



Marine Notice No. 15 of 2020

Updated 12/01/2021

Notice to all Shipowners, Fishing Vessel Owners, Shipmasters, Skippers, Seafarers and fishers.

Temporary Contingency Planning for the Surveying and Certification of Irish Registered Ships – COVID-19

1. Introduction

This Marine Notice sets out temporary provisions for survey and certification of Irish ships. Further information on processes and procedures to be followed in relation to COVID-19 and Maritime Declarations of Health are detailed in [Marine Notice 06 of 2020](#). Attention is also drawn to [Marine Notice 22 of 2020](#). In particular, persons carrying out surveys, providing safety related services etc. onboard Irish cargo vessels or fishing vessels are considered to be involved in providing essential services within the European Union. Employers of such personnel may complete the form contained in Annex 3 of the Communication from the European Commission, as referred in MN 22/2020.

Information in relation to seafarer Certificates of Competency and Proficiency, medical certificates and seafarer employment agreements can be found in [Marine Notice 14 of 2020](#).

In light of the position of the European Union and of the International Maritime Organisation, the Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) of the Department of Transport is adopting the following measures in order to minimise the impact of Covid-19 on the maritime sector as much as possible and to protect the health of employees in the sector during the ongoing pandemic.

The Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) of the Department of Transport has received enquiries regarding postponement of inspections and extending the validity of mandatory certificates due to difficulties caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

This includes an extension of statutory certificates or postponement of bottom inspections as a result of unavailable dry-dock facilities as well as timely completion of ISM Internal Audits and ISM/ISPS/MLC periodical verifications.

The Department of Transport considers the COVID-19 outbreak to be a force majeure situation and is implementing the following amended procedures with immediate effect.

The shipowner/ISM Company is at all times responsible for ensuring that all its ships are operating according to all the applicable regulations, international Conventions, domestic and EU legislation.

2. Survey and Certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in international trade

The Department of Transport has agreements with recognised organisations (RO) for the survey, verification and certification of Irish ships in compliance with relevant international Conventions. **Companies should endeavour to arrange surveys within the applicable time window whenever this is possible.**

Where this is not possible, due to personnel and travel restrictions that are currently in place around the world, owners or ISM operating companies must contact the Marine Survey Office (MSO) in advance.

The MSO will consider on a case by case basis, any necessary extensions or equivalent arrangements to be actioned taking account of the guidance issued by the IMO – see [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Guidance for flag States regarding surveys and renewals of certificates during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

This applies to certificates issued by service providers, recognised organisations and recognised security organisations (RSO's) carrying out surveys, verifications and inspections on behalf of the IMA.

The above also applies to certificates issued by service providers conducting services on behalf of the Administration or RO, including but not limited to service providers re-certifying life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment or radio equipment.

The MSO will advise regarding the continuing validity of ship certificates and expiry thereof.

The above also applies in relation to the continuing validity of certificates, when issues arise in relation to arranging the required annual/periodical/intermediate/renewal/bottom surveys within the expiry of the survey window.

In such cases where it is agreed by the MSO that surveys may be held/completed outside the time window, a note should be made on the certificate by the attending surveyor, explaining the circumstances. The scope of survey that is to be used may be the same as if subject survey was held within the original window.

In relation to annual ISM internal audits, the MSO will consider requests for postponement for 3 months, as described in paragraph 12.1 of the ISM Code in cases where audits cannot be carried out due to travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19. The ship owner shall notify the ROs in cases where they make use of the above-mentioned provision. Similarly the MSO will consider annual internal audits under the ISPS Code to also be postponed for 3 months with notification to the RSO as above.

3. Survey and Certification of Irish Ships-in-Service engaged in Domestic Voyages including fishing vessels

The survey of ships, passenger ships and passenger boats engaged in domestic voyages and fishing vessels will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Owners should apply for survey in the usual manner and they will be contacted by the Marine Survey Office (MSO) to discuss arrangements.

4. Survey and Certification of New-Building ships of all types for the Irish Flag

Due to increased travel restrictions it is currently not possible for MSO Surveyors to travel to shipyards overseas. Therefore, the survey of new-building ships for the Irish flag of all types will be considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the shipyard and shipowner.

In such cases the shipyard and shipowner should make direct contact with the MSO who will discuss arrangements.

5. Ships Radio Licences and Registration of EPIRBs

Ship Radio Licence/Transfer Applications, EPIRB Registrations and general maritime radiocommunications related queries should be e-mailed directly to RadioSurveyors@dtas.gov.ie

Relevant forms are available in an editable format at the following link, <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1d6ea4-maritime-radio/>

As there may be delays in issuing hard copies of licences, a PDF version of the Ships Radio Licence and associated documentation may be emailed to applicants during this period. This PDF should be printed and retained onboard the vessel and be available for inspection purposes.

6. Life Saving Appliances

Routine Servicing of Life Saving Apparatus under SOLAS III Regulation 20.8.1.1 and national legislation permits an Administration to extend the period of servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and Marine Evacuation Systems (MES) to 17 months where servicing at the required interval is impracticable. The MSO recognises that servicing facilities may not be available due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak and therefore, on application to the MSO and subject to an onboard inspection by the Master, an extension will be considered of the servicing of inflatable liferafts, inflatable lifejackets and MES by five months after expiry to a maximum total of 17 months. Routine on-board inspections of Life Saving Apparatus should continue as normal on equipment subject to the above extensions.

7. Port State Control

The Paris MoU on Port State Control has issued Temporary Guidance to its Member Authorities related to COVID-19 in which they require that when a ship does not comply with the requirements of the surveys, inspections and audits contained in the relevant conventions, the ship must provide evidence to the port State that the flag State has agreed to an exceptional delay specific to COVID-19. There should also be evidence that the ship has a plan that covers how the ship will be brought back into the regular survey or audit cycle.

8. Support

All queries relating to this Marine Notice and to any issues affecting the operation of Irish ships should be addressed to the IMA.

The IMA recognises the importance of ships and shipping in maintaining supplies and will endeavour to assist Irish ships and shipping companies where possible during this period.

This Marine Notice will expire on 30 June 2021 and thereafter the provisions contained within will no longer be applicable. A further Marine Notice will issue before end of June to clarify the situation on this matter.

Note: Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

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For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
The Marine Survey Office, email MSO@transport.gov.ie
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:
MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie
Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Dept. of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02
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