

Questions we're often asked

Q My ship is trading entirely within the national waters of one country and that country does not require the vessel to comply with the ISPS Code. Why does the BMA not grant me exemption from the requirements of the Code?

A Vessels are registered under the Bahamas Flag based on their status as being engaged in foreign going trade, that is, operating outside the territorial waters of The Bahamas. For continued registration of the vessel with the Bahamas Flag, the BMA has concluded that our vessels must fully comply with all applicable international requirements.

Q Why does the BMA not issue exemptions directly for statutory certification as some other Administrations do?

A The BMA will issue exemptions directly only in support of issued certificates which we maintain, for example Safe Manning Certificates. The surveys for compliance with statutory requirements and issue of associated certification are delegated to our Recognised Organisations. RO Surveyors know the ships intimately because of the surveys carried out. Their local surveyors are able to verify the arrangements on board and recommend actions to suit the situation as they find it. Therefore it is only right that they should make recommendations to us for our consideration before we agree to an exemption or extension being issued by them. Our procedures – Instruction to Classification Societies No. 11 and Information Bulletin No. 8 are available on our website at www.bahamasmaritime.com.

Q Why does the BMA not charge companies for advice given on any statutory or operational issues?

A The Bahamas prides itself on its reputation as a register of quality, which is derived directly from the good management of the ships on the Register. It makes obvious good sense to advise and encourage our managers in the application of statutory requirements and to make that advice as freely available as possible. The Technical Department is always pleased to hear from managers asking for advice or clarification on any issue which is not already dealt with in our Information Bulletins and Instructions to Classification Societies.

Your comments

If you have any comments or suggestions about "The Bahamas Flag" please send them to:

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News in Brief

Captain Fazlur Rahman Chowdhury

On 1 August 2004, Capt Chowdhury joined the Bahamas Maritime Authority as Deputy Director. He will head the Maritime Affairs section of the Technical Department.



In 1976, he obtained a Master's (FG) Certificate from the former Department of Transport, UK. He then obtained an MSc in maritime safety administration from the World Maritime University in Sweden in 1988.

Capt Chowdhury spent well over 12 years at sea, three of which were spent in command of merchant ships engaged in international trade. Following his time at sea, he served ashore in almost every discipline of maritime trade – shipping company,

port authority, training institute and finally in maritime administration in Bangladesh before joining the Marine Division of the Department of Transport, UK in 1991. He became the Deputy Chief Examiner of the Seafarers' Standards Branch of the UK-MCA in 1997 and continued in this post until the end of 1999 when he became the Maritime Administrator in Gibraltar. He is an IMO field consultant and a Visiting Professor of the World Maritime University.

John Akhurst



Mr Akhurst recently joined the Inspections section of the Technical Department where his engineering and surveying skills will be invaluable.

Growing up in the shadow of Cardiff docks it was hardly surprising

that John ended up joining a local shipping firm, Reardon Smith, as an engineer cadet. Service on general and bulk cargo ships was followed by voyages on a car/packaged timber carrier until he achieved his Class I Motor Certificate. Time spent as Chief Engineer on a self-elevating workover platform off Saudi Arabia was followed by his move to Lloyd's Register as an engineer surveyor. He represented Lloyd's Register in Switzerland, various offices in the USA and finally as the lone surveyor in Swansea. A master's degree, followed by a further stint in Lloyd's Register, eventually led to a post as Technical Manager with British Waterways.

Ricardo Delaney joined the BMA in March this year as the Senior Nautical Inspector (Nassau), following a ten year stint as an entrepreneur in his own business.

Ricardo Delaney



He began his career in the maritime industry in 1975, when he joined the British Merchant Navy as an engineer cadet. Having attended Southampton College of Higher Education, UK, where he obtained a Second Engineer's Certificate of Competency, he sailed with companies including Salen UK, Whitco Marine, Denholms and Chevron International. After his tenure at

sea he worked as a maintenance supervisor at the Bahamas Oil Refining Company. In 1994, Ricardo started an engineering business which he operated until joining the BMA team.



The Bahamas FLAG



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BAHAMAS MARITIME AUTHORITY

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Ferries on the Flag

One of the most notable features of the Bahamas Ship Register is the vast range of ships which fly its flag. And ferries of all types – freight, passenger, car and now high speed – are increasingly turning to the Bahamas Register as their flag of choice.

