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## **Bahamian Flag State Endorsements**

Notice to ship owners, managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors, seafarers, Seafarers Recruitment & Placement Service Providers, training providers and duly authorised manning agents.

*This Notice supersedes BMA Information Bulletin No. 108*

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### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (STCW), the associated Code (STCW Code), Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) and IMO Resolution A.891(21), as amended by A.1079(28), require all persons to be trained, instructed or certificated for their assigned shipboard tasks and for the ship on which they are sailing.
- 1.2. This Marine Notice outlines:
  - i. The Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) requirements for a Flag State Endorsement (FSE) that is required in accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/10, and
  - ii. the procedures for obtaining a Bahamas Flag State Endorsement.
- 1.3. This Marine Notice should be read in conjunction with the BMA's Marine Notices and/or Information Bulletins relating to training and certification of seafarers.

### **2. Application**

- 2.1. The information in this Marine Notice applies to:
  - i. All persons serving or intending to serve on Bahamas registered vessels in a capacity for which an FSE is required in accordance with the STCW Convention,
  - ii. Companies employing, recruiting or selecting, the seafarers noted above for service on board Bahamian registered ships.

### **3. Introduction**

- 3.1. For the purpose of this Marine Notice, 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.
- 3.2. The registered owner or International Safety Management (ISM) manager shall report the full name and details of any such entity (e.g., manning agents) to the BMA's 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 by submitting a letter of declaration<sup>1</sup> to this effect.
- 3.3. 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 Marine Notice 038.
- 3.4. Notwithstanding the delegation of recruitment, selection and placement, the ISM Company is reminded of its responsibility in accordance with paragraph 6 of the ISM Code, STCW Regulation I/14 and 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.

### **4. General requirements**

- 4.1. In accordance with the STCW requirements, the BMA requires a FSE to be issued to the following persons serving onboard Bahamian vessels:
  - i. Master
  - ii. Chief Mate
  - iii. Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch
  - iv. Chief Engineer
  - v. Second Engineer
  - vi. Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch
  - vii. GMDSS Radio Operator
  - viii. Electro-Technical Officer
  - ix. Any Officer with Immediate Responsibility Serving on Tankers<sup>2</sup>
- 4.2. If requested by the Company, the BMA may issue a FSE for other STCW documents.  
Note: **An FSE is only required for the capacities specified in paragraph 4.1.**

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<sup>1</sup> The letter shall be on the headed paper of the registered owner/ISM manager

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to BMA Information Bulletin No. 106

- 4.3. The BMA may apply the STCW principles (the flag state endorsing training certificate issued by a STCW party with whom it has an STCW agreement) to other training certificates that have been issued in accordance with international guidelines.
- 4.4. 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.
- 4.5. The seafarer shall ensure that they have available at all times:
- i. a valid medical certificate and
  - ii. valid training documents
- 4.6. It is the responsibility of the Company and the seafarer to check and verify that all the details recorded on the CRA and FSE are correct.

## **5. Application procedure**

### **5.1. All Applications**

- 5.1.1. Applications for FSE must be submitted by the owner or the Company appointed by the owners of the vessel. 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.
- 5.1.2. Companies should submit applications in a timely manner, bearing in mind the BMA processing timescale specified in paragraph 5.1.7, to ensure there are no delays to the vessel due to missing documentation.
- 5.1.3. Unless submitting an application under paragraph 5.1.4, all seafarer applications shall be submitted via the Bahamas On-Line Registration Information System (BORIS)<sup>3</sup>. Please refer to Section 5.2 and BMA Information Bulletin No. 137.
- 5.1.4. Hard copy applications for seafarer documents are limited solely to Bahamian nationals and/or residents for submission to the BMA Nassau office only.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://public.bahamasmaritime.com>

