



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
SHIPPING DEPUTY MINISTRY

Circular No. 16/2021

7 April 2021

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To all Registered Owners, Registered Bareboat Charterers,
Managers and Representatives of Ships flying the Cyprus Flag

Subject: Urgent Provisional Measures for the operation of Cyprus ships during the Covid-19 outbreak

In an effort to support shipping companies and owners of Cyprus ships and to enable them to address the difficulties encountered due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Shipping Deputy Ministry (SDM) has put in place special arrangements for its smooth operation and the effective provision of services to its clients and collaborators (Circulars No. 6/2020, 08/2020, 18/2020 and 1/2021).

In addition, the Shipping Deputy Ministry has prepared a [dedicated section](#) in its website where all related information and Circulars issued by the SDM, Cyprus, the EU and the IMO regarding Covid-19 can be found.

The Shipping Deputy Ministry remains fully committed to continue to provide its high-quality services without any disruption, so that all ships registered under the Cyprus flag will continue to operate as usual. Our arrangements ensure the timely completion of registry and other transactions without any interruption and encourage the continuity of trade and the maintenance of the supply chain. The Registrar of Cyprus Ships assures all those concerned that a degree of flexibility will be permitted wherever this is deemed necessary.

Due to the continuing pandemic and this force majeure situation, the SDM continues to implement a number of urgent provisional measures adopted relating to the following matters:

A. Seafarers

Seafarers' Certification: Please refer to the provisions of [Circular No. 1/2021](#) issued on 8 January 2021. Any inquiries shall be addressed to seafarers@dms.gov.cy.

Provisions related with seafarers' repatriation during COVID-19: The intention is to examine applications for the approval of seafarers' employment agreement (SEA) extensions over twelve months due to COVID-19 imposed travel restrictions that prevent the normal crew change and repatriation of seafarers, provided that this will be supported by documented evidence, therefore immediately after a seafarer completes eleven months continuous sea service a repatriation plan shall be submitted by the owner / bareboat charterer or manager of a ship flying the Cyprus Flag, for the approval of the Shipping Deputy Ministry.



The following supporting documents need to be submitted:

1. Signed contracts for the period for which the extension of SEA is requested.
2. Repatriation plan, as per the **attached form**, with the inclusion of seafarers whose contracts have been extended, as well as the rest of the crew.
3. Justification for the untimely repatriation of seafarers after the expiry of their contract.
4. Evidence of the actions taken by the owner / bareboat charterer or manager of the ship to protect the mental health of seafarers and to fight fatigue due to long stay on board.

Applications and supporting documents shall be submitted electronically at mlc@dms.gov.cy.

B. Statutory Surveys for Internationally Trading vessels

We acknowledge that Cyprus flag vessels and their operators alike are encountering increasing difficulties in arranging the surveys, audits, inspections and servicing activities required under national and international regulations 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.

For this reason, the following arrangements will apply:

Surveys in areas not affected by Covid-19: Operators are urged to consider arranging surveys/ audits/ inspections of their vessels as early as possible and, if practicable, within the window provided by the relevant International Maritime Conventions at locations and under conditions which will not adversely affect the health of the personnel involved.

Extension of surveys: Extension of the annual/ intermediate/ periodic or renewal surveys is possible for all ships' statutory certificates, subject to authorisation. Extension is possible for up to 3 months from the last date of the window survey, provided that this request is supported by the Classification society of the vessel.

Remote Inspection: The Administration 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 may be carried out by remote inspection techniques. Remote inspections should ensure same level of accuracy as the on-site surveys.

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 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.

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.

C. International Safety Management (ISM) Code & International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code Verifications

If, due to restrictions imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, an auditor of a Recognised Organisation (RO) or Recognised Security Organisation (RSO) cannot attend ISM/ISPS upcoming audits, or verifications, the company of the ship or the relevant RO or RSO must notify this Administration and obtain relevant authorisation, unless specified otherwise, as follows:

1. ISM Code

Internal Annual ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for up to a 3-month extension to the 12-month interval for shore-side and shipboard internal audits. The audit may be postponed for up to a further 3 months with no further authorisation by this Administration, however, prior notification is required. Remote internal audits in lieu of physical audits are accepted by this Administration. Companies shall carry out these audits by using their own remote auditing techniques which must be communicated to this Administration.

