



EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES RESULTING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Merchant Shipping Notice 158

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,
Owners' Representatives and Recognised Organisations*

The Directorate wishes to remind all concerned to [MS Notice No.157](#) providing precautionary measures against Novel Coronavirus. Furthermore, we bring to the attention of all concerned to the [Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers](#), published by the International Chamber of Shipping.

The Directorate is also very sensitive to the disruptions and difficulties that the recent outbreak of COVID-19, now declared a pandemic, is causing to the shipping industry. We are aware that a large number of ships registered under the Merchant Shipping Act are already facing certain challenges emerging from mandatory quarantine and also from precautionary measures being taken by a number of port authorities around the world.

To this effect, the Directorate wishes to inform all the shipping community of the following:

EXTENSION OF SEA SERVICE BEYOND THE SEAFARER EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT PERIOD

Shipowners, Managers and Operators encountering difficulties in repatriating seafarers following the expiration of the term established in the Seafarer's Employment Agreement in terms of the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Rules, may, on a case-by-case basis request to extend the validity of the Agreement for a maximum period of three months, which period may be extended for further periods upon application, should the situation remain the same. Arrangements for repatriation should be made at the earliest opportunity.



Shipowners, Managers and Operators who require such an extension are to submit details of the seafarer/s including the details of the current agreement periods to our dedicated email address mlc.tm@transport.gov.mt.

Any extended period would require an addendum to the Seafarer Employment Agreement under the same terms and conditions as the underlying agreement.

EXTENSION OF THE VALIDITY OF SEAFARER CERTIFICATES BEYOND THEIR EXPIRY DATE

Seafarers, in possession of a Certificate of Competency (CoC) issued by an Administration other than Malta and who are in possession of a Flag State Endorsement issued under the Merchant Shipping Act and in terms of the STCW Convention, which may expire during an extended period on board, may extend the validity of their Flag State Endorsement by submitting a request to the Directorate's dedicated email address applica.stcw@transport.gov.mt.

The request is to include the details of the seafarer, the endorsement number and a copy of a valid (or extension of validity) Certificate of Competency by the issuing Administration of the CoC. The Flag State Endorsement may only be extended up to the date of the extended validity of the CoC.

Holders of Maltese CoCs who have certificates that will expire during an extended period on board or encounter any difficulties in refreshing their underlying certificates are to contact the Directorate on applica.stcw@transport.gov.mt.



EXTENSION OF STATUTORY CERTIFICATES, SURVEYS, AUDITS AND INSPECTIONS

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease, attendance of statutory surveys has become increasingly difficult. Furthermore, several shipyards cannot accommodate ships, for both booked and planned supervisions requiring dry docking.

In view of these exceptional circumstances, in cases where surveyors, auditors and/or inspectors are not able to undertake scheduled surveys, audit and inspections due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19, this Directorate will consider requests for extension/postponement under *force majeure* or unforeseen exceptional circumstances, on a case by case basis.

For statutory surveys delegated to Recognised Organisations, the respective recognised organisation shall make an application to this Directorate on the owner's behalf, including all supporting information.

All requests are to be sent by email on tech.tm@transport.gov.mt.

Merchant Shipping Directorate

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Merchant Shipping Directorate
ISO 9001:2015 certified