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Circular Letter No.4276
23 April 2020

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

Subject: **Communication from the Government of the Lebanese Republic**

The Government of the Lebanese Republic has sent the attached communication, dated 21 April 2020, with the request that it is circulated by the Organization.

ANNEX

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
Ministry of Public Works & Transport
Directorate General of
Land & Maritime Transport



الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة الأشغال العامة والنقل
المديرية العامة للنقل البري والبحري

Beirut, 21 April 2020

Ref. 3702 / 6 / 2020

His Excellency Mr. Kitack LIM
Secretary General
International Maritime Organization (IMO)
4 Albert Embankment
London SE1 7SR
United Kingdom

**Subject: Notification by LEBANON – Contingency measures taken by
Lebanese Maritime Administration concerning COVID-19 for
Extension of Ships' & Seafarers' Certificates**

Excellency,

The Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport (DGLMT) of Lebanon expresses its deep gratitude to your kindness and to IMO staff for the tireless and impeccable efforts exerted by issuing the circulars in close consultation with WHO and other partners to assist member states in minimizing relevant risks from COVID-19 outbreak.

In light with the IMO circulars pertaining to precautions to be taken in these difficult times of the outbreak, and in view of the Lebanese Government announcement of general mobilization to confront the Coronavirus, the Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport has the honour to notify you of the contingency measures taken in view of COVID-19 outbreak pertaining to extension of ships' and seafarers' certificates, copy enclosed.

We greatly appreciate circulating these measures to all member states, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Yours Sincerely,

Eng. Abdel Hafiz EL KAISSI

Director General of Land & Maritime Transport
LEBANON





21 APR 2020

**CONTINGENCY MEASURES TAKEN BY LEBANESE MARITIME
ADMINISTRATION CONCERNING COVID-19 FOR EXTENSION OF
SHIPS' & SEAFARERS' CERTIFICATES**

In accordance with decree no. 6198 dated 15 March 2020 (Announcement of general mobilization to confront the Corona virus) issued by the Government of Lebanon, the Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport has adopted the following measures in order to mitigate disruption to the maritime sector caused by the worldwide Corona virus pandemic (Covid-19 outbreak) and to protect the health of employees in the sector. The Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport considers the Covid-19 outbreak as a force majeure situation and is applying the following measures with immediate effect from 15 March 2020.

These instructions and measures will be applied to all types of ships and crafts flying the flag of LEBANON, including vessels of less than 500 GT.

Whilst compiling these instructions and measures, the Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport has taken the following IMO Circular Letters into account:

- A. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.1 of 19 February 2020.
- B. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2 of 21 February 2020.
- C. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3 of 12 March 2020.
- D. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4 of 05 March 2020.
- E. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5 of 17 March 2020.
- F. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.6 of 27 March 2020.
- G. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5/Rev.1 of 02 April 2020.

Background

Due to the rapid spread and outbreak of the Corona virus disease (COVID-19), and having considered the problems encountered with the temporary restrictions on the functioning of maritime educational institution (MARSATI) in the city of Batroun, north of Lebanon, and the temporary restrictions on the movement of citizens. In addition to the considerable difficulties faced by the seafarers in relation to revalidating their various certificates.

And due to inquiries of ship-owners and ship managers for the postponement and extending the validity of ships' statutory certificates and postponement of ships' bottom inspections and the shipboard ISM/ISPS/MLC inspection and verifications. As well as, taking into account the difficulties encountered in renewing the Certificates of Competency, Certificates of Proficiency and SEA contracts.

Handwritten signature in blue ink.





Based on the above issues and situations, the main and utmost objective of the Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport is the protection of shipping economy of Lebanon by providing all facilities for ships and seafarers in order to continue to operate despite possible expired certificates caused by the current COVID-19 situation, has decided the following measures:

❖ **Survey and Certification of ships flying the Lebanese flag:**

The ship-owner/operator/manager is responsible to ensure that all ships are operating according to all applicable regulations. The DGLMT has decided that all ships' certificates which expire between **15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020** will remain valid for an extended period of **three (3) months from its expiry date without a prior request or approval from the DGLMT**. The expired certificate is valid along with this Circular.

The extension will also be applied to certificates issued by service providers conducting services on behalf of the DGLMT for life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment or radio equipment.

The subject ship certificates are not required to be replaced by new certificates.

❖ **Duration of statutory certificates**

The ships' statutory certificates that expire **between 15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020** will remain valid for **three (3) months** from the date of expiry of the certificate without a specific decision or approval from the DGLMT.

The expired certificate is considered valid along with this circular as mentioned above. There is no need to approach the DGLMT to take advantage of this extension.

❖ **Interval of surveys and audits**

Ship-owners and managing companies must exert efforts to arrange for the survey/audit/inspection of their vessels at the earliest opportunity within the window provided by the regulations,

In relation to the validity of certificates for which it is not possible for a ship to comply with the requirements of the surveys (annual/periodical/intermediate/renewal/bottom surveys), within the expiry of the window by **15 July 2020**, the surveys are postponed, and the certificates remain valid for **three months** from the expiry window.

This extension of **three months**, also applied to service providers serving and certifying the life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment, etc. on behalf of the DGLMT.





❖ ISM and ISPS

In cases where audits cannot be carried out due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19, annual ship ISM audits which expire between **15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020** will remain valid for an extended period of **three (3) months from its expiry date without a prior request or approval from the DGLMT.**

The same applies to the annual audits under the ISPS Code.