Initial ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the Interim Safety Management Certificate (SMC) with validity, for a minimum period required to complete the initial verification and for a period up to 3 months.

Intermediate ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term SMC that is valid for a period up to 3 months.

Renewal ISM Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the SMC up to 3 months.

Document of Compliance Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term DOC, valid for a period of no longer than 3 months, in the event that a company is unable to complete the necessary verifications (including initial verifications) due to the current Covid-19 circumstances.

2. ISPS Code

Internal Annual ISPS Verification: Internal annual ISPS Verification may be postponed for up to 3 months with an authorisation from this Administration. The audit may be postponed for up to a further 3 months with no further authorisation by this Administration, however, prior notification is required. Remote internal audits in lieu of physical audits are accepted by this Administration. Companies shall carry out these audits by using their own remote auditing techniques which must be communicated to this Administration.

Initial ISPS Verification: This Administration will authorise a consecutive Interim International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC) with validity for the minimum period required to complete the initial verification and for a period up to 3 months.

Intermediate ISPS Verification: Authorisation is required for the issuance of a short-term ISSC with validity of up to 3 months.

Renewal ISPS Verification: Authorisation is required for an extension of the ISSC for up to 3 months.

3. Remote Audits

This Administration may also accept a remote audit in lieu of the onboard or shore-based audit, whenever the RO/RSO confirms that such audits cannot be carried out physically and can be carried out by using remote auditing techniques. Remote audits should ensure same level of accuracy as the on-site audits.

D. Guidance for Recognised Organisations

Where an RO is able to conduct a survey on board a vessel in compliance with the normal course of survey and certification, no notification to the SDM is required and the relevant certificate may be issued or endorsed as necessary. In the case of ISM and ISPS related audits, the associated RO is obliged to inform the SDM as per [Circular No. 03/2019](#) at ism@dms.gov.cy and as per [Circular No. 24/2015](#) at maritime.security@dms.gov.cy.

For statutory certificates issued by an RO, and the issuance of a short-term certificate or extension as provided on the basis of this Circular, the SDM should be notified electronically as soon as practicable at shipsafety@dms.gov.cy. For passenger ships, SDM notification should be addressed to passengerships@dms.gov.cy.

E. Compulsory Insurance

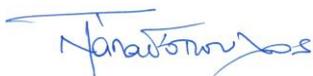
Owners and Managers of Cyprus flagged ships remain liable to maintain at all times compulsory insurance in force and, if applicable, carry on board relevant Certificate(s) in hard copy or electronic format under the 2006 MLC Convention, the 2001 Bunkers Convention, the 1992 CLC Convention, the 2007 Nairobi Wreck Removal Convention, Directive 2009/20/EC and the Athens PLR Regulation (EC) No.392/2009, to the extent that these instruments apply.

F. General Provisions

The Shipping Deputy Ministry is at the disposal of Owners, Managers and anyone concerned to provide any information or clarifications they may require.

This Circular **remains valid until 31.12.2021** or until is revoked by this Administration if it occurs earlier. **SDM Circular No. 08/2020 is no longer valid.**

This Circular must be placed on board vessels flying the Cyprus flag.



Dr. Neophytos Papadopoulos
Permanent Secretary
Shipping Deputy Ministry

Cc: - Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Maritime Offices of the Shipping Deputy Ministry abroad

- Inspectors of Cyprus Ships
- Diplomatic Missions and Honorary Consular Offices of the Republic
- Recognised Organisations (ROs)
- Cyprus Shipping Chamber
- Cyprus Union of Shipowners
- Cyprus Master Mariners Association
- Association of Merchant Marine Officers
- Recognised maritime training schools
- Trade Union SEK
- Trade Union PEO
- Trade Union DEOK
- Cyprus Bar Association