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## **INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 107**

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### **Record of Employment, Bahamas Seaman's Record Book and Certificate of Discharge**

**Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations,  
Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers,  
Masters, Seafarers, Recruitment & Placement Service and Training  
Providers**

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#### **1. Purpose**

1.1 Section 86 of the *Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act*, Regulation 15 (5) of The *Bahamas Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2012* and Standard A2.1 (e) of the *Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006)* require that all seafarers onboard a Bahamian registered ship are provided with a record of the seafarer's employment onboard the ship.

1.2 This Bulletin outlines:

- 1) The Bahamas approach to documenting record of employment,
- 2) Procedures to apply for a Seaman's Record Book (SRB), sometimes referred to as a Discharge Book or Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) that records the onboard record of employment.

1.3 This Bulletin should be read in conjunction the BMA Information Bulletins relating to seafarers documents and employment of seafarers.

#### **2. Application**

2.1 The information in this Bulletin applies to:

- .1 All persons serving or intending to serve on Bahamas registered vessels,
- .2 Companies employing, recruiting or selecting the seafarers noted above for service onboard Bahamian registered ships.

- 2.2.1 For the purpose of this Bulletin, the Company is the entity that has accepted responsibility for the assignment of seafarers for service onboard Bahamian registered ships in accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/14. The Registered Owner or ISM Manager shall report the full name and details of such entity (e.g. Manning agents) to the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) Seafarers and Manning Department. This notification, as well as any changes of the entity, shall be made either by completing the Manning Section of Bahamas form R104 or submitting a Letter of Declaration to this effect (The letter shall be on the headed paper of Registered Owner/ISM Manager).
- 2.2.2 Where the Company is a shore-based recruitment, selection and placement service and not directly assigned responsibility in accordance with STCW Regulation I/14, the BMA will require documentary evidence of compliance with the MLC 2006 requirements for a Recruitment and Placement Service as outlined in [BMA Information Bulletin no. 147](#). Notwithstanding the delegation of recruitment, selection and placement, the ISM Company is reminded of its responsibility in accordance with paragraph 6 of the International Safety Management (ISM) Code, STCW Regulation I/14 and the MLC 2006 Regulation 1.3 to ensure that prior to being assigned to a ship, the noted persons are of the minimum age, duly trained or certified and medically fit to perform their proposed shipboard duties.

### **3. General**

- 3.1 The Master, who is deemed to be the person in overall responsibility of the vessel, shall ensure that the seafarer has the appropriate certification or documentary evidence prior to being assigned shipboard duties.
- 3.2 The seafarer shall ensure that he/she has valid training documents and medical certificate at all times.
- 3.3 The record of employment onboard a Bahamian ship shall not include any statement as to the quality of the seafarer's work, character, ability or the seafarer's wages. That information should be recorded and issued separately in a Report of Conduct Certificate or similar document.
- 3.4 The record of employment should contain the following minimum information:
- Name of seafarer,
  - Capacity of seafarer onboard,
  - Details of ship,
  - Type of voyages,
  - Date of joining and leaving the ship,
  - Signature of the Master.

- 3.5 The record of employment or sea service on board a Bahamian ship may be recorded in a Seaman Record Book (SRB) or discharge document.
- 3.6 The BMA normally issues discharge documents for individual Certificates of Discharge in the form of booklets. The booklets are issued to vessels upon registration and refill booklets may be purchased from BMA offices.
- 3.7 The BMA has produced a Bahamas SRB in response to demand from industry bodies and individuals for a consolidated record of Sea Service / Discharge. The BMA only issues Bahamas SRBs to person(s) who are serving or intending to serve on Bahamian ships.
- 3.8 A Bahamas SRB is not a national identity document. National identity documents, including passports or International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 185 Seafarer Identity Document, can only be issued by the country where the person is a national.
- 3.9 A Bahamas SRB is not mandatory to serve on board a Bahamian ship but the BMA is aware that some countries to which a ship is operating may require a person serving on board a ship to have a SRB issued by the flag of the ship.
- 3.10 Where a seafarer is not in possession of a Bahamas SRB or equivalent Discharge Book issued by his own country, a Certificate of Discharge may be issued on board the vessel. If provided onboard, the certificate of discharge should contain the minimum information noted in section 3.4 above.
- 3.11 Applications will only be accepted from Companies who are engaged in the employment, recruitment or selection of persons for service on Bahamian ships. Where the BMA has any doubt on the linkage of a Company or seafarer to a Bahamian ship, additional information will be requested from the Company making the application, in order to confirm the eligibility of the Company to make the application.
- 3.12 A Bahamas issued SRB does not have an expiry date but the BMA does recommend that a person with a Bahamas SRB applies for a SRB after 10 years so that an updated photograph is incorporated in the SRB.
- 3.13 It is the responsibility of the Company and seafarer to verify that all the details recorded in the SRB are correct and this information shall be checked upon receipt of the document and the BMA notified of any errors.