❖ Joining and Repatriation of seafarers from ships in Lebanese ports

Passengers are prevented from embarking or disembarking in Lebanese ports.

The joining or repatriation of foreign crews, under extreme cases, are dealt with on a case by case basis, taking into account the IMO/WHO guidelines regarding the seafarers' screening, thermal scan test and the health check questionnaire.

❖ General extension of the seafarers' certificates

The Directorate General of Land and Maritime Transport will grant a general extension for the validity of the following merchant marine personnel certificates:

- i. Certificates of Competency;
- ii. Certificates of Proficiency, and
- iii. GMDSS Radio Operator Certificates.

All above mentioned documents which expire between **15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020** will be granted extended validity for **three (3) months** from the date of expiry.

The individual seafarer is requested to submit an application letter for the validity extension, for which the submission may be done electronically by the seafarer through the master of the ship and/or the ship-owner/manager, to the following Email to DGLMT: **ministry@transportation.gov.lb**

The above extension applies primarily to seafarers who are currently aboard vessels and due to the imposed restrictions, they are unable to revalidate their Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency.

Due to the extraordinary circumstances of such an extension, where the epidemic risk is contained, the movement of citizens and the operation of maritime education MARSATI is restored, seafarers holding documents that have been extended under this procedure should, where possible, immediately as soon as possible, remedy all deficiencies, as required, in order to revalidate their documents in accordance with the provisions of the STCW 78 as amended.





❖ Seaman's Book

As of **15 March 2020** the validity of Lebanese seaman's books which will expire on or before **15 July 2020**, are granted also an extended validity of **three months** (from date of expiry).

❖ Lebanon endorsement of foreign certificates

The validity of the endorsements issued by DGLMT is usually linked to the validity of the seafarer's national Certificate of Competency (CoC) or Certificate of Proficiency (CoP).

If the seafarer's national CoC or CoP is extended, it will be possible to be granted an extended validity of the endorsement for **three months** (from date of expiry).

In this case, the seafarer is required to submit an application to the following Email of DGLMT: ministry@transportation.gov.lb

❖ Seafarers with expired safety Certificates of Proficiency

For the Lebanese Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) related to Chapter VI of the Manila amended STCW holders whose training safety Certificates expiring between **15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020**, are granted also an extended validity of **three (3) months** (from date of expiry), provided that the certificates were valid on 15 March 2020.

The extension is granted under the following conditions:

- a) The extension will be granted to seafarers who are working on board with certification expiring during the course of their employment; or
- b) The extension will be granted to seafarers who are due to embark and are in possession of expired certificates.

Also in this case, the seafarer is requested to submit an application for the extension of validity to the following E-mail of DGLMT: ministry@transportation.gov.lb

❖ Extension of contracts (MLC 2006) Seafarers who are on board a ship beyond their Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA) for reasons connected to COVID-19.

If the **Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA)** has expired, and the shipping company encounters problems with repatriation of seafarers after the deadline set in the seafarer's employment agreement, the validity of the SEA may be extended or a new SEA or an ANNEX to the SEA may be issued. The reasons for this extension shall be documented and recorded in the ship's official logbook.

Any requested extension of a SEA shall be first agreed and approved by the DGLMT.





Be informed that the given exception/extension letter for three months will be reviewed considering the condition of the COVID-19.

In addition, the ship owner/operator/manager is obliged to inform the DGLMT the following information **for extension; the name of the ship-owner, the name and IMO number of the vessel, the seafarer's full name and nationality, position on board the vessel, details of the qualification documents or scanned copies of it, and a copy of the extended employment contract of each seafarer requesting the extension, crew list and copy of the Registry Certificate.**

This period may possibly be further extended if the situation resulting from the epidemic does not allow repatriation.

The ship owner/operator/manager, whose name and signature and stamp are mentioned in the SEA, shall make sure that the seafarers are repatriated at the first available opportunity.

❖ **Ship-owner liability**

Shipping companies remain liable for costs pending repatriation such as medical Care and treatment, crew transfer, isolation etc.

❖ **Seagoing service**

All days spent on the ship when it is operational or in a laid up situation, although not carrying cargo, will be accepted as valid seagoing service.

❖ **Seafarers Medical Certificate**

If a Seafarer Medical Certificate expires during the voyage **or at** a location where it is not possible to obtain a new medical certificate, the medical certificate which is expired **between 15 March 2020 and 15 July 2020** are considered extended for a period of **three (3) months** beyond the expiry date.

❖ **General Information**

For any further information and queries, the following contact details are available for your service:

E-Mail: ministry@transportation.gov.lb

<https://www.transportation.gov.lb>

Tel. + 961 1 371 644 / +961 1 371 645

Fax. +961 1 371 647





As well, the following webs are important and can find useful information on:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

and in the Circulars issued by the IMO (ICS Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for ship operators for the protection of the health of seafarers.

The extended validity has been granted in order to provide sufficient time for the situation to get back to normal.

This instruction has been drawn up taking into account the current information available concerning the Covid-19 crisis.

The ship owners are encouraged to retain a copy of this circular on board for the guidance of officials should it be required.

Up-to-date information will be published on an ongoing basis on the above mentioned website (<https://www.transportation.gov.lb>) and by circulars.

Eng. Abdel Hafiz EL KAISSI

**Director General of Land & Maritime Transport
LEBANON**

