The Bahamas Maritime Authority

Version No. 1.1

Issue Date 06/05/2026

Effective Date 06/05/2026

Hatches, Lifting Appliances and Anchor Handling Winches

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

1. Purpose

1.1. This Notice is provided by the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) to describe the requirements for the design, construction, installation, inspection, testing, certification and maintenance of hatches, lifting plant and anchor handling winches[1].

1.2. The Bahamas requirements for the testing, certification and maintenance of ship's hatches and lifting plant on Bahamian ships are as provided in the Merchant Shipping (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988, as amended[2] ('the Bahamas Regulations').

1.3. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted Resolution MSC.532(107) on 08 June 2023, which amended the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974, as amended (SOLAS), including *inter alia* the addition of a new Regulation 3-13 on lifting appliances and anchor handling winches in Chapter II-1 of the Convention (SOLAS Chapter II-1). The amendments entered into force on **01 January 2026**.

1.4. This notice does not address other requirements that may be applicable to lifting appliances on board ships through Rules of Classification, regional or national legislation of the State(s) in whose jurisdiction a ship may operate or other regulatory regimes affecting such equipment either directly or indirectly.

2. Application

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

2.2. The Bahamas regulations place obligations on the 'employer'. The 'employer' is considered the entity that employs the master - in most cases, this will be the same as

[1] Anchor handling winch means any winch used for the purpose of deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and mooring lines in subsea operations

[2] https://mf.bahamasmaritime.net/SharedLinks.aspx?accesskey=10f8c62f49fdc27bad156b7e43723019dfb69e2ffee2e9d71f74dd170bc2b862&VaultGUID=8A7ABFCE-CCD2-49D8-9190-B5F8650E5B38

the 'Company'[3] for the purposes of the ISM Code. If the employer and the Company are different entities, it should be noted that the obligations in the Bahamas Regulations are on the employer and any reference to the Company in this Notice should be read as reference to the employer.

3. Definitions

3.1. The terms used in the Bahamas regulations are defined in Regulation 2 of the Merchant Shipping (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988, as amended.

3.2. The terms used in the SOLAS Regulation are defined in Regulation 2 of SOLAS Chapter II-1, as amended.

3.3. There is some overlap between the definitions of "lifting appliance", "lifting plant", "lifting gear" and "loose gear".

3.4. Broadly, any part of a lifting plant whether stationary, movable or rigidly attached that becomes, or may become, bearing a load under lifting or load suspension operation shall be considered as forming a part of lifting appliances on board. Naturally such definition cannot be expanded to the extent of covering the exact and conclusive terminology for any and all possible variations whether being a less common engineering solution or for those where only terminology and linguistic specifics may represent a difference. All parties are encouraged to contact the BMA directly in case of difficulties to identify the applicability of the requirements to any specific appliance, gear or a part thereof.

3.5. For the purposes of this Notice:

i. **Lifting appliances** refers to any ship's stationary or mobile appliance (and every part thereof, including attachments used for anchoring, fixing, or supporting that appliance but not including vehicle coupling and vehicle securing arrangements) which is used on a ship for the purposes of suspending, raising, or lowering loads or moving them from one position to another while suspended. It also includes ship's lift trucks and similar vehicles. Additionally, it encompasses all load-handling ship's equipment used for:

- Cargo loading, transfer, or discharge;
- Raising and lowering hold hatch covers or movable bulkheads, except where done by hydraulic or mechanical jacks;

[3] The 'Company' is the entity responsible for the operation and management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code (SOLAS Chapter IX), as applied under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2021. Where the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the entity recorded as responsible for the operation of the ship in accordance with regulation 5(3)(d) of the Merchant Shipping (Registration) Regulations, 2026.

- Engine-room cranes independent of type;
- Stores cranes independent of type;
- Hose handling cranes independent of type;
- Launch and recovery of tender boats, work boats, overboard hanging arrangements, suspended work platforms and any and all similar applications;
- Personnel handling cranes.

