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## **INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 153**

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### **GUIDANCE ON THE ISSUE OF BAHAMAS NATIONAL CERTIFICATES UNDER STCW CHAPTER IV AS GMDSS RADIO OPERATOR AND STCW CHAPTERS II AND III AS RATING OR ABLE SEAFARER**

**Guidance and Instructions for Shipowners, Managers, Masters,  
Seafarers intending to sail on Bahamian ships, Bahamas Recognised  
Organisations, Maritime Training Institutes, Bahamas Approved Nautical  
Inspectors and Bahamians seeking a career at sea and Seafarers  
Recruitment and Placement Providers**

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#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The Merchant Shipping (Training, Certification, Manning and Watch-keeping) Regulations 2011 require that all seafarers trained under the STCW Chapter II, III and IV are required to be duly certified.
- 1.2. The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978, as amended (STCW), requires that a contracting party verifies the competence of seafarers who holds certificates issued by that party.
- 1.3. This Bulletin gives guidance on Bahamas Certificate of Competency (CoC) and Bahamas Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) which the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) will issue to seafarers who satisfy the STCW Chapter IV requirements as GMDSS Radio Operators and Bahamas Certificate of Proficiency which the BMA will issue to seafarers who satisfy the STCW Chapter II or III requirements as Ratings or Able Seafarers.
- 1.4. This Bulletin should be read in conjunction with BMA Information Bulletin nos. 81, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 115, 118, 121, 124, 129, 130, 135, 138, IMO Assembly Resolution A.891 (21), IMO Assembly Resolution 1047 (28) and any subsequent Bulletins or international guidelines relating to manning, seafarers or training.

- 1.5. Certificates issued under 1995 amendments to the STCW will not be valid after 31 December 2016.

## **2. Application**

- 2.1. This Bulletin applies to seafarers applying to serve onboard Bahamian ships and Companies providing seafarers to Bahamian ships.
- 2.2. Non- Bahamian nationals maybe considered for certification as Ratings, Able Seafarers and GMDSS Radio Operators at the discretion of the BMA.

## **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Bulletin:

*"Company"* is the entity that is either designated under SOLAS 1974, as amended, Chapter IX/1.2 which assumes the duties and responsibilities imposed by International Safety Management (ISM) Code or, where ISM is not applicable, the entity who has accepted responsibility for the assignment of seafarers for service onboard Bahamian registered ships in accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/14;

*"Ship"* is any vessel or unit registered with The Bahamas in accordance with The Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act;

*"Approved training book"* means a record document that the BMA has approved as documentary evidence. The training book shall fulfil the conditions for training as set out in the STCW. The training book must be properly filled in by the training officer and countersigned by the master or the chief engineer for deck and engine training respectively;

*"Approved training"* is training that satisfies the requirements of STCW and has been approved by The Bahamas or an STCW party with whom The Bahamas has a STCW recognition agreement;

*"Master"* shall be deemed to be the person designated by the Company as having overall responsibility for the ship.

## **4. Application General Requirements**

- 4.1 Applications for Bahamas National Certificates must be made utilising the BMA's application form (see *BMA Information Bulletin no. 124*) and which can be downloaded from the BMA website ([www.bahamasmaritime.com](http://www.bahamasmaritime.com)).

4.2 Each application **MUST** include the following, in order to be processed:

- 1) Proof of age and identity,
- 2) Valid medical certificate. This document must be issued by a medical practitioner approved in The Bahamas or by a country that is party to STCW,
- 3) A duly completed application form which shall be signed by the seafarer and where applicable, the Company submitting the application,
- 4) 2 original passport size photographs. ( Details of photograph specification is contained in *BMA Information Bulletin 124*),
- 5) Evidence of approved seagoing service and competence as required for the appropriate certificate. STCW requires that the seafarer shall have the minimum knowledge, understanding and competency/proficiency required for the appropriate certificate. The BMA requires that documentary evidence is provided relating to competence achieved by the following methods:
  - In-service experience (seagoing). This information (name and IMO number of ship, capacity that the applicant served, dates served) may be provided as an extract from a seaman record book, copy of certificate of discharge or letter from the Company,
  - Training-ship experience,
  - Practical training,
  - Simulator training,
  - Laboratory equipment training.
- 6) Payment. Details of the fee is outlined in Section 14 of this Bulletin.

