



INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 71

Approval (Certification) of Marine Equipment

Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers and Masters

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Bulletin provides guidance on methods of approval for individual items of equipment provided on board Bahamian ships, to meet the requirements of International Conventions and which must be "approved by the Administration".

2. Application

- 2.1. This Bulletin applies to all Bahamian ships registered under the Merchant Shipping Act.

3. Certification of Equipment - General

- 3.1. Unless otherwise stated in this Bulletin, the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) will normally not be directly involved in the process of certification of marine equipment, unless the equipment is manufactured in The Bahamas.
- 3.2. Equipment which is fully certified to the standard or specification referenced in an international Convention or associated Code, by any Bahamas Recognised Organisation (RO) under the RO's Type Approval Scheme is considered approved for routine applications on board Bahamian ships.
- 3.3. Bahamian law does not recognise the European Union Marine Equipment Directive (MED). Section 5 of this Bulletin addresses the Bahamas position with respect to equipment certified under the MED Scheme.

- 3.4. Any proposal to use RO approved equipment in an innovative manner must be notified to the BMA and may be subject to additional testing and certification to be agreed between the BMA and the RO.
- 3.5. This Bulletin does not address the approval of "arrangements" (i.e. systems, assemblies, combinations of components) installed on board a Bahamian ship. Neither does it deal with the approval of novel equipment as an equivalent, or alternative, arrangement to an International Convention requirement. The general procedure for consideration of such applications is contained in BMA Information Bulletin No.8.
- 3.6. In the absence of any standards specified in the Convention/Code, the RO shall provide the BMA with information and recommend a suitable alternative manufacturing, testing, and performance standard.
- 3.7. In approving or verifying the certification of equipment the RO shall take into consideration the guidelines outlined in IMO MSC/Circ.1221. Any certificate attesting to the conformity of any item of equipment shall be valid for not more than five (5) years and shall be subject to annual inspection and/or verification of the manufacturer's processes.

4. Equipment not Certified by a Bahamas RO

- 4.1. Equipment which is not certified by a Bahamas RO will be considered by the BMA on a case by case basis. The BMA may require an RO to undertake verification of the certification that has been issued for the equipment.
- 4.2. Where verification of such equipment is required by the BMA, the RO must exercise professional judgment concerning the extent of verification of the equipment approval or certification. This may include an inspection of any approval certification, examination and review of supporting test documentation and/or test of a sample item. However, the verification must be of sufficient scope to guarantee that the equipment meets the required manufacturing, testing, and performance standards.
- 4.3. External factors that might influence the extent of verification include:
 - i. The RO and industry experience with a particular piece of equipment;
 - ii. Compliance by the manufacturer with any conditions associated with the certification or approval;
 - iii. Time elapsed since certification or approval.
- 4.4. Equipment may only be accepted when the original / re-validated certification or approval has been completed within the five year period preceding the proposed installation.

- 4.5. If the verification process identifies that an item of equipment does not fully comply with the international requirements, the RO shall notify the BMA of the area(s) of non-compliance and provide a recommendation for acceptance or rejection.

5. Marine Equipment Directive (MED)

- 5.1. The Commonwealth of The Bahamas is not a Member State of the European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) and therefore has not adopted EU Council Directive 96/98/EC (as amended), known as the Marine Equipment Directive (MED).
- 5.2. Noting that significant amounts of Marine Equipment produced worldwide is now certified under the MED The Bahamas recognises that, in some cases, manufacturers of marine equipment may only offer owners or shipyards equipment certified under the MED.
- 5.3. The Bahamas further recognises that the MED's approach to type approval is distinctly different from other type approval schemes in that the product (Module B - Type Examination) and manufacturing processes (Modules D, E & F) are subject to separate approvals, which may be carried out by two separate notified bodies, of which one or more may not be a Bahamas RO.
- 5.4. For new installations on Bahamian ships MED certified equipment is considered approved for routine applications on board provided:
- i. The Module B "*Type Examination*" Certificate is issued by a Bahamas RO acting as a Notified Body of the Flag Administration of an EU or EEA Member State; and,
 - ii. The Module B Certificate is supported by a Module D, E or F "*Certificate of Conformity*" issued by a Bahamas RO acting as a Notified Body of the Flag Administration of an EU or EEA Member State; and,
 - iii. The Manufacturer's "*Declaration of Conformity*" covering the serial numbers of each specific piece of equipment to be installed is reviewed by the RO surveyor and found satisfactory.
- 5.6 MED certified equipment where the Notified Body issuing the MED Module B, D, E or F Certification is not a Bahamas RO will not be considered by the BMA, except in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.7 MED Module G and Module H are not recognised by The Bahamas.
- 5.8 Any proposal to use equipment certified under the USCG/EU Mutual Recognition Agreement is to be submitted to the BMA for consideration on a case by case basis.

- 5.9 Noting that, for the supply of some marine equipment, the lead time can be quite lengthy, owners and ship builders are to ensure that the BMA has accepted any proposal to install MED certified equipment prior to placing an order so as to prevent delay in the supply of equipment.

6. Revision History

Rev.2 (08 July 2015) – Complete revision and new format. Paragraphs 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2 & 2.3 from Rev.1 consolidated in paragraph 3; section 3 in Rev.1 re-numbered as section 4; new paragraph 3.3; new section 1, 2, 5 & 6.