Lifting appliances do not include:

- Pipes, Ladders and gangways including winches serving these applications;
- Screw, belt, bucket, or other conveyor systems used for the continuous movement of cargo or people, but it does include the lifting appliances used to suspend, raise, lower, or move any of these items or assemblies thereof;
- Survival craft or rescue boat launching and recovery appliances or arrangements;
- Pilot hoists;
- Personnel elevators or cargo lifts;
- Personnel fall arresters and lifeboat fall preventer devices (FPD)
- Attractions and fairground type rides – these are covered by equipment specific risk assessments and mitigations.

ii. **Lifting gear / Loose gear** refers to any and all gear or article of ship's equipment by means of which a load can be attached to a lifting appliance or an anchor handling winch, but which does not form an integral part of that appliance or the load. It does not include pallets, one-trip slings, pre-slung cargo slings, and freight containers.

iii. **Lifting plant** means all lifting appliances and lifting gear.

iv. **Survey** means the survey of the ship's Safety Construction (SAFCON), Passenger Ship Safety Certificate (PSSC) or other form of certification issued to the ship to certify compliance with SOLAS Chapter II-1;

v. **Repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character** are those which:
- change the safe working load (SWL) of the lifting appliance; or
- affect the strength, stability or service life of the lifting appliance; or
- affect the primary load bearing structure of the lifting appliance; or
- modify the functionality of the lifting appliance or any part thereof which may affect its strength or safety or structural integrity.

vi. **Anchor Handling Winch** means any winch for the purpose of deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and mooring lines in subsea operations. It does not

include ship's anchoring and mooring equipment, such as anchor windlasses, anchor winches, anchor capstans or other arrangements provided for the purpose of anchoring a ship.

vii. **Register of Lifting Appliances and Cargo Handling Gear** (The Register) means the lifting plant records maintained on board a ship in the format specified in Appendix 3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663. The Register may be maintained in either paper or electronic form and does not require approval. The Register shall remain on board at all times. The BMA expects ships with Lifting Appliances and Cargo Handling Gear Register already in use before 01 January 2026 to be in a format largely in compliance with Appendix 3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663. Should that not be the case, it is the responsibility of the Company to ensure the on board Register is amended to match the format stated in MSC.1/Circ.1663 by not later than the next renewal survey date.

viii. **Less Frequently Used Lifting Plant** means all pad-eyes, lifting eyes, lifting points, trolleys, hoist attachments etc forming a part of lifting appliances. For such equipment with SWL1000kg and over, the requirements of SOLAS Chapter II-1 apply concurrently with the Bahamas Regulations. Those with SWL below 1000kg continue to comply with the Bahamas Regulations only.

It should be noted the mentioned pad-eyes, lifting eyes, lifting points, trolleys, hoist attachments etc do not as such represent a lifting appliance unless a suitable hoist, block, crane or a suspension is attached. To the extent of application of both the Bahamas Regulations and SOLAS Chapter II-1, no thorough examination or testing is required unless these fixtures are planned to be used as lifting appliances.

The Company should identify fixtures that are being used regularly and consequently will require through examination and load testing at prescribed intervals. For fixtures that are provided for specific tasks (e.g. shipyard works, unusual or very rare frequency of use (longer than 5 years period), or for certain specific applications where a fixture may have been installed for a one-off operation only), the BMA may consider accepting alternative "on-demand" verification of the condition and the safe load prior to each such case of irregular use. The Company shall propose such alternative verification and testing approach.

Where fixtures of this kind have been verified, tested and certificated by the yard at the stage of newbuilding, the application of any alternative approach should only be required 5 years from the date of yard testing of the respective fixture.

3.6. **Competent Person**

3.6.1. The criteria for nomination of a Competent Person, as per paragraph 2.1 of MSC.1/Circ.1663, are outlined in MN089 and a competent person shall be nominated by the Company.

3.6.2. The competent person may not necessarily be a person present on board at all times, though it is common practice to nominate a suitably trained and experienced officer member of the crew for the purpose of supervising and conducting maintenance, repairs, inspections and testing of lifting appliances.

3.6.3. **The nomination of a competent person, as well as selection of the necessary criteria addressing proficiency, training and experience level for a competent person is the responsibility of the Company**. The BMA expects such criteria take into account any applicable requirements of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.

3.6.4. A competent person nominated by the Company may be a member of the crew, Company personnel, a duly qualified third party (such as a dedicated lifting inspection company), a representative of the coastal state competent authority (for ships operating in waters under a single jurisdiction), or a Recognised Organisation surveyor, if appointed by the Company (see 3.6.5).

3.6.5. For the avoidance of doubt, Recognised Organisation surveyors are not considered competent persons for the purpose of load testing and thorough examinations per MSC.1/Circ.1663, unless the Company nominates a Recognised Organisation surveyor that meets their criteria for this role.

3.6.6. Where a Company appoints a Recognised Organisation surveyor to act as a competent person for the purposes of compliance with SOLAS Chapter II-1, this can be any Bahamas Recognised Organisation surveyor. In such a case, the responsibility for assessing compliance with SOLAS Chapter II-1 remains the responsibility of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.