4.3.1 For the purpose of verifying competency based on experience and/or training, the BMA will require a record of approved seagoing service which should be relevant to the appropriate certificate. The sea service record should include the following information:

- 1) Name of person,
- 2) Vessel details: IMO no., Gross tonnage, Engine power,
- 3) Capacity onboard,
- 4) Joining and leaving dates,
- 5) Voyage description.

4.3.2 The sea service information should be recorded in a discharge book (Seaman Record Book) or certificates signed by the Master or Chief Engineer (in the case of Engineering candidates only) of the respective ships and bear the stamp of the respective ship.

- 4.3.3 In the absence of a discharge book or certificate, a letter from the Company containing the information on approved seagoing service specified in Section 4.3.1 may be acceptable. The letter should be on company letterhead with full contact details and signed by a responsible official of the Company.
- 4.3.4 In addition to the above, cadets/apprentices/trainee ratings or any applicant undergoing supervised training should ensure that any assigned tasks/duties are endorsed by a certificated Officer and recorded in an approved training record book. The officer endorsing such tasks/duties should also provide his Certificate of Competency number, issuing authority and full name along with his/her signature. The BMA will accept *International Shipping Federation (ISF)* onboard training book as an approved training record book.
- 4.4 Once the application is received, it will be processed and the BMA will issue a Bahamas Certificate to the applicant if all requirements are satisfied. Taking into consideration public holidays and other factors, the BMA aims to issue Bahamas Certificates in a timely manner in order to avoid any delays to the vessel. Companies should ensure proper planning when submitting applications for a seafarer who intend to join a vessel.
- 4.5 The completed application and supporting documentation shall be submitted to the BMA at [stcw@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamasmaritime.com).
- 4.6 Applicants should note that service onboard Tankers, Passenger Ships, Offshore Units, High Speed Craft and ships, to which the ISPS Code applies, require additional training. *BMA Information Bulletins 105, 106, 118, 129 and 135* provide additional guidance.
- 4.7 Seafarers who already hold a Bahamas CoC or CoP will have to surrender the existing document, if valid, once the new CoC or CoP has been issued.

## **5. Certification as GMDSS Radio Operator under STCW regulation IV/2**

- 5.1 In addition to the general information specified in Section 2.2, the applicant shall provide the following
- 1) Documentary evidence of having completed Basic Training in accordance with STCW A-VI/1, and

- 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with STCW A-IV/2. If the training was undertaken outside of The Bahamas, the applicant should be assessed by the Maritime Administration of the country where the training was carried out and the applicant shall provide documentary evidence issued by the Maritime Administration stating that the candidate has satisfied the standards required for issue of similar certificate in that country.

5.2 A satisfactory assessment by the BMA maybe required. The assessment will cover The Bahamas radio legislations and STCW requirements related to the GMDSS Radio Operator.

## **6. Certification as a Rating forming part of a Navigational watch under STCW II/4**

In addition to the general information specified in Section 4.2, the applicant shall provide the following:

- 1) Documentary evidence of having completed Basic Training in accordance with STCW A-VI/1, **and**
- 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with STCW A-II/4. This maybe a certificate from an approved training centre stating that applicant has successfully completed a course of study equating to STCW A-II/4 and having met the required standards; **and**
- 3) Documentary evidence of either:
  - a) at least 6 months sea service in the deck department (as a trainee rating) of which at least 2 months shall be on duties associated with navigational watch-keeping on the bridge under the supervision of a certificated deck officer **and** an assessment report (Annex-1) or *ISF* Training Record Book signed by the trainer /master of the ship of having met the standard specified in STCW A-II/4, **OR**
  - b) Approved special training, either pre-sea or on board ship in the deck department (as a trainee rating), including an approved period of seagoing service which shall not be less than two months.

## **7. Certification as an Able Seafarer Deck under STCW regulation II/5**

7.1 All training requirement items marked with # may be replaced by a single letter from the Maritime Administration or approved Maritime Institution of the country where the training was carried out, stating that the candidate has satisfied the specified standards.

