

(Name)

(Address)

(Date)

Dear (Name),

 Congratulations on being accepted as a trainee on the Summer Voyage 2015! We’re looking forward to having you sail with us.

 As you make your preparations, if you have any questions please don’t hesitate to ask. I hope to make the process of joining *Picton Castle* go as smoothly as possible for you.

 Most of the information in this package is for you to read and keep, but there are a few forms for you to fill out and return to me. The forms I need returned are the Sail Trainee’s Individual Declarations and the Medical Information Form, along with the last page of the Articles of Trainee Engagement (with your signature). You will also sign the master copy of the Articles once you join the ship. In addition, for those crossing an international border, please send me three good, colour copies of your passport (the photo and signature page). For those not crossing an international border (Americans sailing on a leg entirely within the USA), please send me a copy of other ID such as a driver’s license. Please also send a clear head-and-shoulders photo of yourself. You can return your forms by regular mail or by email, whichever is most convenient for you.

Reporting to the Ship

 Please plan to arrive at the ship during daylight hours on the day your voyage begins. The first days of each leg of the voyage will be spent on training, orientation, and making final preparations to depart. Details of where to find Picton Castle in the port where you'll be signing on will be passed to each trainee separately, closer to the day you're scheduled to join.

 Please let me know your travel details once you have them so that we can expect your arrival. I will make sure that information gets shared amongst trainees so you can meet up at the airport with anyone traveling at the same time as you to share transportation.

Contact While You’re Away

 The best way to keep in touch while you’re away is by internet or telephone when you reach port. Many ports the ship visits will likely have an internet café or library somewhere with public internet access, and wifi is found in an increasing number of places in the world.

 *Picton Castle* has a satellite communication system with telephone and email. This system is for emergencies and ship’s business only. You will not have access to this system. We strongly recommend against bringing your own satellite phone.

 If you choose to bring a cell phone, please be advised that our ship policy on cell phone use is that it can only be used off-watch, in port.

 Please let your family know that if there is an emergency at home and they need to get in touch with you while the ship is at sea they can contact our office and we will make contact with the ship to pass on a brief message. This will be done only in urgent/emergency situations.

 Likewise, if there is an emergency with you or the ship, the office will make contact with whoever you name as your emergency contact on the medical information form. Please provide as much contact information as possible on the form so that we are able to reach them (including cell phone, email, etc).

Following Along With the Voyage on [www.picton-castle.com](http://www.picton-castle.com)

 Let your family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and anyone else who is interested know that they can follow along with your voyage on the *Picton Castle* website. The Captain’s Log will be frequently updated at sea and in port with stories and explanations of what’s happening on the voyage. The ship’s current location can also be viewed online so folks at home can follow your progress.

Passport

 A valid passport is essential for those crossing an international border. If you need to get or renew your passport you should do it now. Remember that your passport needs to be valid through the entire trip.

 Once you sign on to the ship, your passport will be collected and kept in the ship’s safe. The crew will be cleared in and out of customs and immigration as a group by the Captain or his designate.

Visas

 For anyone who would ordinarily need an ESTA to fly into the USA (pretty much anyone who’s not American or Canadian), you will have to get a visitor visa instead because Picton Castle is not a bonded carrier. Some nationalities will need visas to enter Canada and/or Bermuda as well.

Any visas that must be obtained in advance are your responsibility. We will do all that we can to assist. If you have specific questions, please let me know.

Travel/Health Insurance

 Trainees are **required to have health insurance** with a minimum coverage of $100,000 in medical evacuation and $50,000 in medical expenses. We strongly recommend you also have travel insurance to cover delays, baggage loss and trip cancellation. A single policy may provide both types of coverage. Once you have this arranged, please send me confirmation from your insurance company of your coverage so we can verify it and provide the company name, emergency phone number and your policy number on the medical information form. You can arrange coverage through your insurance agent or travel agent.

Immunizations

 For our extended international voyages, we send a long list of suggested immunizations. For this voyage, we simply recommend that your tetanus shot is up to date, along with any other routine immunizations.

Medical Services at Sea

 The ship will sail with a medical officer who can provide emergency medical services at sea. Our extensive medical chests are stocked with the necessary elements for this type of care, including antibiotics, splints and IV fluids. All of the professional crew are trained in marine first aid. In addition, Maritime Health Services provides us with 24-hour physician consultation to the ship at sea, international hospital and physician referrals, assistance with arranging emergency transport and repatriations, and distribution of prescription medication included in our medical chest. All medical supplies are under the exclusive supervision of the ship’s medical officer and the Captain.

Personal Medical Kits

 Although the ship has a medical chest, we expect that each trainee will bring the following items as required, including:

Your preferred analgesics for aches and pains

Your preferred seasickness medications

Minor wound care supplies – adhesive bandages, disinfectant, antibiotic ointment, tweezers

Remedies you usually take for colds, allergies, skin irritations, yeast infections and any other common ailments

An adequate supply of tampons/sanitary napkins

An adequate supply of contact lens solution

Sun block, at least SPF 15, preferably SPF 30 or higher, sun glasses and sun hat

Insect repellent

Vitamins and nutritional supplements

An adequate supply of any prescribed medicine and a copy of the prescription for each

Anything else you usually use at home for illnesses or injuries

What to Bring

 It is best to bring only what you will absolutely need rather than everything you might wish for. The ship will visit enough ports where you will be able to purchase anything extra you might require or want. Your personal storage space, while ample, is distinctly limited to your bunk and storage locker or sea chest. Everything you bring must be able to fit in your own personal storage space. Do not pack in trunks or suitcases, use a duffel bag or sea bag that can be folded or rolled and stowed in your storage locker/sea chest.

 Rigging knives may be purchased upon arrival at the ship.