Bahamas-flagged ferries include Condor Ferries, P & O Ferries and Stena Line which are some of the largest companies operating on the highly competitive routes in Northern Europe. Bahamas-registered ferries are also found in the Mediterranean as well as in Caribbean waters. The ferry industry is a rapidly expanding growth area for the Authority with companies attracted to the Bahamas Flag because of its reputation for quality, safety, expertise and most especially in today's uncertain world, security.

Stena Line's *Stena Lynx III* is a 4113 gt Tasmanian-built high speed craft registered with The Bahamas. This multi-purpose vessel, which operates on Stena's Irish Sea route, has a maximum speed of 32 knots. The 31,189 gt *Stena Baltica*, another Bahamas-flagged ferry, transports up to 1800 passengers and 210 cars between Sweden and Poland. With its 89-strong ferry fleet, Stena and its subsidiaries operate Europe's most comprehensive route network calling at ports in eight countries in Scandinavia and Northern Europe.



Condor Express, Condor's 5005 gt high speed catamaran

Condor Express and *Condor Vitesse* are two of the four ferries Condor Ferries have flagged with The Bahamas. The state-of-the-art high speed crafts, with a passenger capacity of 750 and space for 185 cars, can travel at up to 42 knots. The Tasmanian-built sister vessels cover the routes between England, the Channel Islands and Western France. Condor plans to add another fast ferry to the Bahamas Register within the next month.

Because of its archipelagic geography, The Bahamas is a nation linked by ferries including modern fast ferries which convey freight, cars and passengers. Like many other countries, The Bahamas has witnessed significant changes in the industry with the introduction of high speed craft which can reduce travel time by half when compared with more conventional ships. One such high speed

vessel is The Bahamas-registered *Bo Hengy*, owned by Bahamas Fast Ferries Ltd, which travels between Nassau and the prime destinations of Paradise Island, Harbour Island and Eleuthera.

The importance of the ferry industry to The Bahamas is demonstrated by the appointment of Craig Symonette, President of Bahamas Fast Ferries, as the new President of the industry group Interferry. In November 2004, delegates to the 29th Annual Interferry Conference, which attracts many of the industry's world leaders, will be welcomed to Freeport, Grand Bahama for four days of meetings and social events. The theme of this year's conference is "Dynamics of Change, New markets – New Opportunities" and representatives from Australia, Europe, Latin and North America will address pertinent topics.

The Minister of Transport and Aviation, the Honourable Glenys Hanna-Martin, will be the keynote speaker at the opening ceremony. As well as welcoming guests to The Bahamas, she will talk about the role of the Bahamas Ship Registry in the international ferry industry. The BMA wishes the conference every success and hopes that those visiting The Bahamas will experience the best of what the islands have to offer, including a ferry journey of course!

Prime Minister visits the BMA

Before returning to Nassau following a state visit to China, the Prime Minister of The Bahamas, the Honourable Perry Christie paid a visit to the Authority's office in London on 22 August 2004. Mr Christie was accompanied by High Commissioner Basil O'Brien and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fred Mitchell. The Prime Minister commended the work of the staff at BMA and expressed his interest in deepening his knowledge of the maritime industry.

Whilst in China, the Prime Minister and his delegation, which included his wife and daughter, was hosted by President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jibao. They conducted significant negotiations related to tourism, trade and industry. During his visit, Mr Christie met with Mr Wei Jaifu, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO). Since Mr Jaifu's visit to Nassau in June, COSCO has agreed to a substantial investment in Freeport, Grand Bahama, and to add further ships to the Bahamas Register (see page 3).

Prime Minister Christie expanded, "It [COSCO] has already registered three ships and by a very recent strategic decision has agreed to the formation of a ship leasing company in The Bahamas that should result in an additional 10 to 40 ships on our register."



From left to right: High Commissioner Basil O'Brien, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fred Mitchell, Prime Minister Perry Christie & BMA Director, John Mervyn Jones

Goal Based Standards update

The latest Bahamas initiative at IMO – to introduce basic internationally-set ship construction standards (Goal Based Standards) – has continued to attract widespread support. And at the next Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) meeting in December, a Working Group will be set up to consider how to take the concept forward.

The most important task for the Group will be to define the principles of Goal Based Standards in terms that

will be readily understood by IMO members. Then standards at the highest level must be set. This might sound easy but it is not. Having discussed the subject with many different professionals, it is clear that there is a massive educational job to be done, not merely a technical one. The work required may seem obvious to those who created the idea in the first place, but as is so often the case, the practical implications can be difficult for others to grasp. The Bahamas therefore intends to take an active part in both the teaching as well as the technical aspects of the new standards.

