



**REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Ken Lee Building  
Edith Cavell Street  
Port-Louis

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**MERCHANT SHIPPING NOTICE Ref: 18 of 2020**

**Title: Vessels and seafarer's certificates during the Covid-19  
Pandemic**

Notice to: **Ship Owners/Masters/Seafarers/Operators/ROs and Managers of  
Mauritian Flagged vessels**

***The objectives of this Merchant Shipping Notice is to inform all those  
concerned of the stand taken by this Ministry with regards to Ship's  
and seafarer's certifications as a result of the Covid-19  
Pandemic situation.***

**1.0** The Director of Shipping wishes to inform all shipowners/operators and those concerned that the Shipping Division of this Ministry remains fully operational and is continuing to provide its high-quality services to all stakeholders so as to ensure that all ships may operate without any disruption despite the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**2.0** Further to Merchant Shipping Notice N0. 5 of 2020, it has been noticed that several owners/operators are having difficulties with scheduled audits, surveys and certifications of their vessels since extensions given as permitted under the various international maritime conventions are about to expire.

**3.0** It has also been noted that in many cases arranging the audits, surveys, inspections and servicing activities required under national and international regulations are almost impossible due to a lack of availability of surveyors and auditors, travel restrictions, limited access to port facilities and the shutdown of many airports around the globe.

**4.0** In an effort to support shipping companies and owners/operators of ships under the Mauritius flag, the Director of Shipping of this Ministry has put in place a couple of measures to address the difficulties being encountered by all those concerned due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**5.0** At **ANNEX 1** of this Merchant Shipping Notice No. 18 of 2020, queries rose so far by shipowners/operators of vessels under the Mauritius flag about seafarers' certificates ships' surveys, further extensions and remote surveys are clarified and answered.

**6.0** Owners/Operators are also reminded that in some cases many ROs have now resumed survey/audit/inspections, at ports where lockdowns and restrictions have been eased up. In case that their vessels are calling at those ports, they should avail themselves of the available facilities and complete all surveys/audits/inspections.

**7.0 Short Term Certificate:** In the event that the authorised RO is unable to attend the vessel to complete a survey or inspection leading to the endorsement or renewal of a relevant certificate, then after due authorisation a short-term certificate may be issued with validity of not more than 3 months from the date of expiration of the current certificate or the closure of the required window for the conduct of the required activity. It remains the responsibility of the Operator and the Master to ensure that the vessel is maintained and operated in accordance with the statutory requirements for the duration of the short-term certificate.

**8.0 Re-alignment of Certificate dates:** On expiration of the short-term certificate, or earlier if circumstances permit, a survey or inspection, must be completed and a new certificate issued, aligned with the expiration date of the previous certificate.

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## ANNEX 1

### 1.0 The Maritime Labour Certificate (MLC) 2006:

- (i). Extension of the external initial MLC 2006 inspection beyond the 6 months provided on the Interim MLC;**
- (ii). Extension of the external intermediate inspection;**
- (iii). Extension of the date for the renewal inspection required by MLC 2006.**

Due to “Force Majeure”, the Ministry will consider on a case by case basis the following;

- a.** Authorisation to RO to issue an extension for a period not exceeding three (3) months in accordance with MLC - Standard A5.1.3.3 and Standard A5.1.3.6 (interim certificate).
- b.** Whether the required surveys/inspections may be conducted by using the remote mode and issue an authorisation for this purpose. This authorisation will be issued when requested if circumstances are beyond the vessel Owner’s/Operator’s control.

In both cases and to obtain the official authorisation document from the Ministry, the Shipowner/Operator will need to provide adequate justification with supporting documentation\* such as;

\* **(i)** Risk Assessment report.

**(ii)** Master’s Declaration Form duly signed. ***(This is attached with this Notice)***

**(iii)** Copies of relevant certificates.

**(iv)** Remote methods to be employed. **(See Section 4)**

## **2.0 ISM Code; The Safety Management Certificate (SMC): \***

### **a. ISM internal safety audit**

Ship Owner or Ship Manager may be granted postponement of the annual interval for internal safety audit on board and ashore for a period not exceeding three (3) months as provided under element 12.1 of the ISM Code. The Ministry will issue the conditions attached upon application. **(See 2.1 below)**

### **b. SMC initial audit**

RO may be authorised to issue a consecutive extension to the Interim Safety Management Certificate (SMC) in accordance with element 14.3 of the ISM Code. Validity of the Interim SMC issued by RO shall not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of issuance of the first Interim SMC.

