



INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 168

Training and Certification Requirements for Persons sailing on board Bahamian ships subject to the Polar Code

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

1 Purpose

- 1.1 Effective 01 July 2018, The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW) require personnel on board ships subject to the International Code for ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) to have appropriate training and certification.
- 1.2 This Bulletin outlines the training, instruction and certification requirements for Masters and Deck Officers serving on Bahamian registered ships that are subject to the Polar Code.
- 1.3 The Bulletin should be read in conjunction with Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) Information Bulletin Nos. 81, 86, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 115, 118, 121, 124, 129 and any other BMA Information Bulletins relating to training and certification of seafarers.

2 Application

2.1 This Bulletin applies to:

- i. All Bahamian ships to which the Polar Code is applicable;
- ii. All persons serving or intending to serve on Bahamian ships to which the Polar Code is applicable in a capacity for which additional training is required;
- iii. Companies employing, recruiting or selecting the seafarers noted above for service on board Bahamian ships to which the Polar Code is applicable.

2.2 For the purpose of this Bulletin, the following definitions apply:

- i. *Approved sea service* is sea service carried out on board a ship that is subject to the Polar Code **and** operates in Polar Waters.
- ii. *Approved training* is training that satisfies the requirements of STCW Code A-V/4 that has been approved by The Bahamas or a STCW party.
- iii. *Company* is the entity who has accepted responsibility for the assignment of the seafarers for service on board Bahamian registered ships in accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/14. The "ISM Company", as defined below, shall report the full name and details of such entity (e.g. manning agents) to the Seafarers and Manning Department of the BMA. This notification, as well as any changes of the entity, shall be made either completing the 'Manning' section of the Bahamas form R104 or submitting a letter of declaration to that effect. (The letter shall be on the headed paper of the Registered Owner or Manager).
- iv. *Equivalent Service* means operation in areas where conditions may arise that are the same extent as ice navigation in Polar Waters, e.g. Ice Navigation in the Baltic Sea, or the Gulf of Bothnia. Approved training in an ice-navigation simulator may also be accepted.
- v. *The ISM Company* is the entity, designated under SOLAS Chapter IX/1.2 that assumes the duties and responsibilities imposed by the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.
- vi. *"Open Waters"* means a large area of freely navigable water in which the sea ice is present in concentrations less than 1/10. There should be no ice of land origin present.

- vii. "Other Waters" means waters with more than 1/10 ice cover or with any ice of land origin.

3 General

- 3.1 In accordance with the STCW requirements, The Bahamas requires all applicable persons serving on board ships subject to the Polar Code to have a valid Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) that relates to Polar Code training appropriate to their assigned shipboard duties.
- 3.2 The Polar Code training shall satisfy the requirements specified in STCW Code A-V/4 **and** be approved.
- 3.3 Master and Deck Officers on ships operating in Polar Waters shall be trained in accordance with the following *Table 1* below:

Table 1

Ice conditions	Training requirements by ship type		
	Tankers	Passenger ships	Other Ship type
Ice free	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Open waters	Basic training required for person serving as: Master, Chief Mate and Officer in Charge of a Navigational watch	Basic training required for person serving as: Master, Chief Mate and Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch	Not applicable
Other waters	Advanced training required for person serving as: Master and Chief Mate. Basic training required for person serving as: Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch	Advanced training required for person serving as: Master and Chief Mate Basic training required for person serving as: Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch	Advanced training required for person serving as: Master and Chief Mate Basic training required for person serving as: Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch.

- 3.4 Upon successful completion of the relevant approved training, a Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) for either Advanced or Basic Training to serve onboard ships that operate in polar waters shall be issued. The BMA will accept a CoP issued by a STCW party or an entity approved by a STCW party.

- 3.5 The certificate to serve on ships in polar waters may be incorporated in the Certificate of Competency (CoC).
- 3.6 All parties are reminded that training for ships serving in polar waters is in addition to any specialised ship type training required under STCW Chapter V.

4 Basic Training for Ships Operating in Polar Waters

- 4.1 Every candidate for a Basic Training Certificate for ships operating in polar waters shall have successfully completed an approved training course for Basic Training for ships operating in polar waters.
- 4.2 Basic Training for ships operating in polar waters shall satisfy the requirements STCW A-V/4-1.

5 Advanced Training for Ships Operating in Polar Waters

- 5.1 Every candidate for Advanced Training Certificate for ships operating in polar waters shall:
- i. hold a valid Basic Training Certificate for ships operating in polar waters; **and**
 - ii. have at least two (2) months of approved seagoing service in the deck department, at management level or while performing watchkeeping duties at the operational level within polar waters or other equivalent service; **and**
 - iii. have successfully completed approved Advanced Training for ships operating in polar waters.