7.2 In addition to the general information specified in Section 4.2, the applicant shall provide the following:

- 1) Documentary evidence of having obtained a Rating forming part of a Navigational Watch Certificate of Proficiency under STCW II/4, **and**
- 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with the requirements of STCW A-II/5. This may be in the form of:
  - i) a certificate from an approved training centre stating that applicant has successfully completed a course of study equating to STCW A-II/5 and having met the required standards. Reference should be made to having obtained proficiency in#:
    - a) Safe navigational watch,
    - b) Berthing, anchoring and other mooring operations,
    - c) Handling of cargo and stores,
    - d) Echo sounder and Compass,
    - e) Safe operation of deck equipment and machinery,
    - f) Application of occupational health and safety precautions,
    - g) Application of precautions and contribution to the prevention of pollution of the marine environment,
    - h) Contribution to shipboard maintenance and repair

Or

- ii) a completed training record book that has been duly signed. The BMA will accept the *ISF* Training Record Book.
- 3) Documentary evidence of having performed at least 18 months sea-service since obtaining a STCW II/4 certificate. This may be reduced to 12 months if the person has completed approved training#.
- 4) Documentary evidence of successful completion of training in Proficiency in Survival Craft & Rescue Boat (STCW VI/2) within last 5 years.

## **8. Certification as Rating forming part of Engine-room Watch under STCW regulation III/4**

8.1 All training requirement items marked with # may be replaced by a single letter from the Maritime Administration or approved Maritime Institution of the country where the training was carried out, stating that the candidate has satisfied the specified standards.

8.2 In addition to the general information specified in Section 2.2 the applicant shall provide the following:

- 1) Documentary evidence of having completed Basic Training in accordance with STCW A-VI/1; **and**

- 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with to STCW A-III/4. This maybe a certificate from an approved training centre stating that applicant has successfully completed a course of study equating to STCW A-II/5 and having met the required standards. Reference should be made to having obtained proficiency in: #
- a) Carry out engine room watch duties and understanding order and matters relevant to watchkeeping duties,
  - b) Maintain the correct water levels and steam pressure,
  - c) Operate emergency equipment and apply emergency procedures.
- 3) Documentary evidence of either:
- a) at least 6 months sea service in the engine department (as a trainee rating) of which at least 2 months on duties associated with watch-keeping in the engine-room under supervision of a certificated engineer officer and an assessment report (*Annex-2*) or ISF Training Record Book signed by the trainer /Chief Engineer of the ship of having met the standard specified in STCW A-III/4, OR
  - b) Approved special training, either pre-sea or on board ship in the Engineering department (as a trainee rating), including an approved period of seagoing service which shall not be less than two months. This evidence maybe in the form of a completed training record book that has been duly signed by the Chief Engineer. The BMA will accept the *ISF* Training Record Book.

## **9. Certification as Able Seafarer Engine under STCW regulation III/5**

- 9.1 All training requirement items marked with # may be replaced by a single letter from the Maritime Administration or approved Maritime Institution of the country where the training was carried out, stating that the candidate has satisfied the specified standards.

9.2 In addition to the general information specified in Section 2.2 the applicant shall provide the following

- 1) Documentary evidence of having obtained Rating forming part of Engine- room Watch Certificate of Proficiency under STCW III/4,
  - 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with to STCW A-III/5. This maybe in the form of:
    - i) a certificate from an approved training centre stating that applicant has successfully completed a course of study equating to STCW A-III/5 and having met the required standards. Reference should be made to having obtained proficiency in: #
      - a) Safe engineering watch,
      - b) Monitoring and controlling an engine-room watch,
      - c) Fuel and oil transfer operations,
      - d) Bilge and ballast operations,
      - e) Safe operation of equipment and machinery,
      - f) Safe use of electrical equipment,
      - g) shipboard maintenance and repair,
      - h) Handling of stores,
      - i) Application of occupational health and safety precautions,
      - j) Application of precautions and contribution to the prevention of pollution of the marine environment.
  - Or
  - ii) a completed training record book that has been duly signed. The BMA will accept the ISF Training Record Book,
- 3) Documentary evidence of having performed at least 18 months sea-service since obtaining a STCW III/4 certificate. This may be reduced to 12 months if the person has completed approved training #.

## **10. Certification as Electro-Technical Rating STCW regulation III/7**

10.1 All training requirement items marked with # may be replaced by a single letter from the Maritime Administration or approved Maritime Institution of the country where the training was carried out, stating that the candidate has satisfied the specified standards.