- 5.1.5. Except for applications submitted under paragraph 5.1.4, once the application is received a Confirmation of Receipt of Application (CRA) will be sent via email to the person submitting the application. In accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/10.5, seafarers are permitted to serve on a Bahamian ship for up to three months provided the affected seafarer has a CRA.  
**Note: A CRA cannot be extended beyond three (3) months.**
- 5.1.6. Failure to follow any of these guidelines may result in an application either being severely delayed or possibly rejected.
- 5.1.7. If the FSE has not been issued or is not received within one (1) month of the expiry date of the CRA, the Company should contact the Seafarers and Manning Department in the BMA office to which the application was submitted. BORIS users should contact their assigned account manager in the first instance. This will enable the Company and the BMA to address any identified problems prior to the expiry of the officer's CRA.
- 5.1.8. If a Company requires documents to be processed within one (1) month of application, then the "fast track application" option should be selected in BORIS.
- 5.1.9. Correspondence relating to applications will be sent to the Company address as registered in BORIS or as listed on the application form. All parties are encouraged to maintain their contact details updated and provide a generic email address in order to avoid any delays in the application process.
- 5.1.10. The BMA should immediately be notified of any FSE that is reported as having been lost or destroyed. The notification should include the following information:
- i. Name of seafarer
  - ii. Date of birth
  - iii. Nationality
  - iv. Affected Bahamas Endorsement number (if known) and a
  - v. Request for a duplicate certificate (if applicable).
- Note: Please note that a CRA is not provided for a duplicate request.**
- 5.1.11. A duplicate certificate will be issued, if requested, subject to receiving the above information, copy of a valid medical certificate and the applicable fee
- 5.1.12. If the lost FSE is subsequently found and a duplicate has been issued, the Company shall retain the duplicate and return the original FSE to the BMA.
- 5.1.13. The BMA continues to monitor measures to reduce the loss of documents in transit.

5.1.14. Any request for correction to a CRA should be made upon receipt of the CRA. Any request for correction to a FSE, that relates to data not on CRA should be received within six (6) weeks of the issue date of the FSE otherwise a correction cannot be issued and a new application, inclusive of payment, will be required.

## 5.2. ***On-line Application***

5.2.1. The BMA has a web-based system (BORIS) for submitting seafarer applications for all seafarer documents. BORIS enables companies to securely submit seafarer's applications and supporting documentation electronically, promptly receive confirmation of receipt of application (CRA) and track the progress of the application. All BORIS companies are also assigned a dedicated account manager.

5.2.2. Full details of BORIS are contained in BMA Information Bulletin No. 137, but all parties should note that the criteria for access to the system is:

- i. Agreeing to terms and condition of use,
- ii. Notification of company details as specified in section 3,
- iii. Details of the Company to which any fees associated with seafarers' documentation will be invoiced, if different than above (i.e., accounting details),
- iv. Details of the delivery address of the seafarer's documentation, if different than (ii) and (iii).

5.2.3. Companies should apply to use the system by submitting an online request via the BORIS public site <https://public.bahamasmaritime.com/>. The online terms and condition(s) of use (BORIS User Agreement) will need to be accepted in order to complete the application.

5.2.4. Companies are required to establish a financial agreement with the BMA and indicate their payment preference during the online registration process. There are two payment options: either a drawdown account can be established with the BMA Finance Department, or payment can be made by credit card directly through the secure BORIS website.

Note: Companies with a drawdown account can also use the credit card option

5.2.5. Each application SHALL include the following supporting documentation in order to be deemed completed:

- i. A clear copy of a valid National Passport  
(A Seaman's Record Book is not an acceptable form of ID for application purposes) **AND**
- ii. A clear copy of a valid seafarer medical certificate of fitness  
(BMA Information Bulletin No. 103 provides guidelines on acceptable medical certificates) **AND**