## 4. Application procedures for a Seaman Record Book

### 4.1 All Applications

- 4.1.1 Applications for Seaman Record Books should be submitted by the Owner or Company as specified in Section 2.2.
- 4.1.2 Companies should submit applications in a timely manner, bearing in mind the BMA processing timescale specified in 4.1.6, to ensure there are no delays to the vessel due to missing documentation.
- 4.1.3 **The preferred method for submitting seafarer applications is through The Bahamas On-Line Registration Information System (BORIS)** (see Section 4.2 below and [BMA Information Bulletin no. 137](#)). However, until BORIS registration has been completed, the seafarer application form can be utilised and forwarded to the nearest BMA office.
- 4.1.4 Once the application is received, with ALL supporting documentation, it should be processed and issued within fourteen (14) working days, from the receipt of application.
- 4.1.5 Failure to follow any of these guidelines may result in an application either being severely delayed or possibly rejected.
- 4.1.6 If the SRB is not received [within one \(1\) month](#), from receipt of application, the Company or Individual should contact the Seafarers and Manning Department in the Office to which the application was submitted or for Boris users, the Company should contact their assigned Boris account manager in the first instance. This will enable the Company or Individual, and the BMA to address any identified problems should contact their assigned Boris account manager in the first instance.
- 4.1.7 If a [Company requires documents to be processed earlier than time period referenced in 4.1.4 above](#), then "fast track application" option should be selected in BORIS or for postal/paper applications, the Company shall follow the procedure outlined in [Technical Alert 14-18 "Fast track service for seafarers documents"](#) which is available on the BMA website. The BMA should be contacted and notified of the same. The provision of this "fast track" service will be subjected to an additional fee. The BMA does not encourage applications through emails unless a "fast track" service is required.
- 4.1.8 Correspondence relating to applications will be sent to the Company address or the individual as listed on the application form and all parties are encouraged to provide a generic email address in order to avoid any delays in the application process.
- 4.1.9.1 The BMA should immediately be notified of any SRB that is reported as being lost or destroyed. The notification should include the following information:

- Name of seafarer,
- Date of Birth,
- Nationality,
- Affected Seaman Record Book number, if known,
- Request for new SRB, if applicable.

4.1.9.2 A new SRB will be issued subject to receiving the above information, copy of a valid medical certificate and the applicable fee (See [BMA Information Bulletin no. 81](#)).

4.1.9.3 If the lost SRB is subsequently found, [the Company shall notify the BMA](#).

4.1.10.1 The BMA continues to monitor measures to reduce the loss of documents in transit.

4.1.10.2 [If a SRB has been issued and not received by the Company, the claim of non-receipt of documents must be received within one \(1\) month of the issue date otherwise the claim cannot be investigated and a new application, with payment, will be required.](#)

4.1.13 [Any request for correction must be received within 6 weeks of the issue date of the document otherwise a correction cannot be issued and a new application, inclusive of payment, will be required.](#)

## **4.2 On-line Application**

4.2.1 The BMA has a web based system, Bahamas On-line Registration & Information System (BORIS) for submitting seafarer applications for all seafarer documents. BORIS enables Companies to securely submit seafarer's applications and supporting documentation electronically, and track the progress of the application. [All BORIS Companies are also assigned a dedicated Boris account manager.](#)

4.2.2 The criteria for access to the system will be:

- .1 Agreeing to terms and condition of use,
- .2 Notification of company details as specified in Section 1.4,
- .3 Details of the Company to which any fees associated with seafarers' documentation will be invoiced, if different than above (i.e. Accounting details),
- .4 Details of the delivery address of the seafarers documentation, if different than (2) and (3) above.

4.2.3 Companies may apply to use the system by sending an email request to [stcw@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamasmaritime.com) . The BMA will forward a copy of the terms and conditions of use (BORIS User Agreement) and once agreed by the Company the BMA will issue log in details for each user.

4.2.4.1 Companies are also required to establish a financial agreement with the BMA and indicate their payment preference prior to registration. This would be done by completing the Financial Agreement form and forwarding it together with the BORIS User Agreement to the email indicated in 4.2.3.