10.2 In addition to the general information specified in Section 2.2 the applicant shall provide the following:

- 1) Documentary evidence of having completed Basic Training (STCW A-VI/1)#,



- 2) Documentary evidence of compliance with STCW A-III/7. This maybe in the form of:
- i) a certificate from an approved training centre stating that applicant has successfully completed a course of study equating to STCW A-III/7 and having met the required standards. Reference should be made to having obtained proficiency in: #
    - a) Safe use of electrical equipment,
    - b) Monitoring the operation of electrical equipment and machinery,
    - c) Safe use of electrical and electronic measurement equipment,
    - d) Shipboard maintenance and repair,
    - e) Maintenance and repair of electrical system and machinery onboard,
    - f) Handling of stores,
    - g) Application of occupational health and safety precautions,
    - h) Application of precautions and contribution to the prevention of pollution of the marine environment.
- OR
- ii) a completed training record book that has been duly signed. The BMA will accept the ISF Training Record Book.
- 3) Documentary evidence of either:
- a) at least 12 months sea service in the engine department (as a trainee electro-technical rating) of which at least 4 months on duties associated with watch-keeping in the engine-room under supervision of an electro-technical officer or a certificated engineer officer, **OR**
  - b) at least 6 months specialised training in the engine department (as a trainee Electro-Technical Rating) of which at least 2 month on duties associated with watch-keeping in the engine-room under the supervision of an Electro-Technical Officer or a certificated engineer officer, OR
  - c) at least 3 months sea service and qualification at a support level with the functional competence of Engineering (electrical, electronic, control, maintenance and repair).

## 11. STCW 2010: Transitional period

11.1 The 2010 amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW) and the Seafarers Training, Certification and Watch-keeping Seafarers Code (STCW Code) are now in force.

11.2 BMA Information Bulletin 129 provides guidance on The Bahamas approach to the implementation of the 2010 amendments and all parties should note that the BMA will apply the transitional periods in accordance with the provisions of the 2010 amendments.

11.3 The BMA will accept application for the renewal and or revalidation of existing certification based on the requirements of STCW and STCW Code prior to the 2010 amendments. The certificates issued under this acceptance will not be valid after 31 December 2016.

## **12. Instructions on Revalidation for Ratings and Able Seafarers**

For the Watch Ratings or Able Seafarers CoPs to be valid beyond 31 Dec 2016, the following training should be valid and satisfy The Bahamas accepted competence:

- (i) Personal Survival Technique (STCW A-VI/1-1),
- (ii) Fire Fighting and Fire Prevention (STCW A-VI/1-2),
- (iii) Survival Craft and Rescue Boat other than Fast Rescue Boat (STCW A-VI/2-1)

## **13. General**

13.1 Failure to follow any of these guidelines will result in an application either being severely delayed or possibly rejected.

13.2 If the Bahamas Certificate is not received within one (1) month of the date of application, the seafarer/Company should contact the Seafarers Department in the Office to which the application was submitted. This will enable the BMA to advise of any identified problems with the application.

13.3 If the documents are required to be processed within one (1) month of application, the BMA should be contacted and notified of the same. The provision of this "fast track" service will be subjected to an additional fee.

13.4 Correspondence relating to applications will be sent to the contact details as listed on the application form and where a Company is submitting the application, it is recommended that a generic email address is utilised in order to avoid any delays in the application process.

13.5 The BMA is reviewing measures in order to reduce the loss of documents in transit.

13.6.1 The BMA should immediately be notified of any Bahamas Certificate that is reported as being lost or destroyed. The notification should include the following information:

- Name of seafarer,
- Date of Birth,
- Nationality,
- Affected Bahamas Certificate number, if known,
- Request for duplicate certificate, if applicable.

13.6.2 A duplicate certificate will be issued subject to receiving the above information, copy of a valid Medical certificate of fitness and the applicable fee (*See BMA Information Bulletin no. 81*).

13.6.3 If the lost Bahamas Certificate is subsequently found, the Company/seafarer shall return this document to the BMA.

13.7 Enquiries relating to Bahamas Certificate applications should be made to Seafarers and Manning Department at Email: - [stcw@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamasmaritime.com)

#### **14. Fees**

The fee is US\$180 which includes \$130 for the issuance of the Certificate if all requirements are satisfied.

#### **15. Enquiries**

Any queries related to crew agreement requirements may be directed to the BMA's Seafarers & Manning Department at: [stcw@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamasmaritime.com).