- iii. A passport size colour photograph in JPEG, GIF or PNG format of at least 150 dpi resolution, with a file size that does not exceed 2MB.  
*(The seafarer's application form provides guidance on the photograph's specification - 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*
  - iv. A full, complete and clear copy of the officer(s) appropriate certificate that was issued in accordance with STCW requirements.  
*(BMA Information Bulletin No. 121 provides a complete list of countries with which The Bahamas has concluded agreements for the recognition of certificates under STCW Regulation I/10). AND*
  - v. A scanned image of the seafarer's signature in JPEG, GIF or PNG format of at least 150 dpi resolution, with a file size that does not exceed 2Mb. The image shall have a plain white background and contain no other images or text.
- 5.2.6. A flow chart showing the application process is shown in the Annex.
- 5.3. **Applications submitted via Post – Bahamas Nationals/Residents Only**
- 5.3.1. As stated in paragraph 5.1.4, postal applications are only accepted from Bahamian nationals via the BMA Nassau office. A copy of the paper application form can be downloaded [here](#)<sup>4</sup> or by contacting the Nassau office.
- 5.3.2. Each application MUST include the following, in order to be deemed completed:
- i. A clear copy of a valid national passport  
*(Seaman Record Book is not an acceptable form of ID for application purposes) AND*
  - ii. A clear copy of a valid seafarer medical certificate.  
*BMA Information Bulletin No. 103 provides guidelines on acceptable medical certificates) AND*
  - iii. 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 **AND**
  - iv. Two (2) original identical passport size colour photographs.  
*(The seafarer's application form and Marine Notice-004 provide guidance on the photograph specification - 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*
  - v. A complete and clear copy of the officer(s) appropriate certificate that was issued in accordance with STCW requirements

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bahamasmaritime.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/seafarer.pdf>



(BMA Information Bulletin No. 121 provides a complete list of countries with which The Bahamas has concluded agreements for the recognition of certificates under STCW Regulation I/10) **AND**

- vi. A copy of the seafarer's signature on plain white paper which shall contain no other images or text.
  - vii. Payment. **The Bahamas Maritime Authority does not accept personal cheques.** Payment must be made via cash, company cheque, credit card or BACS at the time of application. See Marine Notice 50 for payment details.
- 5.3.3. As paper applications are limited to Bahamian nationals and/or residents and then only via the BMA Nassau office, it should be noted that the requirement to send out a hard copy of a CRA by post is no longer required or available.
- 5.3.4. The completed application and supporting documentation shall be posted to:

Seafarers Applications  
The Bahamas Maritime Authority  
Shirlaw House  
226, Shirley Street  
PO Box N-4679  
Nassau, Bahamas

## **6. Validity of FSEs**

- 6.1. The Bahamas Maritime Authority is mindful that some Administrations have a process of extending the validity of a national STCW Certificate of Competency (CoC) and this may result in the CoC having a validity date that exceeds 5 years.
- 6.2. Notwithstanding the national process, all parties shall note that in accordance with the provisions of Regulation I/2.8.4 of STCW, the BMA FSE cannot exceed five (5) years from the date that the FSE is issued.
- 6.3. Seafarers with a national certificate that exceed five years shall liaise with their national Administration, as the BMA is unable to consider any request to align the validity of the FSE with the expiry date of the national CoC if this will result in The Bahamas FSE having an expiry date that exceeds five (5) years from The Bahamas FSE date of issue.

## **7. Fees and Refunds**

- 7.1. The fees for FSEs are the same as for other BMA certificates or endorsements. Please refer to Marine Notice 50.
- 7.2. The fast track service specified in 5.1.8 will be charged as a professional fee. Please refer to Marine Notice 50.
- 7.3. For applications where the CRA or FSE has been issued, a refund may not be offered.
- 7.4. If no CRA is issued and the document has not been issued, the BMA may charge the bank charges (US \$25) plus a charge of 20% of the cost of the document in administration fees.

## **8. Enquiries**

- 8.1. Enquiries relating to FSE applications should be made to the Seafarers & Manning Department by emailing [stcw@bahamamaritime.com](mailto:stcw@bahamamaritime.com).



**ANNEX – BORIS Application process**