4.2.4.2 There are two payment options either a drawdown account can be established with the Finance Department or payment can be made by credit card directly through the secure BORIS website. [Companies with a drawdown account can also use the credit card option.](#)

4.2.5 Each application **MUST** include the following supporting documentation in order to be deemed completed:

- A clear copy of a valid National Passport (a Seaman Record Book is not an acceptable form of ID for application purposes),
- A clear copy of a valid seafarer medical certificate of fitness ([BMA Information Bulletin no. 103](#) provides guidelines on acceptable Medical Certificates,
- A scanned passport size colour photograph in a JPEG (.jpg) format of at least 75 dots per inch (dpi) resolution. The seafarer's application form provides guidance on the photographs specification and it should be noted that photographs that do not comply with the guidance may not be accepted and would result in the delay of the submitted application.

### 4.3 Application submitted via post

4.3.1 The BMA does not encourage applications by post but if a Company is not yet registered for BORIS. Applications for SRBs must be made utilising the BMA's seafarer application form and which is also available for download from the download page of the BMA website ([www.bahamasmaritime.com](http://www.bahamasmaritime.com))

- 4.3.2 Each application **MUST** include the following, in order to be deemed completed:
1. Proof of identity and age. A clear copy of a valid National Passport (Seaman Record Book is not an acceptable form of ID for application purposes), AND
  2. A clear copy of a valid seafarer medical certificate. ([BMA Information Bulletin no. 103](#) provides guidelines on acceptable Medical Certificates), AND,
  3. A duly completed application form (the data can be filled in electronically) which shall be signed by the seafarer and where applicable, the Company submitting the application,
  4. Two (2) original identical passport size colour photographs. The seafarer's application form and *BMA Information Bulletin no. 124* provide guidance on the photographs specification and it should be noted that photographs that do not comply with the guidance may not be accepted and would result in the delay of the submitted application, AND
  5. Payment. **The BMA does not accept personal cheques.** Payment must be made via cash, company cheque, credit card, or BACS. See [BMA Information Bulletin no. 81](#) for payment details.
- 4.3.4 Taking into consideration public holidays and other factors, the BMA aim to issue SRBs for applications submitted by post in a timely manner in order to avoid any delays to the vessel. Companies should ensure that proper planning in the submission of applications for seafarer who intend to join a vessel
- 4.3.5 The completed application and supporting documentation shall be posted to the nearest BMA office (contact details available on BMA website [www.bahamasmaritime.com](http://www.bahamasmaritime.com)).

## 5. Certificate of Discharge validation

- 5.1 The BMA is aware that there are some Administrations that require Officers who are submitting documentary evidence of sea service for the renewal/revalidation of their national Certificates to evidence of sea service validated by the Administration of the country whose ship the officer has served.
- 5.2.1 To assist in this process, The BMA and if applicable The Bahamas diplomatic office will on request by the seafarer, validate that the affected ship was/is a Bahamian ship by stamping and signing the Certificate of Discharge.

5.2.2 The following shall be sent to the BMA London office with the request:

- Certificate of Discharge,
- Payment including courier fees if applicable,
- details of return address,
- telephone number,
- valid e-mail address.

5.3 Seafarers requiring the validation to be carried out on the same day will have request and pay for a fast track service.

## 6. Fees and refunds

6.1 The fee for SRB is outlined in [BMA Information Bulletin no. 81](#).

6.2 The fast track service specified in 4.1.7 will be charged as a professional fee. Please refer to [BMA Information Bulletin no. 81](#).

6.2 Please note that the administrative cost for validating of a Certificate of Discharge is GBP £20.00, US\$30.00 or EUR €25.00 per certificate plus the fast track fee if same day service has been requested.

6.3 For application where the SRB has been issued, then no refund will be offered if the document is no longer needed.

6.4 If SRB has NOT been issued, then the BMA may charge 50% of the cost of the SRB as an administrative fee.

## 7. Enquiries

Enquiries relating SRB applications should be made to Seafarers & Manning Department: [stcw@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamasmaritime.com)

## 8. Revision History

Rev.04 (22 December 2015): General editorial and formatting, [clarification on the non-mandatory requirement for a Bahamas SRB](#), [clarification that SRB is not a Bahamas national ID](#), [re-enforcement of preference to use BORIS](#), [inclusion of fast track fee for same day service](#), [reference to BMA details on website](#).

Rev.03 (11 June 2013) - Complete revision