### **c. SMC intermediate audit**

RO may be authorised to issue a Short Term Certificate for a period not exceeding three (3) months provided that the requisition for an intermediate audit is made by the Ship Owner or Ship Manager to the RO before the end of the third anniversary date.

### **d. SMC renewal audit**

RO may be authorised to issue an extension for a period not exceeding three (3) months in accordance with element 13.14 of the ISM Code.

### **e. Annual and renewal DOC audit**

An extension of the Document of Compliance (DOC) in the form of a “Short Term Certificate” may be considered by the Ministry on case-by-case basis if the Ship Owner or the Ship Manager is unable to complete the required annual endorsement and issuance of the DOC.

## **2.1 Remote Inspection: (See also Section 4.0) \***

**a.** The Ministry may also accept a remote inspection in lieu of the onboard survey, if the Shipowner/DPA OR Recognised Organisation (RO) proposes and has in place procedures for any of the above-mentioned audits to be carried out by remote inspection techniques which at least meet with the requirements of element 12 of the ISM Code. In any of the above cases the following \* Supporting Documents are to be submitted to the Director of Shipping.

*(i) Risk Assessment report.*

*(ii) Master's Declaration Form duly signed. (This is attached with this Notice)*

*(iii) Copy/ies of related Certificate/s.*

*(iv) In case of remote inspection, the methodology to be used.*

### 3.0 The International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC):

**a. Extension of the internal initial ISPS audit beyond the requirements found in the ISPS Code:**

Recognized Security Organization (RSO) may be authorised to issue a consecutive extension to the Interim International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC) in accordance with ISPS Code A-19.4.5. Validity of the Interim certificate issued by RSO shall not exceed twelve (12) months from the date of issuance of the first Interim ISSC.

**b. Extension of the internal annual ISPS Audit beyond the 15 months allowed by IMO Resolution MSC 273 (85):**

*The Ministry would consider completing the Audit by remote procedures.*

**c. Extension of the external intermediate audit required by the ISPS Code:**

*RSO may be authorised to issue an extension for a period not exceeding three (3) months in terms of a “Short Term Certificate” provided that the requisition for an intermediate audit is made by the Company Security Officer to the RSO before the end of the third anniversary date.*

**d. Extension of the ISSC renewal audit:**

*RSO may be authorised to extend the validity of the ISSC for a period not exceeding three (3) months in accordance with ISPS Code A-19.3.5.*

**e. Extension of the date for the external renewal audit required by the ISPS Code beyond the three months provided by 19.3.5 of the ISPS Code:**

*The Ministry may allow the RSO to issue an ISSC with limited validity, if adequate justification with supporting documentation\* is provided.*

**f. Remote Inspection: (See Section 4.0)**

The Ministry may also accept a remote inspection in lieu of the onboard survey, whenever the Recognised Organisation (RO) proposes that any of the above-mentioned surveys/audits may be carried out by remote inspection techniques.

#### **4.0 Remote Surveys:**

**a.** This Ministry will accept the following to be conducted using remote survey techniques, namely;

- (i)** Renewal and annual DOC audits at the company's office;
- (ii)** Renewal and intermediate SMC audits on board the ship;
- (iii)** Renewal and intermediate ISSC verifications on board the ship;
- (iv)** Renewal and intermediate MLC inspections on board the ship;
- (v)** Verifications of interim SMC, DOC, ISSC and MLC audits;

**b.** Remote surveys will require the use of digital communication solutions, such as telephone, Skype, video conference options, Zoom and others.

Owners/Operators/DPAs/ROs and Shipmasters must make sure that documents are presented electronically by means of remote access, e-mail and conferencing tools, including audio, video and data sharing.

**c.** The ISM and ISPS internal audits shall be performed as near as possible in accordance with the requirements of the Codes and may include a methodology other than physical on-board audits, while ensuring that personnel carrying out audits are independent of the areas being audited.

**d.** Companies may thus carry out internal audits for both ISM and ISPS remotely by means of digital communication solutions and data sharing and by the help of shipboard personnel.

**e.** In the case of MLC where RO intervention is required, owners/operators are to discuss with their respective RO's and check the remote system they are willing to employ and consequently inform this Ministry. For MLC, since the Convention does NOT allow extension, remote audits would be permitted by this Ministry for;

- (i)** Renewal and intermediate MLC inspections on board the ship; and
- (ii)** Verifications of interim MLC audit.