At the MSC meeting in May, one of the delegates suggested that the

introduction of agreed mandatory standards for ship construction was something that IMO should have been working on for the last 50 years! The BMA agrees but is optimistic that rapid progress can now be made.

The Classification Societies have already been hard at work, not only to tailor their own rules to meet the standards proposed at an earlier MSC meeting but also to make those rules common for all International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) members. This in itself is a major step forward and augers well for IMO's future work in this area.

Bulk Carriers – IMO's change of heart

During its last meeting in May 2004, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) decided to overturn a previous decision to make double side skin construction mandatory for certain bulk carriers. At the time, the change of heart was criticised by some delegates as well as by certain sections of the press. It was said to be a blow for the Formal Safety Assessment (FSA) procedures which had produced the original proposal.



However, another way of looking at IMO's change of heart is to go back to the original principles of the FSA. Then it becomes clear that the procedures were never designed to make decisions, but rather to give the decision makers a choice about how to reduce risk.

The FSA research group, having completed its investigation, made the choice and subsequently presented MSC – the actual decision makers – with a package of measures almost on a "take it or leave it" basis! When MSC realised that they had little or no choice and more to the point, that double side skin was not the only way to reduce risk, the original IMO decision was reversed.

It is hoped that, far from killing the concept of FSA, the realisation of its limitations will result in the better use of the technique. After all, when radar was first introduced, it was far from perfect. In fact, it was only when its limitations were recognised and dealt with that it really became the valuable tool that it is today.

▲
Messidor – recently delivered Chinese-built bulk carrier owned by the French company AVRACS

Impressive ISPS record for Bahamas

Like many other maritime Administrations, The Bahamas was a hive of activity in the months leading up to 1 July 2004 as it strived to achieve its commitments as a Flag, Port and Coastal State under the new ISPS Code. The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) was designated as the security focal point for ships and a newly formed Port Security Advisory Committee was tasked with the security of all Bahamian ports and, most crucially, with the establishment of a security level for the country.

All applicable personnel underwent security training and Recognised Security Organisations were authorised for ship and port facilities certification.

On the entry into force date, The Bahamas took stock of the status of the implementation of the ISPS Code and the outcome, based on provisional figures, was positive, especially for a small nation:

- ▶ 21 of the 22 identified port facilities within The Bahamas were certified as being compliant
- ▶ Over 90 % of Bahamian registered ships were certified for compliance
- ▶ All the required information - contact points and details of port facilities - was recorded in the IMO Global Integrated Ship Information System (GISIS)

Equally important is the fact that a number of our shipowners are voluntarily opting to have their ships,

to which the ISPS Code does not apply, audited and certified under the Code. This lays testimony to the quality of our shipowners who share our mutual commitment to security.

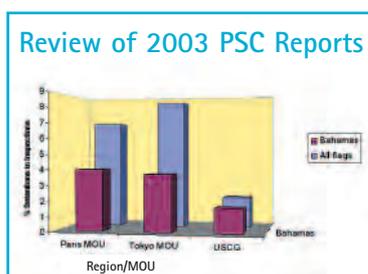
The BMA has made a significant contribution to a raised awareness of security as well as to the international maritime security framework. But now is not the time for the Authority to rest on its laurels. On the contrary, the BMA regards this as just the first hurdle. The Code, as with other newly developed regulations, will remain under continuous review and the Authority urges all parties to provide feedback on their practical experience of its implementation. This information will prove invaluable during discussions at the December meeting of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee at which The Bahamas, "armed" with contributions, will actively participate.

Port State Control – Bahamas remains in top group

The month of July also saw the BMA considering the effect of the maritime security regulations, whilst at the same time analysing the annual Port State Report from the Regional MOUs and the US Coast Guard. Within the MOUs, concentrated inspections started on 1 July 2004, the focus being the ISPS Code. Early indications suggest that there have been few control actions taken against Bahamian-flagged ships.

In terms of the 2003 Port State Control statistics, the quality of ships flying the Bahamas Flag remains evident by our inclusion on the Paris MOU White List and our non-inclusion on the Tokyo MOU and US Coast Guard's lists of targeted flags. From the adjacent chart, it can be seen that The Bahamas detention record is about half the world's average. This information was provided to John Mervyn Jones, BMA's Director, as he prepared to accompany members of the Bahamas Shipowners Association (BSA) to their regular meeting with the US Coast Guard in September 2004. *"The maritime world uses port state control*

statistics as performance measurement tools for Flag States and the Authority is pleased with the consistent level of quality and continuous improvement of our fleet in this all important area", commented Mr Jones.



