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## **Record of Employment, Bahamas Seaman's Record Book & Certificate of Discharge.**

Notice to ship owners, Managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors

*This Notice supersedes BMA Information Bulletin No.107*

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### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Section 75 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act 2021, Regulation 16 (7) of The Bahamas Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) Regulations 2026 and Standard A2.1 (e) of the Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) require that all seafarers onboard a Bahamas-registered ship are provided with a record of the seafarer's employment onboard the ship.
- 1.2 This Marine Notice outlines:
- i. The Bahamas' approach to documenting the record of employment,
  - ii. Procedures to apply for a Seafarer's Identification & Record Book (SIRB), sometimes referred to as a Discharge Book or Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) that records the onboard record of employment.
  - iii. Procedures on lost or destroyed seafarer's record books
- 1.3 The Marine Notice should be read in conjunction with the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) Marine Notice 031, 034, Information Notices 015, 030, 031 and 032 as appropriate.

### **2. Application**

- 2.1 This Notice applies to all persons employed as seafarers or intending to be employed as seafarers on Bahamas-registered vessels and to companies employing, recruiting or selecting such persons.
- 2.2 The definition of a seafarer is in BMA Marine Notice 031 and should be referred to for further guidance before applying for a SIRB.
- 2.3 For this Marine Notice, the Company is the entity that has accepted responsibility for the assignment of seafarers for service onboard Bahamas-registered ships in accordance with the provisions of STCW Regulation I/14.

- 2.4 The Registered Owner or ISM Manager must notify the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) Seafarers and Manning Department of the full details of any such entity (e.g. manning agents). This, and any subsequent changes, must be submitted via the Manning section of Bahamas Form R104 (<https://www.bahamasmaritime.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Form-R104-Memorandum-as-to-the-Registration-of-Managing-Owners.pdf>) or a Letter of Declaration. The letter must be on the headed paper of the Registered Owner and/or ISM Manager named on the vessel's Certificate of Entry as Co-/Joint Assured.
- 2.5 Where a shore-based recruitment, selection and placement service is engaged and not assigned responsibility under STCW Regulation I/14, the BMA requires documentary evidence of compliance with MLC 2006, Regulation 1.4. Despite such delegation, the ISM Company remains responsible under ISM Code paragraph 6, STCW Regulation I/14 and MLC 2006 Regulation 1.3 to ensure personnel are of minimum age, suitably trained or certified, and medically fit before assignment to a vessel.

### **3. General**

- 3.1 Applications are accepted only from companies actively engaged in employing, recruiting, or selecting personnel for Bahamian ships. Where there is doubt about a company's or seafarer's connection to a Bahamas-registered vessel, the BMA may require additional information to confirm eligibility.
- 3.2 A Bahamas seafarer's record book shall be kept in a form as determined by the Director of the Bahamas Maritime Authority.
- 3.3 The Bahamas Maritime Authority's seafarers' record book serves two main purposes. When presented with the holder's valid passport, it may be used as an identification document to facilitate travel to and from an assigned vessel. It is also the primary record of a seafarer's sea service, which is required to support applications for STCW certificates of competency.
- 3.4 The Bahamas issued "Seafarer's Identification and Record Book" (SIRB) is not a national identity document or a Seafarer Identity Document introduced by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 185.
- 3.5 A seafarer must present their SIRB when requested by an authorised official, for example, a Customs Officer or a Port State Control Officer, for the purpose of carrying out their duties. The seafarer must also present the SIRB when requested by the master of the vessel on which they are employed, or by the master's representative.
- 3.6 A seafarer's record of employment on board a Bahamas-flagged vessel must be recorded on a formal document before the seafarer disembarks. This may be entered in the seafarer's national sea service record book, a Bahamas-issued SIRB, and/or a Bahamas-issued Certificate of Discharge.

- 3.7 Where a seafarer does not possess a Bahamas SIRB or equivalent sea service record book issued by his/her own country, a Bahamas-issued Certificate of Discharge must be issued on board the vessel. The Certificate of Discharge must include the minimum information specified in section 5.1 below.
- 3.8 A Bahamas SIRB is not mandatory for serving on board a Bahamas-flagged ship. However, the BMA is aware that some countries in which a ship operates may require seafarers to hold a sea service record book issued by the vessel's flag State.
- 3.9 All Bahamas-issued SIRBs are valid for 10 years. Record books previously issued without an expiry date must be renewed 10 years after their original issue date so that an updated photograph can be included.
- 3.10 If it is determined that a seafarer has obtained a Bahamas SIRB through deception, has received one in error, or has committed serious misconduct, the seafarer must surrender the book to the Bahamas Maritime Authority when instructed by the Director of the Bahamas Maritime Authority.