## 5.0 Other Statutory Surveys and Certificates:

### **a. Postponement of a vessels dry dock survey and Statutory Surveys including the IOPP renewal survey?**

SOLAS Chapter I, Regulation 14(e) and MARPOL Annex I, Regulation 10.5 permits a Certificate to be extended by a maximum period of three (3) months if the ship is not in a port where the surveys are to be carried out.

If it can be shown that a vessel was scheduled for the dry-docking survey in a shipyard and due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, the shipyard is experiencing major delays on all projects, the Ministry may extend the Dry-Dock Survey and related Statutory surveys including the IOPP renewal survey beyond the maximum three (3) months, if the vessel operator provides the Ministry with the necessary documentation\*.

***This will be treated on a case by case basis.***

***\* Documents submitted shall also consist of the Dry-Dock booking confirmation.***

## 6.0 Passenger Vessels:

For: -

- (i)** Passenger Certificate,
- (ii)** High Speed Craft Safety Certificate, or
- (iii)** Passenger Ship Safety Certificate,

Due to the nature of their businesses, Passenger Vessels are subject to more stringent rules and due consideration shall be taken prior issuing any extension or exemptions.

Therefore, any application for an extension of certificate in relation to any survey/inspection/audit and bottom hull inspection shall be submitted to the Director of Shipping at least two (2) weeks prior to the expiry date(s) of said certificate(s).



## **7.0 Certification of Non Convention vessels, Fishing vessels of 24 meters or more and Pleasure Crafts on International Voyages**

For vessels which are not certified according to International Conventions and whose certification is issued by this Ministry or RO's, the same procedures as described at **Section 9** below should be followed with the necessary adaptations.

## **8.0 Seafarers' Certification- CoCs and CoPs issued by this Ministry, Endorsements and Medical Certificates:**

### **a. CoCs and CoPs;**

For those who are onboard and their Certificates of Competencies (CoCs) and Certificates of Proficiencies (CoPs) issued under the STCW 78 Convention (as amended) have expired or are due to expire on 30/06/2020;

**(i)** Whether their five-year renewal requires successful refresher/update courses or not, an extension for a period of six (06) months, without having to undergo the said course would be considered.

**(ii)** Holders of those certificates are requested to contact this Ministry through their Shipping Companies and submit the necessary documentations for renewal process.

**(iii)** For those who are ashore, they should call at the Shipping Division as usual to complete all relevant procedures;

**(iv)** Holders of certificates issued by other Maritime Administrations serving onboard Mauritius Flag vessels shall abide by the instructions of the issuing administration and this Ministry will issue appropriate **Letter** of Endorsement to allow the seafarer to complete his/her tour of duty onboard the concerned vessel.

**b. Medical Certificates;**

(i) Mauritian seafarers presently serving onboard and whose Medical Certificates have or about to expire may continue likewise for a further period of six months unless any facility is available to undergo fresh medical examinations.

(ii) Non-Mauritian seafarers serving onboard Mauritius flag vessels falling under the same category as (i) above shall also be allowed to stay onboard under the same terms and conditions as above.

(iii) Any seafarer presently ashore and who intends to join a vessel under the Mauritius flag, shall do so with a medical certificate with validity to cover the duration of his/her contract.

**9.0 Documentation and Authorizations:**

**a.** Any request relating to the contents of this Merchant Shipping Notice shall be made to be made to the Director of Shipping at [shippingdivision@govmu.org](mailto:shippingdivision@govmu.org)

**b.** The documents to be submitted shall include but not limited to;

**(i)** A risk assessment report pertaining to the request for extensions/conducting remote audit process;

**(ii)** Documented procedures, including checklists for conducting the internal audit process;

**(iii)** In case of Dry-Dock postponement, proof of the booking confirmation;

**(iv)** Master's Declaration Form (attached with this MSN).

**(v)** For matters regarding CoCs and CoPs, applicants are to contact the Ministry for the appropriate procedures to be followed.

**All inquiries and applications with the required documentation to be submitted in scanned - electronic format by e-mail**

## **10.0 Processing of Applications:**

As soon as an application is received, it will be treated on a case by case basis and once approved; an Official authorisation will be sent to the applicant.

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