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Circular Letter No.4285  
30 April 2020

To: All IMO Members  
Intergovernmental organizations  
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Communications from the Governments of:**  
i **the Kingdom of Bahrain; and**  
ii **the Republic of South Africa**

The Governments of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Republic of South Africa have sent the attached communications, dated 29 April 2020, with the request that they are circulated by the Organization.

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KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN  
Ministry of Transportation  
and Telecommunications



منطقة البحرين  
وزارة المواصلات والاتصالات

Ref.: 223/2020  
Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020

**H.E. Mr. Kitack Lim**  
**Secretary General**  
**International Maritime Organization (IMO)**  
**4 Albert Embankment**  
**London SE1 7SR UK**

Your Excellency,

The Maritime Administration in the Kingdom of Bahrain represented by Ports and Maritime Affairs (PMA) at the Ministry of Transportation and Telecommunications expresses its gratitude and appreciation to your excellency and to IMO staff for your sincere efforts, especially during these difficult times. This is demonstrated in the various circulars and guidance issued by IMO to assist the shipping industry minimize the effects of the outbreak of Corona Virus (COVID-19).

As a response to the pandemic, and in light of IMO circulars and guidance to adopt practical and pragmatic measures due to the current exceptional circumstances, the PMA has issued two marine notices with regard to the extension of seafarers certificates validity and the extension of the surveys, audits and inspection windows.

The marine notices were logged on the ministry's webpage and can be referred to at:  
[http://www.mtt.gov.bh/sites/default/files/marine\\_notice\\_no. 1 2020.pdf](http://www.mtt.gov.bh/sites/default/files/marine_notice_no.1_2020.pdf) and  
[http://www.mtt.gov.bh/sites/default/files/marine\\_notice\\_no 2-2020.pdf](http://www.mtt.gov.bh/sites/default/files/marine_notice_no_2-2020.pdf).

Copies of the marine notices are also enclosed with this letter. We would appreciate if your excellency may arrange for this information to be circulated to member states and to non-governmental organizations.

Appreciating your support and wishing you to remain safe.

Yours sincerely,

**Kamal Ahmed Mohammed**  
**Minister of Transportation and Telecommunications**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**



إشعار بحري رقم (١) لسنة ٢٠٢٠ م

Marine Notice No. (1) 2020

**Concerning Corona Virus (COVID-19)  
Guidance Relating to Extension  
Certificates of Seafarers**

**إجراءات بشأن جائحة فيروس كورونا  
(COVID-19) إرشادات تتعلق بشأن تمديد العمل  
بشهادات البحارة**

- To: – Shipping companies with ships registered under the Bahraini flag;  
– Recognized Organizations;  
– Whom it may concern.

- إلى: – شركات النقل البحري التي لديها سفن مسجلة في مملكة البحرين؛  
– هيئات التصنيف المعتمدة؛  
– من يهيمه الامر

In light of the precautionary measures taken to prevent an outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19), and in accordance to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch keeping for seafarers 1978, as amended (STCW) Convention, and in order to comply with the relevant international procedures on facilitating maritime trade during this period, and in reference to the IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5 on the encouragement of member states to extend the validity of seafarers certificates for crews of its flag ships associated with the STCW Convention, as well as their acceptance of extensions to these certificates issued by other countries in accordance with the measures taken worldwide.

في ظل الإجراءات الاحترازية التي تتخذها للوقاية من تفشي جائحة فيروس كورونا (كوفيد ١٩) وطبقاً لمتطلبات الاتفاقية الدولية لمعايير التدريب ومنح الشهادات والنوبات للعاملين في البحر لسنة ١٩٧٨ وتعديلاتها (STCW)، وفي إطار الاجراءات الدولية ذات الصلة بشأن تيسير التجارة البحرية خلال هذه الفترة، وكذلك تعميم المنظمة البحرية الدولية رقم (Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5) بشأن تشجيع الدول الأعضاء على تمديد صلاحية الشهادات لأطقم العاملين على السفن المسجلة لديها والمرتبطة باتفاقية (STCW 1978)، وكذلك قبولها للتمديدات لهذه الشهادات الصادرة عن دول أخرى بموجب الإجراءات المتخذة في جميع أنحاء العالم.