 Here is a guideline of what to bring:

Valid passport, if necessary

Warm sleeping bag or blanket - we provide sheets and pillow, but bring your own warm layer(s) as it can be cool at sea at night

Camping pad or Thermarest for sleeping on deck in warm weather or treks ashore (optional)

Foul weather gear – jacket, pants and boots that are waterproof. Whatever brand and style you choose, we recommend bright colours and/or reflective patches so you will be visible on deck at all times. Boots with a heel are best (regular rubber boots will be fine).

Footwear – we often go barefoot aboard in warm weather, but you will want a sturdy pair of shoes to wear aboard when it is cooler and for walking ashore.

Ship clothes – most crew have some clothes to wear on board and some to be worn ashore. Your ship clothes will be your get-dirty work clothes – jeans, shorts, t-shirts and a sweater. Lightweight long-sleeve shirts with collars are good sun protection.

Shore clothes – you will likely want separate clothes to wear ashore that you don’t normally wear on the ship. Included in your shore clothes should be one set of dress clothes – a dress or skirt for women and a shirt and tie for men.

If you wear glasses, a spare pair

Sunglasses

Sun hat

A rigging knife in a sheath, and a belt to attach it to (together known as your "rig")

Swim suit

Personal hygiene products

Talcum powder

Towels and washcloths

Small waterproof flashlight or headlamp and batteries

Camera

Notebook and pens

Battery operated fan for bunk

Salt water soap – Joy dishwashing liquid will work

Daypack for treks ashore

Plug adapter if necessary (our outlets aboard are North American-style 110V outlets)

Personal medical kit (see above)

The ship will provide safety harnesses, but if you want to bring your own you may

It's a good idea to bring a few fun items as well - musical instruments are always welcome (they must fit in your bunk), goofy clothes or funny costumes (we sometimes have costume or theme parties), books (we have a small library on board that you can use, but it's a good idea to bring one you'd like to read). MP3 players with headphones and battery operated speakers have been a big hit on our recent voyages. Former trainees have also recommended your own permanent marker and good flip-flops.

Electronic Equipment

 Please keep the amount of stuff you bring that needs to be plugged in to a minimum. We generate our own electricity on board and conserve power because we’re limited to what we can make in a day. You will be able to plug in your gadgets (to charge your camera batteries, iPod, etc) only with the permission of the Chief Engineer while the generator is running, in the designated areas. The ship runs on both 110v AC (the same as standard outlets in North America) and 110v DC. The outlets may look the same, so be sure you’re plugging into the right one or your gadget will be fried.

Conserving Resources

 As mentioned above, we make our own electricity. We also make our own water. This means that we have to use what we have wisely. You can get in the habit at home by turning off lights when you’re not using them and turning off the water while you’re brushing your teeth.

Money

 Many people ask about spending money for the voyage, and how much you spend will depend entirely on you and what you choose to do during your time off ashore. Captain Moreland says that people who spend less money often have a better time ashore.

 Most crew have found that the best way to access money in 90% of ports is to withdraw cash using an ATM card (make sure your card has a 4-digit PIN). In the 10% of places where that’s not an option it’s usually because there is no ATM machine. I suggest bringing some cash, probably US dollars, with you. I know that I personally feel more secure when traveling with a credit card with a high enough limit that I could buy a plane ticket home, just in case.

 All of your personal belongings, including cash, ATM cards, etc. are to be kept in your bunk or your personal storage area. The ship has a strict honour code that prohibits anyone from touching anything in your bunk without your permission.

Captain’s Suggested Reading

 Captain Moreland has put together a list of suggested reading to help you prepare.

*The Way of a Ship* by Capt. Alan Villiers

*Two Years Before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana

*Billy Budd* by Herman Melville

*The Last Grain Race* by Eric Newbey

*Men, Ships and the Sea* by Capt. Alan Villiers

*Captains Courageous* by Rudyard Kipling

*Youth* by Joseph Conrad

*Eagle Seamanship: A Manual for Square-Rigger Sailing* by Lt. Edwin H. Daniels, Jr.

*Clean, Sweet Wind* by Douglas C. Pyle

*Around Cape Horn* (film, not a book) by Capt. Irving Johnson

Payment

 An invoice for the balance of your trainee fee is enclosed in this package. The balance of your payment is due 90 days before you are scheduled to join the ship for those making the full voyage and 60 days before you are scheduled to join the ship for those sailing on a leg of the voyage. We accept payment by cheque, bank cheque, money order made out to Windward Isles Sailing Ship Company, or wire transfer (I will forward our bank details if this is the method you choose). All fees are quoted in US dollars.

 Also enclosed in this package is a document that outlines our cancellation and refund policy. Please read and understand the policy as it applies to you.

Things to Send to *Picton Castle* Office

You may send the items below by email, fax or post, whichever is most convenient for you. We need to have your forms as far in advance of your joining date as possible. Please send the following items:

Completed Medical Information Form

Completed Individual Declarations form

The last page of the Articles of Trainee Engagement (signed)

Three good, colour copies of your passport or other ID as appropriate

A head-and-shoulders photo of yourself

Confirmation of your insurance coverage

The balance of your payment

 If there is anything that is unclear or anything I haven’t thought of that you need to know, please ask. We’re looking forward to having you aboard.

Regards,

Maggie Ostler

Barque *Picton Castle*

PO Box 1076, 132 Montague Street

Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

B0J 2C0 Canada

(902)634-9984

castle@tallships.ca

Enclosed

Itinerary, Summer Voyage 2015

Articles of Trainee Engagement

Fee, Cancellation and Refund Policy

Medical Information Form

Sail Trainees Individual Declarations and Commitment to Terms of Articles of Trainee Engagement

Individual Trainee Invoice

Crew Handbook