



**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**

Department of Shipping

141-143 Motijheel C/A (8<sup>th</sup> Floor), Dhaka-1000

Phone: 9513305

Fax :9587301

E-mail: info@dos.gov.bd

Web-site: www.dos.gov.bd



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To: Ship owners, managers, operators, masters, Officers, Crew, recognized organizations, Certifying Authorities, PSCO's, agents and the Shipping community,

**CIRCULAR RELATING TO CERTIFICATION OF SHIPS AND SEAFARERS FOR CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC.**

The spread of the coronavirus has placed the entire world in an unprecedented situation. To slow the spread of the disease and mitigate its impacts, travel is being curtailed and borders are being closed. Transport hubs are being affected. Ports are being closed and ships denied entry.

The actions taken worldwide as a result of the outbreak pose a serious challenge for administrations to allow the continued training of seafarers, revalidate certificates, including medical certificates and issuance of endorsements attesting recognition of certificates in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW Convention), 1978, as amended.

The prevailing situation would have direct affect on the following aspects of the shipping community.

- (a) the continued training of seafarers, revalidation of certificates, including medical certificates, and issuance of endorsements attesting recognition of certificates in accordance with the

International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for seafarers (STCW Convention), 1978, as amended;

(b) Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) and Service period of Bangladeshi seafarers; and

(c) All matters related to ships surveys, inspections, certifications and/or renewal of statutory certificates;

(d) Lockdown, Curfew, Quarantine, Denial, Embarkation and Disembarkation, refusal, isolation measures imposed by various authorities is causing seafarers retention on board for unexpected period and the seafarers passport and other travel documents are expiring.

Considering the COVID-19 Pandemic situation Department of Shipping Bangladesh Promulgate following circular to the Bangladeshi shipping community.

#### **1. General Guidance:**

Information on COVID-19 relevant to the maritime industry can be found on the following websites:

- (a) International Maritime Organization ([www.imo.org](http://www.imo.org))
- (b) International Maritime Health Association ([www.imha.net](http://www.imha.net))
- (c) World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int))
- (d) International Chamber of Shipping ([www.ich-shipping.org](http://www.ich-shipping.org))
- (e) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh ([www.mohfw.gov.bd](http://www.mohfw.gov.bd))
- (f) Directorate General of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh ([www.dghs.gov.bd](http://www.dghs.gov.bd))

Specific guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers is available in IMO Circular Letter No.4204. Please note

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this circular letter is being regularly updated, the latest version is available on the International Maritime Organization's website.

**2. Seafarer's Certification:**

Certificates of Competency (CoC) and Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) which will be expired before 30th April 2020 will be granted a general extension till 30th June 2020. Seafarers will not be required to apply for the extension.

Consideration will be given to allow seafarers who hold foreign issued Certificates of Competencies (CoC) to continue serving onboard Bangladesh Registered Ships, if they are unable to revalidate their CoC before the expiry date due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Bangladesh Registered Ships owners and managers may submit such request in-writing to Department of Shipping (DoS), accompanied with a confirmation of continued validity from the issuing authority of the seafarer's CoC.

**3. Minimum Safe Manning Document (MSMD)**

Where it can be demonstrated that a crew member is required to depart a vessel owing to the COVID-19 and unable to be replaced, exemptions to MSMD will be considered on a case by case basis and should be supported by risk assessments from the company.

**4. Medical certificate:**

If a medical certificate expires whilst the seafarer is at sea, the certificate is allowed to remain in force until the next port of call where the seafarer can obtain a medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner. This is permitted for up to 30th June 2020. If a seafarer is urgently required to join a ship with an expired medical certificate, the Department of Shipping (DoS) must be contacted to request permission.

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**5. Continues Discharge Certificate (CDC):**

Continues Discharge Certificate (CDC) which will be expired before 30th April 2020 will be granted a general extension till 30th June 2020. Seafarers will not be required to apply for the extension.

**6. Extension of Seafarers Employment Agreements (SEA):**

The Seafarers Employment Agreements (SEA) should remain valid. The company should explain to the seafarers as to why they need to remain on board. If any of the SEA's have expired, they need to be extended or new ones issued. The company need to ensure that the seafarers are sent home at the first available opportunity. Evidence should be retained by both the seafarer and the Company clearly demonstrating the reason why the Seafarer was asked to extend their contract.

**7. Extension of mandatory surveys, audits and expiry of statutory certificates:**

Statutory certificates which will be expired before 30th April 2020 will be granted a general extension till 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Owners or operators of Bangladesh Registered ships will not required to apply for the extension.

**8. Port State Control Measures:**

Port State Control officers are instructed to take a pragmatic and practical approach in relation to these certificates and endorsement extensions and their acceptance in the excise of Port State Control procedures.



Commodore Syed Ariful Islam, (TAS), ndc, psc, BN  
Director General