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Government of Bermuda
Department of Maritime Administration

BERMUDA SHIPPING NOTICE

OFFICER CERTIFICATION AND ISSUE OF ENDORSEMENTS.

Summary

This notice sets out the general requirements for officer certification on Bermuda ships and the processes for obtaining STCW Endorsements for officers.

Introduction.

The 1995 amendments to the STCW 1978 Convention are given effect in Bermuda by the Merchant Shipping (Training, Certification, Manning and Watchkeeping) Regulations 2005. These regulations specify the requirements for certification and place clear responsibilities on shipowners to ensure that ships are manned by sufficient personnel holding the appropriate certificates. The Bermuda Department of Maritime Administration does not issue certificates of competency. Instead it recognises by endorsement, in accordance with regulation I/10 of the STCW Convention, certificates issued by a range of other countries.

General Requirements.

Every Master, Chief Engineer, Chief Mate, Second Engineer and officer who is in charge of a watch, or who is a part of a watch, must have an appropriate and valid certificate of competency. The certificate must incorporate the issuing state's STCW endorsement confirming that it is issued in conformity with the Convention and stating the capacity or capacities in which it is valid and the levels at which it is issued. Officers are required to have their original certificates with them when they join a ship.

Additionally, for service in a Bermuda ship certificated officers who do not hold a UK certificate of Competency must have a Bermuda Endorsement. This document is required by the Convention and confirms that Bermuda as the flag state has recognised the certificate for service in a Bermuda ship. Officers holding UK certificates of competency do not require to have a Bermuda endorsement. However UK Certificates of Equivalent Competency which are issued to some officers by the UK are, in fact, the equivalent of STCW endorsements and cannot be recognised by the issue of a further endorsement and they will not be accepted by Bermuda for recognition.

Officers holding UK Certificates of Equivalent Competency must present their underlying national certificate if they seek a Bermuda endorsement.

Eligibility requirements for a Bermuda Endorsement.

It is a requirement of the Convention and of Bermuda law that officers are proficient in spoken and written English sufficient for their roles on board and it is the responsibility of the shipowner to ensure that this is the case.

The application for an endorsement contains a statement to this effect that must be signed by the shipowner or his representative.

Officers serving in management roles (Master, Chief mate, Chief Engineer, and Second Engineer) also need to have a knowledge of Bermuda legal requirements and administrative procedures. It is the responsibility of the shipowner, or his representative, to ensure that this requirement is met and the declaration on the application for an endorsement also contains a note to this effect.

Some countries include the function "Radiocommunications" in the set of functions included in the STCW endorsement part of the certificate of competency. This will always be at the operational level. Some countries issue a separate GMDSS certificate with an STCW endorsement showing "Radiocommunications" at the operational level. When the radio function is included in a separate certificate then a copy of this will need to be included in the application for a Bermuda endorsement.

The Bermuda endorsement will include the function "radiocommunications" with the other functions.

Endorsements for service in specialised ships.

Officers who are required to serve in tankers (oil, gas or chemical) are required by the Convention (Chapter V) to hold an appropriate certificate issued by the certificate issuing state to demonstrate that they have completed the requisite training.

Bermuda endorsements issued to officers whose certificate of competency is accompanied by a correct certificate (or by an endorsement on their certificate of competency) showing an eligibility for service in tankers will have the same eligibility shown on their Bermuda endorsement.

Officers who are to serve in passenger ships are required to have completed a range of training required by STCW Chapter V but in these cases they require only to have documentary evidence of having completed the training and it is the responsibility of the shipowner to ensure that the officers concerned have the appropriate evidence and that it is available when the officers are on board. It can be asked for by Port State Control officers. The eligibility for passenger ships will not be shown on the Bermuda endorsement.

Validity of Endorsements

Bermuda endorsements will normally be issued to the same expiry date as the STCW endorsement issued as part of the officer's underlying certificate of competency. However the Administration has the right to issue shorter term endorsement in any particular case if it chooses.

The maximum period of validity of any Bermuda endorsement is therefore 5 years and on its expiry the shipowner or manager will have to apply for a new endorsement. There is no facility for extending endorsements.

A valid Bermuda endorsement may be used in the capacity stated on it, or in a lower capacity, in any Bermuda ship subject to any limitations that are stated on it.

Application for an endorsement.

Applications are only accepted from the shipowner or the ship manager or (where the details have been forwarded to the Administration) the shipowner's contracted crew manager. Applications from individuals are not accepted.

In cases where an officer has obtained a higher grade of certificate and requires a new endorsement to reflect the new qualification and in cases where an endorsement has expired it will not be necessary to return the old endorsement to the Administration. It should be destroyed by the holder on receipt of the new document.

Procedure for making an application.

The Convention requires that every officer holding a certificate of competency not issued by the flag state must have a flag state endorsement. However in order to allow time for the applications to be processed the Convention allows for evidence of the application having been made to be available on board and accepted for a maximum of three months before the actual endorsement document reaches the ship.

Bermuda follows this procedure and the Maritime Administration will issue electronically a statement immediately on receipt of a valid application confirming that the application has been made and that the process for issue of an endorsement has been started. This statement fulfils the requirements of the Convention and will serve as evidence of a valid application for up to three months.

The three month period is ample time for the application to be processed and for the final endorsement document to be sent to the ship.

The process for an endorsement application should be:

1. Complete the application form. (available on the Administration website)
The application form can be completed electronically, and is in a WORD format. Save the completed application form.
2. Print off page three of the application form and attach the officer's photograph and have the officer place his signature in the space provided. Then sign the declaration if this is correct and make a clear scan of this page.
3. Make good copies of the officer's supporting documentation:
 - a. Certificate of competency ensuring that the national STCW endorsement is also copied.
 - b. Any certificates attesting to training in tankers as necessary,
 - c. The officer's GMDSS certificate where this is issued as a separate document.
 - d. The officer's passport or national ID card,
 - e. Any previous Bermuda endorsement where one has been issued.
4. Check that all the necessary data is correctly included through the checklist on page 2 of the application.

5. Send all three pages of the completed application form as a "Word" document plus the scanned copy of page three plus scans of the supporting documents by email with a header in the format STCW Endorsement application (*name of seafarer*) to;

endorsements.bermudashipping@gov.bm

6. On receipt the application will be checked and if correct the first page of the application, which forms the statement from the Administration confirming receipt will be signed, stamped, scanned and emailed back.

Countries whose certificates of competency are accepted.

The current list of countries whose certificates of competency are accepted by Bermuda is attached as Appendix 1 to this Notice.

Appendix 1

Countries accepted for the issue of Bermuda endorsements;

Australia	Mexico
Belgium	Montenegro
Brazil	Myanmar
Bulgaria	Netherlands
Canada	New Zealand
China	Norway
Croatia	Pakistan
Czech Republic	Philippines
Denmark	Poland
Estonia	Portugal
Egypt	Romania
Faroe Islands	Russian Federation
Finland	Serbia
France	Singapore
Germany	Slovenia
Greece	South Africa
Hong Kong	South Korea
Hungary	Spain
Iceland	Sri Lanka
India	Sweden
Ireland	Ukraine
Italy	U.S.A.
Iran	
Jamaica	
Latvia	
Lithuania	
Malaysia	
Malta	