#### **4. Application Procedures for a Seafarer's Identification and Record Book (SIRB)**

- 4.1 The BMA only issues Bahamas SIRB to persons who are serving or intending to serve on Bahamas ships.
- 4.2 Applications for SIRB, except for Bahamian nationals, shall be submitted by a company defined in section 2 of this notice, through the Bahamas Online Registration Information System (BORIS), as outlined in Information Notice 015.
- 4.3 Use of the paper application form is now limited to individual Bahamian nationals submitting to the BMA Nassau Office. The application process for individual Bahamas residents is detailed in the Information Notice 031.
- 4.4 The application process for a digital version of the seafarer's record book is provided in Information Notice 030.
- 4.5 For details of how to register for access to the BORIS, reference should be made to BMA Information Notice 015.
- 4.6 Once the application is received, complete with all supporting documentation, it will be processed and issued within fifteen (15) working days from the receipt of the application.
- 4.7 If the Company requires documents to be processed urgently, a "fast track application" option should be selected in BORIS. The provision of the "fast track" service is subject to an additional fee, and the expected service time is two (2) business days.
- 4.8 If the seafarer's record book has not been received within one (1) month from the receipt of the application, the company or individual should contact their assigned BORIS

account manager. This will enable the company, the individual and the BMA to address any identified problems.

- 4.9 It is the responsibility of the company and the seafarer to verify that all details recorded in the identification page of the record book are correct. This information is to be checked upon receipt, and the BMA is to be notified of any errors.
- 4.10 The penalty for false statement(s) or the submission of false document(s) to obtain a Bahamas seafarer's record book shall be in accordance with Section 198 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act 2021.

## **5. The making of entries into a seafarer's Identification and Record Book (SIRB)**

- 5.1 The Bahamas SIRB is designed to record only essential sea service information. All fields on the 'Record of Sea Service' pages must be completed, including the following:
- The ship's details - Name of ship, Port of Registry, Official number, Gross Tonnage and Engine Power,
  - The Rank/function of the seafarer,
  - The place and date of joining and leaving the ship,
  - The description of the voyage – Domestic, Near Coastal or International,
  - The master's details – name and signature. (Electronic signature is accepted on digital seafarers' record books), and
  - The vessel or Company official stamp. (Official stamp is not required on digital seafarers' record books).
- 5.2 No entry should be included in any assessment of a seafarer's work quality, character, ability, or wages. Such information must be issued separately in an appraisal, report of conduct, or similar document.

### **5.3 Making entries and correcting errors in physical SIRBs**

- 5.3.1 All entries must be written in black or blue ink by the master or their designated representative, such as the crew purser. Each entry must then be signed by the master and stamped with the official ship or company stamp.
- 5.3.2 The 'Observations' page in a physical seafarer's record book may be used to record sea service only when the dedicated pages are full, and the seafarer is awaiting a new record book. The master must enter all essential information listed in section 5.1 above.
- 5.3.3 The 'Observations' page may also be used by the master to support corrections made in the seafarer's record book, and by port officials to meet their national requirements.
- 5.3.4 Any errors should be crossed out with a single line and signed by the master. An explanation may be entered on the 'Observations' page at the back of the record book.

#### **5.4 Making entries and correcting errors in digital SIRBs**

- 5.4.1 All entries must be created digitally using the process specified by the digital record book service provider, whether through their mobile app or web-based platform. Additional information can be found in Information Notice 030.
- 5.4.2 There is no 'Observations' page within the digital version of the seafarer's record book.

#### **6.0 Lost seafarer's record books**

- 6.1 The BMA must be notified immediately if a seafarer's record book is lost or destroyed. The notification should include the following information:
- The name of the seafarer,
  - The seafarer's date of birth,
  - The seafarer's nationality,
  - The affected record book's identification number, if known,
  - A request for a new seafarer's record book, if applicable.
- 6.2 A new seafarer's record book can be applied for by following the appropriate instructions in section 4 of this Marine Notice.
- 6.3 If the lost record book is subsequently found, the Company shall immediately notify the BMA's Seafarers and Manning Department – [seafares@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:seafares@bahamasmaritime.com)
- 6.4 If a physical seafarer's record book has not been received by the Company and is believed to be lost in transit, a claim of non-receipt must be submitted to the BMA within one month of the issue date. Claims received after this period cannot be investigated, and a new application, with payment, will be required.

#### **7. Validation of Certificates of Discharge**

- 7.1 The BMA acknowledges that certain Administrations require a seafarer's sea service documentation to be validated by the Administration of the Flag State under which the seafarer served.
- 7.2 To facilitate this process, the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) and, where applicable, the Bahamas Diplomatic Office will, upon request, validate that the vessel in question was or is a Bahamas-flagged ship by stamping and signing the Certificate of Discharge.
- 7.3 A booklet containing individual Certificates of Discharge can be obtained from the BMA. These booklets are issued to vessels upon registration, and additional booklets may be purchased by emailing [publications@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:publications@bahamasmaritime.com)
- 7.4 The validation process for the Certificate of Discharge can be found in the Information Notice 032.

**8. Fees and Refunds**

- 8.1 Details of fees are outlined in [Marine Notice 050](#).
- 8.2 Refunds will not be issued for seafarers' record books that have already been produced, even if the document is no longer required.
- 8.3 Applications for refunds where the seafarer's record book has not yet been issued will incur an administrative fee equal to 50% of the record book cost.

**9. Queries.**

- 9.1 Clients' enquiries relating to SIRBS applications shall be made via their allocated BORIS Account Manager or, in their absence, via the BMA's Seafarer & Manning Department at [seafarers@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:seafarers@bahamasmaritime.com)
- 9.2 All enquiries relating to the validation of sea service shall be directed to [dsc@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:dsc@bahamasmaritime.com).

**Revision History**

Version	Description of Revision
1.1	BMA Bulletin 107 transferred to MN 029 with amendments. Contents revised and introduction of digital seafarer's record books included.