COSCO delegation visits The Bahamas



Mr Wei Jaifu, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO), paid a courtesy call on the Honourable Glenys Hanna-Martin, Minister of Transport and Aviation (centre), on 25 June 2004, at the Ministry of Transport and Aviation in Nassau. Mr Wei (right) was accompanied by His Excellency Jiao Dongcun (left), Chinese Ambassador to The Bahamas. Mr Wei led a delegation of ten COSCO executives to The Bahamas to explore business opportunities with the Grand Bahama Port Authority, joint owner, together with Hong Kong based Hutchinson Port Holdings, of the Freeport Container Port (Photo: Derek Smith, Bahamas Information Services)



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- Liaison with The Bahamas government
- Technical advice for local vessels

Ricardo Delaney
Senior Nautical Inspector

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Patricia Pinder
Registration Assistant



- Ship registration in New York
- Issue of Seaman's Books
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New York office making strides

Since its opening in 1999, the BMA's New York office has attracted significant new build tonnage to the Bahamas Flag. 2004 has been a particularly successful year with a total of 16 new buildings to date. Most notable is the registration of ten oil tankers by Teekay Shipping (Canada) Ltd, the New York office's biggest client, which has more than 100 ships registered with the BMA.

But New York's success also includes passenger ships. Recent registrations include Norwegian Cruise Line's *Norwegian Spirit* and Royal Caribbean Cruises' *Jewel of the Seas*. These high profile registrations highlight The Bahamas as a flag of choice because of its total commitment to high quality tonnage and excellent service. Also joining the Register this year are two newly built semi-submersible drilling rigs built by Cianbro Shipyard in Portland Maine, USA and owned by Petrodrill Engineering N.V.



Norwegian Cruise Line's 75338 gt *Norwegian Spirit*

In an effort to improve its service, the New York office is now assisting the BMA's London office by issuing Seaman's Records Books for crew members employed on passenger ships registered through New York.

The BMA is proud of the strides that the New York office has made and continues to make in attracting quality new tonnage to the Register.

Advances in technology for BMA

"We've been in the Information Age for about thirty years, but most of the information moving among business has remained in paper form...much of the computing power is only used for the automation of old processes...the best way to differentiate your company from the competition is to do an outstanding job with information." Bill Gates, *Business @ the speed of thought*.

The Bahamas Maritime Authority was among the first registries to become completely computerised. This shift undoubtedly boosted the Authority's efficiency, but as many other organisations discovered, computerisation simply automated previous manual processes. BMA realised that although those processes were the best practice of their day, computerisation opened up new possibilities and the Authority had to meet the challenge head-on.

It may indeed be true that we have been in the Information Age for the last thirty years but the changes in technology in the last five years dwarf anything seen in the previous 25 years. Customers are now much more computer savvy. As a result, they require a great deal more than was even thought possible only five years ago. The ability of the

BMA to meet the present needs of its clients is a given but it is no longer enough. Anticipation of future requirements is now essential. The post-September 11 environment has forever changed the constraints under which the maritime industry operates. The BMA is committed to being at the forefront of this change, and technology is one of its tools.

Over the next 24 months the Authority will implement some very important changes in its computerisation. For BMA's clients, many of these changes will be barely detectable except for a continual improvement in the high quality of service already offered. Some clients will be offered services that they have always wished for but which were previously impossible to provide. And the provision of yet more new services will exceed their expectations. For BMA staff, not only will more information be readily available to make necessary decisions, but these planned changes will transform best practices as we know them today. Within the industry, these technological changes will allow the BMA to remain at the cutting edge, continually raising the bar not only on what is possible but also on what is expected.

The BMA now operates a Virtual Private Network (VPN) that allows key personnel to remain in contact with the system 24 hours a day from any location worldwide. This

technology will be used to permanently connect all BMA offices in a wide area network. Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) is perhaps the technology that has had the single greatest impact over the past two years. The Authority is studying ways of integrating VOIP into its network so that its phone contact can expand over a wider period whilst at the same time costs can be reduced.

Document Management is one of the most talked about features of the information age. And whilst the paperless office – the so-called panacea for the business world – remains a myth, the past two years have seen technology catch up with its potential. The benefits of electronic document management are too great to ignore and the BMA has started to integrate it within the system.

These are but a few of the IT projects being undertaken by the Authority and there are many more at the planning stage. Nonetheless, the Authority is acutely aware that these are just tools to assist in the delivery of a quality service. But quality is and will always remain people driven.