6 Re-validation

- 6.1 The certificate to serve on ships that operate in polar waters shall be revalidated every five years from the date of issue to ensure that the competencies are maintained.
- 6.2 For revalidation of an advanced certificate to serve on ships that operate in polar waters, the candidate shall provide documentary evidence that he/she:
- a) Has served onboard a ship to which the Polar Code is applicable as Master or Deck Officer for at least 3 months during the preceding 5-year period, or

- b) Has at least 1 month within the preceding 6 months' period prior to renewal, or
- c) Has completed in a refresher course.

6.3 For revalidation of a Basic Certificate to serve on ships that operate in polar waters, the candidate shall provide documentary evidence that he /she :

- a) Has served as a Master or Deck on ships where the Polar Code is applicable for a minimum of 1 month within the previous 5 years' period, or
- b) Has completed a refresher course.

8 Application process for the issuance of a Bahamas Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) or a Bahamas Flag State Endorsement (FSE)

8.1 Applying for a Bahamas CoP

8.1.1 Any person who does not hold either a Basic or Advanced Training for ships operating in polar waters CoP but otherwise satisfies the training and certification requirements of STCW Codes A-V/4 may apply for a Bahamas CoP.

8.1.2 All applications must include a copy of a valid CoC and valid medical certificate.

8.1.3.1 Applications for a Bahamas CoP for Basic Training shall in addition to 8.1.2 include documentary evidence of successful completion of an approved training of Basic Training for ships operating in polar waters.

8.1.3.2 Until 01 July 2020, the BMA is applying the transitional provisions for training and certification as specified in STCW Regulation V/4. 6 and accordingly, accordingly, seafarers who commenced approved seagoing service in polar waters prior to 1 July 2018 may apply for a Bahamas CoP for Basic Training by submitting:

- a) Documentary evidence of at least 3 months sea service in the Deck Department whilst the ship was operating ion the polar region (Please refer to 8.1.5 below); or
- b) Documentary evidence of successful completion of a training course meeting the IMO training guidance for ships operating in polar waters.

8.1.4.1 Applications for Bahamas CoP of Advanced training shall include:

- .1 documentary evidence of successful completion of an approved training of Basic Training for ships operating in polar waters; **and**
- .2 Documentary evidence of at least 2 months sea service in the Deck Department whilst the ship was operating in polar waters (please refer to 9.1.5) below, **and**
- .3 documentary evidence of successful completion of an approved training of Advanced Training for ships operating in polar waters.

8.1.4.2 Until 01 July 2020, the BMA is applying the transitional provisions for training and certification as specified in STCW Regulation V/4. 7 and accordingly, accordingly, seafarers who commenced approved seagoing service in polar waters prior to 1 July 2018 may apply for a Bahamas CoP for Basic Training by submitting:

- a) Documentary evidence of at least 3 months sea service in the Deck Department whilst the ship was operating in polar waters (please refer to 8.1.5) below; or
- b) Documentary evidence of successful completion of a training course meeting the IMO training guidance for ships operating in polar waters **and** documentary evidence of at least 3 months sea service in the Deck Department whilst the ship was operating in polar waters.

8.1.5 Where a seafarer is applying for a CoP based on holding documentary evidence of sea service whilst onboard a ship operating in polar waters, the BMA will require a letter (including name and IMO number of affected ship) from the Master or Company confirming that the seafarer has:

- .1 Participated in polar waters operations on board a Polar Code ship or carried out cargo operations on board a Polar Code ship, **AND**
- .2 Completed at least two months service in the previous five years on Ships subject to the Polar Code.

8.2 Applying for a Bahamas FSE

8.2.1 A Bahamas Flag State Endorsement (FSE) is not required for any training carried out under STCW Chapter V/4.

8.2.2 Notwithstanding 8.2.1, any person who holds a CoP for Basic or Advanced training for ships operating in polar waters, issued by an administration with whom The Bahamas has a STCW recognition agreement, may apply for a Bahamas FSE of that document.

8.2.3 The preferred method for submitting seafarer applications is through The Bahamas On-Line Registration Information System (BORIS). Full details of

BORIS and the application process are contained in BMA Information Bulletin no 137.

9 Enquiries

Any queries related to the training requirements can be directed to the BMA's Seafarers & Manning Department at stcw@bahamasmaritime.com.

10 Revision History

Rev.0 (31 July 2017) – First issue