore, only basic healthcare services can be offered at the health centers.

Tourists cannot be hospitalized in these facilities but are instead transferred to either a regional hospital or the national hospital in Nuuk. Please contact the medical hotline at Queen Ingrid's Hospital for assistance, +299 55 99 55.

Transportation expenses are paid by the tourist or the tourist's insurance company. Patient transfers and destinations are solely determined based on medical indications. The tourist or insurance company may not choose.

### Regional Cities

Greenland's Healthcare System has five regional hospitals:

- Ilulissat
- Aasiaat
- Sisimiut
- Qaqortoq
- Tasiilaq

Surgical readiness cannot be guaranteed at regional hospitals, so acute and severely ill patients will be transferred to Nuuk based on medical indications. The regional hospitals can provide primary healthcare services in the form of medical consultations, skeletal and thoracic x-rays, and certain laboratory services. There are no CT scanners available in the regional hospitals.

## **Nuuk**

Queen Ingrid's Hospital is the national hospital and serves the entire country with specialized treatment. It has medical and surgical wards, a maternity ward, an intensive care unit, and an intermediate care unit. There are operating rooms for emergency procedures.



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Queen Ingrid's Hospital has both an MRI scanner and a CT scanner. Scans are performed solely based on medical indications and cannot be ordered by insurance companies.

## **Patient Transfers and Evacuations**

Patient transfers can occur by ship, helicopter, or plane. If it is not an acute case, the regular transportation network is used. However, patients requiring a stretcher for transport are primarily transferred using the Healthcare System's ambulance plane. The Healthcare System only has one ambulance plane, a Beechcraft King Air ambulance plane, with room for 2 stretchers. The plane is used for patients throughout the country, and emergency evacuations are prioritized. Therefore, it is not possible for insurance companies to book transfers by ambulance plane. Transfers and evacuations are done solely based on medical indications.

## **Disembarkation of Ill Passengers**

Disembarkation of ill passengers should not occur without prior agreement with the Healthcare System. This is to ensure that ill passengers only disembark in places where necessary medical treatment can be provided. Disembarkation should only be carried out after prior agreement and discussion with the medical hotline at Queen Ingrid's Hospital. In the case of an emergency evacuation, contact with the healthcare system will be made through the Joint Arctic Command, which is in contact with Radio Medical Denmark, SAR.

## **Evacuation to Home Country from Nuuk, Kangerlussuaq or Narsarsuaq**

There are 3 airports in Greenland that can accommodate ambulance jets: Nuuk, Kangerlussuaq and Narsarsuaq. Nuuk is the only city of the 3 that has a hospital. The other 2 do not have hospital wards or 24-hour care available.

If an insurance company wishes to transfer a tourist from Greenland to their home country using an ambulance plane, it can be done from Nuuk International Airport (BGGH). Transportation from a regional hospital to Nuuk will be by charter. If the ambulance airplane is available, it can possibly be used. If not, transportation will be by Dash 8 plane, provided there is available capacity with Air Greenland.

If the patient can be transported to Narsarsuaq from the Regional Hospital in Qaqortoq, it will be done either by helicopter (charter or regular service) or by boat (charter or regular service). The Healthcare System can assist in arranging domestic transportation or transportation to Copenhagen. This requires a payment guarantee from the insurance company.

## **Death/Mortuary Procedures**

If a guest passes away aboard a cruise ship, it should be noted that repatriating the deceased from Greenland will take a long time. This can be done either by ship via Denmark and then to the home country or by flight to Copenhagen and onward from there. If the Healthcare System is to handle this task, it requires a payment guarantee from the insurance company, as well as the signature of the next of kin to accept the lengthy transit time.



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## **Medication**

Prescription medication can ONLY be obtained at a regional hospital or at Queen Ingrid's Hospital in Greenland. Payment is required upon receipt. There is a highly limited list of available medications, so it should not be expected that the specific medication one normally uses will be available.

There is a limited selection of over-the-counter medication available in grocery stores.

## **The National Dentistry**

The National Dentistry can assist with emergency dental treatment. However, specialized dental treatment is not available.

If emergency treatment is needed, please contact the administration of National Dentistry at +299 34 40 16 between the hours of 08.00-16.00 on weekdays. The information in Appendix 1 should be provided when contacting the administration of National Dentistry.

Emergency dental treatment is possible if a dentist is present. District dental clinics are located throughout the country.

The tourist is responsible for arranging transportation and covering transportation expenses to the designated treatment location. Additionally, there will be expenses for the emergency treatment itself.