#### **16. Revision History**

Rev.0 (28 November 2014) – First issue

Annex - 1

Form of Assessment of a seafarer for issue of a  
Navigational Watch-Rating Certificate

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Ship\*: \_\_\_\_\_

IMO no: \_\_\_\_\_ GT: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Seafarer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Seaman Record Book/ Passport Number\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Last or present vessel      \*\*Delete as required

The following check-list is to be used to assess the competence of the seafarer:

1. Has s/he undertaken the following Basic Training and produced evidence to this effect in original format

\*\*\*Please write „Y“ or „N“ as appropriate

\*\*\*Yes \*\*\*No

- |  |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Personal Survival Techniques:   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Fire prevention and Fire-fighting;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Elementary First-Aid;   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Personal Safety & Social responsibility.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Has s/he undertaken Familiarisation Training?   |                          |                          |
| a. General layout of the ship & escape route;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Emergency escape from Engine-room & other locations;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Location of emergency equipment;  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. Muster list duties & functions.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Steered ship using both Gyro and Magnetic compasses?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Steered ship complying with helm orders in English  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Changed steering over from automatic pilot to hand steering and vice versa?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Shown ability to keep a proper look-out by sight and hearing?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Shown knowledge of information required to maintain a safe watch?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Shown ability to report to the Officer of the Watch in approximate degrees and points the position of a light, sound or object? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Understood shipboard terms, definitions and navigational vocabulary?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Shown familiarity with internal communication and alarm systems?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 11. Shown ability to understand orders and communicate clearly with the Officer of the Watch in matters relating to watch-keeping duties?
  
- 12. Shown ability to display flag signals as advised by OICNW?
  
- 13. Shown ability to relieve, maintain and hand-over a watch following accepted practices and procedures?
  
- 14. Shown knowledge of man overboard signal and release of buoy, use of pyrotechnic signals carried on board?
  
- 15. Shown knowledge of the use of EPIRB and SART?
  
- 16. Shown knowledge of the avoidance of false- distress alerts and actions to be taken to remedy an accidental activation?
  
- 17. Shown awareness of environmental protection and knowledge of procedures to be followed?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Assessor  
Stamp

Signature

Designation

Date

Annex – 2

Form of Assessment of a seafarer for issue of an  
Engine-Room Watch-Rating Certificate

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details: Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Ship\*: \_\_\_\_\_

IMO no: \_\_\_\_\_ GT: \_\_\_\_\_

kW: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Seafarer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Seaman Record Book/ Passport Number\*\* \_\_\_\_\_

\*Last or present vessel

\*\*Delete as required

The following check-list is to be used to assess the competence of the seafarer:

1. Has s/he undertaken the following Basic Training and produced evidence to this effect in original?

\*\*\*Yes \*\*\*No

- a. Personal Survival Techniques:
- b. Fire prevention and Fire-fighting;
- c. Elementary First-Aid;
- d. Personal Safety & Social responsibility.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Has s/he undertaken Familiarisation Training?

- a. General layout of the ship & escape route;
- b. Emergency escape from Engine-room;
- c. Location of emergency equipment;
- d. Muster list duties & functions.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Does s/he have adequate knowledge of machinery & equipment and the terms used in machinery spaces?

- a. Main Engine
- b. Boilers
- c. Generators
- d. Pumps

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Does s/he have the ability to understand orders and communicate with the Officer of the watch in matters relating to watch-keeping

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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4. Is s/he conversant with the use of internal communication?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Is s/he familiar with Safe Working Practices?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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6. Does s/he have sufficient knowledge of ER alarm systems, ability to distinguish various alarms with special reference to fire extinguishing gas alarm?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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7. Does s/he have basic knowledge of safe operation of boilers, importance of correct water level and steam pressure

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8. Does s/he have the ability to read and note temperature, pressure, r.p.m., etc. as required?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. Does s/he have the ability to carry out routine checks and lubrication as necessary?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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10. Does s/he understand various emergencies in the Engine-room
11. Does s/he have knowledge of hand-over / relief procedure?
12. Does s/he understand monitoring over-board discharges? In compliance with MARPOL 73/78.
13. Does s/he have an awareness of environmental protection and knowledge of procedures to be followed? In compliance with MARPOL 73/78.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Assessor                      Signature                      Designation                      Date

Stamp