Accordingly, Ports and Maritime Affairs (PMA) decided to consider that all expired certificates issued in accordance with the STCW Convention 1978 including certificates of competency, certificate of proficiency, certificates of basic training, medical fitness certificates, and endorsements attesting recognition of certificates, for seafarers

فقد قررت شئون الموانئ والملاحة البحرية اعتبار كافة الشهادات الصادرة بموجب الاتفاقية الدولية لمعايير التدريب ومنح الشهادات والنوبات للعاملين في البحر لسنة ١٩٧٨، المنتهية الصلاحية وهي الشهادات الأهلية وشهادات الكفاءة وشهادات التدريب الأساسي والشهادات الأخرى الصادرة للبحارة، وإقرارات الاعتراف بالشهادات الأهلية الصادرة للضباط والمهندسين البحريين وشهادات اللياقة



working onboard Bahraini flagged vessels and onboard foreign vessels working in Bahraini waters valid for a period of 3 months, starting from 26/03/2020.

الطبية، وكافة الشهادات الأخرى الصادرة للبحارة العاملين على السفن البحرينية وعلى السفن الأجنبية العاملة في مياه المملكة صالحة لمدة ٣ اشهر ابتداء من ٢٦/٣/٢٠٢٠.

Furthermore, PMA, within the flag State and port State control, will take pragmatic and practical approach regarding inspection of all seafarer's certificates on ships to which the STCW Convention applies, and will consider all extensions on these certificates and its endorsements acceptable when exercising control procedures in accordance with Article X (and Regulation 1/4) (Control Procedures) of the STCW of 1978, and Ministerial Resolution (20) for year 2016 with regard to implementation of maritime international conventions, and Ministerial Resolution (6) for year 2001 with regard to implementation of the STCW Convention.

كما ستعمل شئون الموانئ والملاحة البحرية من خلال رقابة دولة العلم ورقابة دولة الميناء على السفن التي تنطبق عليها الاتفاقية بشأن التفيتيش على كافة الشهادات للعاملين في البحر الصادرة بموجب الاتفاقية على اتخاذ الإجراءات الواقعية والعملية فيما يتعلق بهذه الشهادات واعتبار التمديدات والمصادقات عليها الصادرة عن الدول الاعضاء في المنظمة مقبولة، وذلك من خلال ممارستها لإجراءات الرقابة طبقاً للمادة العاشرة (واللائحة (٤/١) (إجراءات الرقابة) من الاتفاقية STCW لعام ١٩٧٨، و القرار الوزاري رقم (٢٠) لسنة ٢٠١٦ بشأن تنفيذ الاتفاقيات الدولية الخاصة بالملاحة البحرية، و القرار الوزاري رقم (٦) لسنة ٢٠٠١ بشأن أنظمة دولة البحرين للملاحة التجارية.

For further information and clarifications  
please contact:  
Ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh

لمزيد من المعلومات والاستفسارات يرجى التواصل عن  
طريق البريد الإلكتروني:  
Ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh

الوكيل المساعد لشئون الملاحة البحرية

**Assistant Undersecretary for Maritime Affairs**

Issued on: 20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

صدر بتاريخ: ٢٠ إبريل ٢٠٢٠



إشعار بحري رقم (٢) لسنة ٢٠٢٠ م  
Marine Notice No. (2) 2020

**Special Measures Concerning the  
extension of certificates, inspections  
and audits for Bahraini Flagged Ships  
Due to the Outbreak of Corona Virus  
(COVID-19)**

**الإجراءات الخاصة بتمديد صلاحية  
الشهادات والفحص والمعاينة والتحقق  
الدوري للسفن التي ترفع العلم البحريني بسبب  
جائحة فيروس كورونا (COVID-19)**

- To: – Shipping companies with ships  
registered under the Bahraini flag;  
– Recognized Organizations;  
– Whom it may concern.