# Patient Information

Name:
Nationality:
CPR nr./D.O.B. (dd-mm-yyyy):
Contact phone number (include country code):
Contact e-mail address:
Country of residence:
Address:
Zip code:
Travel insurance company information: <small>(*If several: Choose primary health travel insurance provider)</small>
Travel insurance company contact phone number:
Travel insurance company policy number:
Description of insurance coverage and max. limit:

**\*Provide a picture/copy of passport and insurance card**

Patient information form completed by:
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Please send the completed form to [turist@peqqik.gl](mailto:turist@peqqik.gl)



### Radio Medical Record

Name / title:		Birthdate / cpr.	Gender:	Nationality:	Date: UTC:
Shipping company:	Ship name:	Ship e-mail:		Satellite call no.:	Call signal:
Coordinates:	Destination/ETA:	Nearest port and ETA:		Medicine chest:	Page 1 of:

#### Does the patient take any medicine?

#### Does the patient have any allergies?

If so, wich one(s):

No ( ) Don't know ( )

If so, wich one(s):

No ( ) Don't know ( )

**Problem description** (what has happened - where did it happen - when did it happen - what are the patient's symptoms)

### A: Airway

Investigate	Action
Clear airways	Yes ( ) No ( ) If no: Jaw lift ( ) Suction applied ( ) Guedal® airway ( )  If no breathing, or insufficient gasping for air, CPR initiated at:
Oxygen	Oxygen administered:     liters pr. min.
Neck / back Suspicion of injury	Yes ( ) No ( )                   Fitted neck collar: Yes ( ) No ( )

### B: Breathing

Investigate	Action
Breathing frequency and depth (See - listen - feel)	Description of breathing: Fast ( ) Slow ( ) Shallow ( ) Deep ( ) Normal ( ) Other:  Number of breaths per min.:     (normal 12 -16)
Oxygen saturation in %	Oxygen saturation in %:     (normal: 95 - 100%)

### C: Cirkulation

Investigate	Action
Capillary response	Number of seconds     If more than 2 seconds: Venous cannula inserted: Yes ( ) No ( )
Skin color	Pale ( ) Reddish ( ) Bluish ( ) Normal ( )
Skin temperature and humidity	How does the skin feel:
Pulse	Pulse per. min.:     (normal 60- 80) Measured at: the wrist ( ) the neck ( ) the groin ( )
Blood pressure	Blood pressure:     /     (normal 120 - 140 / 60 - 90)

**Radio Medical Record**

**D: Disability**

Investigate	Action
Level of consciousness	<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Awake, alert and well orientated <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Unclear, but responds to questions <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Does not respond to questions but to pain stimuli <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Unconscious and unresponsive to pain stimuli  Convulsions: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Paralysis: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil reaction	Normal: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> (uniform contraction)    No <input type="checkbox"/> describe what you see:

**E: Expose**

Investigate	Performed	Action
Top to toe examination. Signs of injury / illness not recognized under A-B-C-D	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, describe any symptoms / findings:
Signs of hypothermia or overheating	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, describe any symptoms / findings:
Temperature measurement	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Temperature (mouth):                      Temperature (measured alternatively):                      Where:

**Performed actions not described above:**

*If possible, attach image(s) when sending mail.*

**If you gave any medication before contact to Radio Medical, please list here**

Time.:	Time.:
Time.:	Time.:

**The name and title of the Medical Officer**





# DANISH MARITIME AUTHORITY

## Radio Medical record - continued documentation

**Time**

**Documentation of prescriptions and actions**

(Radio Medical's prescriptions must include: Medication name, strength, number and duration)

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**Radio Medical Record - Observation Chart**

**Patient's name:**

**Birthdate / CPR**

Date						
Time						
General condition (1 - 4)						
Level of consciousness (1 - 4)						
Oxygen liters/min						
Breathing frequency /min.(12-16)						
Oxygen saturation in % (95-100)						
Capillary response in sec. (< 2 sek.)						
Heart rate / min. (60-80)						
Blood pressure (120-140 / 60-90)	/					
Pupil reaction ( Normal + / + )						
Temp. measured in the mouth (36,5)						
Venous cannula inserted (yes / no)						
Intravenous fluid, drops / min.						
Fluid intake / drink						
24-hour urine						
Urine sticks						
Blood sugar (4-7 mmol / liter)						
Malaria test						

**How to code:**

<b>General condition</b>	<b>Level of consciousness</b>	<b>Pupil reaction</b>
1=The patient is generally unaffected 2=The patient is slightly ill or not completely well 3=The patient is ill and generally affected 4=The patient is very ill and heavily affected	1= Awake, alert and well orientated 2= Unclear, but responds to questions 3= Does not respond to questions but responds to pain stimuli 4= Unconscious and unresponsive to pain stimuli	Normal reaction indicated by + / + In case of abnormal reaction, describe your findings (eg. right pupil large, without light reaction)



# DANISH MARITIME AUTHORITY

Please, indicate in pictures below: Pain, injuries or symptoms



**Back**

**Front**