The Bahamas Maritime Authority is preparing to transform its business "@ the speed of thought".

New Flaggings

In the past six months, the BMA has seen a number of new builds of various vessel types added to the Register by some of the world's largest shipping companies – Bergesen, CMA CGM, Norwegian Cruise Lines and Teekay – representing a wide cross section of the maritime industry. By early 2005, Royal Caribbean Cruises will transfer six ships from the Norwegian Register to the Bahamas Flag. The recent announcement came after year-long discussions with union representatives, the Norwegian Government and RCCL employees. Following the transfer, all 19 of RCCL's vessels will be registered with The Bahamas.

Berge Arzew

Bergesen-managed *Berge Arzew* was registered with the Bahamas Flag in July. The 93844 gt, 277 m Liquefied Nitrogen Gas (LNG) Carrier is co-owned by subsidiaries of the Norwegian company Bergesen and the Algerian company Sonatrach. The Korean-built LNG, which was delivered this year, will trade between the Algerian port of Bethouia, the US and Europe.

Apart from being one of the world's largest shipping companies, Bergesen is



Berge Arzew – Bergesen's recently delivered Korean-built LNG carrier

the largest owner and operator of gas carriers worldwide. Of the 99 vessels owned by Bergesen, 79 are gas carriers. Over the past few years, the company has ordered ten LNG new builds from South Korean yards and has established a LNG shipbuilding programme at the Daewoo yard. *Berge Arzew* is the third LNG new build to come out of Daewoo – the first order was made in 2000 – and there is an option to contract a fourth for delivery in 2005.

As one of the significant players in the LNG sector of gas transportation, Bergesen plays an active part in the large scale Maritime Environment Programme initiated by the Norwegian Shipowners' Association.

CMA CGM Bellini

Another significant new build registration was the 65,247 gt, 263 m container ship *CMA CGM Bellini*. The *Bellini*, which is also Korean-built (Samsung), is the first of seven purpose-built vessels that will serve in CMA CGM's North China Express Service between Asia, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and Europe. These vessels will replace smaller chartered ships and owned units.

CMA CGM was formed by the merger of Compagnie Maritime d'Affrètement (CMA) and Compagnie Générale Maritime (CGM). With a fleet of 172 vessels, it has now become the fifth largest shipping company worldwide, ranking first in France and fourth in Europe.



CMA CGM Bellini – new reefer vessel built in the Samsung yard, South Korea

BSA News

Three new Bahamian cadets to study at CalMaritime

The BSA and BMA's cadetship programme continues to expand. The BSA and BMA recently awarded three new cadetships – two engineer and one deck – bringing the total number of cadets enrolled at the California Maritime Academy to six. Only four years ago, there was only one BSA sponsored cadet at CalMaritime.

This year two of the senior cadets, Misty Bain and Denardo Bain, passed their US Coast Guard Examinations and graduated from CalMaritime with impressive results. The recent graduates are now approaching the shipowners as potential employers. All of the cadets have expressed their gratitude to the BSA and BMA especially to those owners who have provided them with invaluable work experience during their summer berths. Kenneth Carey, who has entered his final year at CalMaritime, spent an exciting summer onboard a Great White Fleet (GWT) reefer vessel transporting cargo from the tropics to the East Coast of the United States.

Bahamas Shipowners AGM set for London

This year the Bahamas Shipowners Association (BSA) will hold its Annual General Meeting on 27 October 2004 at the Mandarin Hotel, Hyde Park in London, the centre of international shipping. The BSA is fortunate to have several distinguished speakers including Mr Bernard Anne, Senior Vice President of Bureau Veritas and Chair of the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS), and Mr Michael Grey, columnist and former Editor of Lloyd's List.

Following on last year's theme, "Safety and Security – The Way Forward", this year's theme "Setting New Standards" will focus on the IMO initiative on Goal Based Standards. The initiative was put forward by The Bahamas with support from Greece in 2002 and 2003, and was followed by a paper submitted by both countries and IACS in 2004. It will be a major topic of interest at the Maritime Safety Committee Meeting at IMO in December. For those who are uncertain about the full meaning of Goal Based Standards and the effect that their adoption will have, the AGM will provide an opportunity to clarify the matter and inject fresh thoughts into the discussion.

Shipowners, please make sure that you have marked this date in your diaries. Do not miss out on an informative day of stimulating dialogue and lively debate on topics which affect all industry players!