- إلى: – شركات النقل البحري التي لديها سفن مسجلة في  
مملكة البحرين;  
– هيئات التصنيف المعتمدة;  
– من يهمه الامر.

In light of the precautionary measures taken to prevent an outbreak of the Corona Virus (COVID-19), and in order to ensure full implementation Legislative Decree (14) for year 1978 with regard to promulgation of registration of ships and determination of its safety, and Ministerial Decree (2) for year 2016 with regard to the implementation of maritime conventions, the Ports and Maritime Affairs (PMA) decided to accept the extension of the certificates, inspections and audits for Bahraini flagged ships from the date of this Marine Notice till 30th June 2020 without the prior approval of PMA, which includes:

في ظل الإجراءات الاحترازية التي تتخذها للوقاية من تفشي جائحة فيروس كورونا (كوفيد ١٩) وطبقاً بتنفيذ أحكام قانون تسجيل السفن وتحديد شروط السلامة الصادر بالمرسوم بقانون رقم (١٤) لسنة ١٩٧٨ والقرار رقم (٢٠) لسنة ٢٠١٦ بشأن تنفيذ الإتفاقيات الدولية الخاصة بالملاحة البحرية، قررت شئون الموانئ والملاحة البحرية تمديد صلاحية بعض شهادات السفن البحرينية وتأجيل عمليات الفحص والمعاينة والتحقق الدورية لهذه السفن بصورة مؤقتة ابتداءً من تاريخ هذا الإشعار البحري حتى ٣٠ يونيو ٢٠٢٠م ودون الموافقة المسبقة من شئون الموانئ والملاحة البحرية وذلك على النحو التالي :

1. Statutory certificates issued by Recognized Organizations, and it will not be required to replace with new certificates onboard.

١. الشهادات القانونية الصادرة عن هيئات التصنيف، ودون شرط استبدالها بشهادات جديدة يذكر فيها تاريخ انتهاء الصلاحية الممددة.



2. Certificates issued by service providers for servicing of life saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment or radio equipment. الشهادات الصادرة عن مقدمي الخدمات لفحص معدات الإنقاذ أو معدات مكافحة الحرائق أو المعدات الراديوية.
3. Bottom inspections which are due before 30th June 2020. عمليات فحص قاع السفينة التي من المقرر إجراؤها قبل ٣٠ يونيو ٢٠٢٠.
4. Annual internal Audits as described in paragraph 12.1 of the ISM Code. عمليات المراجعة الداخلية السنوية كما هو موضح في الفقرة ١٢,١ من مدونة ISM.
5. Periodical ISM & ISPS verifications. العمليات الدورية للتحقق من تطبيق المدونتين ISM & ISPS.
6. All cases of extensions and postponement shall be reported afterwards by the ROs to the PMA through email ( ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh ). يجب إبلاغ إدارة تسجيل السفن وشؤون البحارة عن جميع حالات التمديد والتأجيل المذكورة أعلاه من قبل الهيئات المفوضة عبر البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بالإدارة (ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh).
7. The extensions mentioned in this marine notice do not include certificates issued directly by the PMA which are the Navigation License, Safe Manning Document, Exemption Certificates and Bunker Certificates. لا تشمل فترة التمديد الواردة في هذا الإشعار البحري الشهادات التي تصدر بصورة مباشرة من قبل شئون الموانئ والملاحة البحرية، وهي شهادة رخصة الإبحار، وشهادة الحد الأدنى للطاقم، وشهادة الاستثناء من المتطلبات الدولية. وشهادة تأمين المسؤولية المدنية عن أضرار التلوث بوقود السفن الزيتي.

For further information and clarifications  
please contact:

Ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh

لمزيد من المعلومات والاستفسارات يرجى التواصل عن

طريق البريد الإلكتروني:

Ship\_registry@mtt.gov.bh

الوكيل المساعد لشئون الملاحة البحرية

Assistant Undersecretary for Maritime Affairs

Issued on: 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

صدر بتاريخ: ٢٦ إبريل ٢٠٢٠







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H.E Kitak Lim  
Secretary General  
International Maritime Organisation  
4 Albert embankment  
London SE1 7SR  
United Kingdom

Dear Secretary General

#### **VALIDITY OF SOUTH AFRICAN CERTIFICATES DURING COVID-19 PERIOD**

As we are well aware of the effect of coronavirus (COVID-19) wreaking havoc around the world, South Africa and the entire maritime industry have not been spared.

South Africa has put measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These measures will affect the services required by ships from the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSMA), an agency of the Department of Transport, as well as from other service providers.

The measures which are put in place seek to ensure that the maritime industry continues to ship goods to, and from, South Africa.

The annex Guideline below, in accordance to IMO's Circular Letter No.4204/Add.5, serves to notify all the relevant stakeholders including the IMO Member States and the industry of the steps taken by South Africa to ensure continuity of maritime related services.

It would be appreciated if the IMO could bring the Guideline to the attention of all Member States.

Yours sincerely

**MR SOBANTU TILAYI**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (ACTING)**  
**SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY**

#### **BOARD MEMBERS**

M. Msimang (Chairperson), Ms N.M Cele (Deputy Chairperson), Mr M.R Burton, Ms A.S Molemane



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DATE: 29 April 2020

## **GUIDELINES FOR SEAFARERS AND VESSEL CERTIFICATION DURING COVID-19 PERIOD**

### **1. Background**

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has affected the Maritime Value chain, including the ability of Maritime Administrations and the Recognised Organisations to deliver services necessary for statutory certification of Seafarers and Vessels.

Furthermore, issues have been raised regarding manning of ships, crew changes and search and rescue services.

Due to measures put in place by the President of the Republic of South Africa and many Governments around the world, the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSMA) has issued a number of [Marine Notices](#) with guidance regarding expiry of Certificates for Seafarers and Vessels as well as the process to be followed to obtain necessary documentation.

### **2. Purpose**

To provide guidance and direction to shipping regarding the measures put in place by SAMSMA to secure the continuity of shipping services by the maritime industry.

### **3. Scope**

The actions described in this memorandum applies to all South African Seafarers (including non-nationals holding South African Certificates) and South African ships in accordance with the appropriate national laws and International Conventions.

### **4. Seafarer's certification**

The following arrangements have been made regarding Seafarer Certification and related documentation

#### **BOARD MEMBERS**

M. Msimang (Chairperson), Ms N.M Cele (Deputy Chairperson), Mr M.R Burton, Ms A.S Molemane

#### **4.1 Validity of Seafarer Certificates**

SAMSA has considered the predicament many seafarers and their employers are finding themselves in and have granted an extension until 30 September 2020 to any certificate that may expire during the national lockdown and/or shortly thereafter. Masters, Seafarers and Employers must produce the appropriate Marine Notice to show extension of their Certificates - <http://www.samsa.org.za/Pages/Marine-Notices.aspx>

Where appropriate, seafarers and/or employers may apply to be issued a specific letter to each seafarers in accordance with the Marine Notice

#### **4.2 Medical and Eyesight Certificates**

Medical Certificates for seafarers shall remain valid as issued. Under the measures in place to combat the COVID-19 disease, medical practitioners will still be operating and persons will be allowed to visit the doctors for any reason.

Seafarers whose medical certificates expires whilst onboard a ship may continue to serve on that ship for 3 months from the expiration date in accordance with STCW Regulation I/9.

#### **4.3 Safe Manning of Ships**

Ship operators shall inform SAMSA regarding any challenges with seafarers holding foreign certificates of competency with regards to revalidation and obtaining an endorsement to their Certificate of Competency. SAMSA will not issue an endorsement to a foreign COC unless such certificate is still valid, except where there is a clear policy form that administration regarding the same. The issue of the endorsement applied for by employers is not affected by this Marine Notice.

#### **5. Vessel Certificates and Surveys**

Vessels which are subject to International Conventions whose statutory certification are due for renewal and there's difficulty with the attendance by a surveyor may apply for extension of certificates by up to three months. Such application shall be made in good time to ensure continued compliance with all statutory requirements.

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