3.6.7. Similar to other servicing and testing activities regulated under the International Conventions, where the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship has reasonable doubts or concerns about the qualifications of a competent person, or where the results of the activities undertaken by the competent person under MSC.1/Circ.1663 are not to their satisfaction, an objection should be raised and the respective survey should be considered as part-held pending application of corrective actions which should be agreed with BMA.

3.7. **Responsible Person**

3.7.1. A Responsible Person, as per paragraph 2.3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663, shall possess the knowledge and experience required for the performance of duties specified in MSC.1/Circ.1663 and this Marine Notice. They shall be nominated based on the selection criteria to satisfy the respective Company procedures and shall be a person present on board at all times when lifting appliances or loose gear are being used, prepared for use, installed, maintained, repaired, tested or surveyed.

4. Compliance requirements

4.1. The Bahamas Regulations apply to all Bahamian ships except for:

i. fishing vessels;
ii. pleasure craft (i.e. private yachts);
iii. offshore installations whilst on or within 500 metres of their permanent working location; or
iv. ships on which there is for the time being no Master, crew or watchman (i.e. laid up).

4.2. Regulation 3-13 of SOLAS Chapter II-1 ('the SOLAS Regulation') entered into force on 01 January 2026 in respect of lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, and loose gear used with them.

4.3. **The Bahamas Regulations continue to apply to all lifting plant including those with a SWL below 1000kg**. However, in case of lifting appliances and loose gear with a SWL of 1000kg and above, continuous compliance with SOLAS Chapter II-1 is considered as equivalent to compliance with the Bahamas Regulations.

4.4. **The SOLAS Regulation applies to lifting appliances with a SWL of 1000 kg and above** except for:

i. lifting appliances on ships certified as MODUs[4];
ii. lifting appliances used on offshore construction ships, such as pipe/cable laying/repair or offshore installation vessels, including ships for decommissioning work, which comply with standards acceptable to the BMA[5];
iii. integrated mechanical equipment for opening and closing hold hatch covers; and

[4] Ships certified as MODUs are those subject to the MODU Code and which carry a MODU Code Certificate on board issued by the BMA or one of its Recognised Organisations, including authorised electronic versions of the Certificate available on board. Chapter 12 of the MODU Code applies to these units in respect of lifting equipment.
[5] In general, the MS (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988 will continue to apply, however the BMA may consider acceptance of the equivalent standards, including those of the State(s) in whose waters the ship is operating.

iv. life-saving launching appliances complying with the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code.

4.5. Operations and Maintenance Manuals for all lifting appliances referenced in 4.4 above shall be available on board as outlined in paragraph 3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663.

4.6. ***Alternative compliance for Mobile Offshore Units/Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MOUs/MODUs)***

4.6.1. Where a ship has dual MODU and SOLAS certification in respect of lifting appliances, the MODU Code requirements shall apply. This excludes anchor handling winches which, if fitted, are subject to the survey, testing and examination regime required by regulation 3-13 of SOLAS Chapter II-1.

4.6.2. In some areas, a stationary FPSO/FSO unit may be certificated to SOLAS rather than MODU Code but for all intents and purposes such units operate in the manner consistent with a regular MODU certificated unit. The BMA may consider permitting such units, after 01 January 2026, to continue to operate with lifting appliances being examined and tested based on the existing Bahamas regulations, independent of the SWL, as an equivalent to SOLAS.

4.6.3. In such cases, the Company should prepare and apply to the BMA, via the Recognised Organisation as per Marine Notice 05, for acceptance of the equivalent method of compliance in lieu of SOLAS requirements.

4.6.4. The application shall outline the details of maintenance, testing and examination requirements applied to lifting appliances on board in lieu of SOLAS provisions. Where accepted, the alternative equivalent compliance provisions shall apply to all lifting appliances on board independent of SWL.

4.6.5. Alternative compliance should not be based on provisions of ILO152.

4.7. All Bahamian ships already comply with the Bahamas regulations, and all lifting plant should already be compliant with those requirements. The requirements of the Bahamas Regulations will remain in force and fully applicable to all lifting plant after 01 January 2026 - see Section 8 below for further details.

4.8. The new SOLAS Regulation does not directly address hatches. The Bahamas Regulations continue to apply to hatches as described in Section 6 of this Notice.

4.9. The current Bahamas Regulations do not address anchor handling winches. The SOLAS Regulations apply to anchor handling winches from 01 January 2026, as described in Section 7 of this Notice.

4.10. ***International Labour Organization Convention 152 (ILO152)***

4.10.1. The Bahamas is not a signatory to ILO Convention 152; however, the Bahamas Regulations give effect to its requirements.

4.10.2. ILO152 covers a vast scope of provisions and arrangements aimed at providing adequate safe working conditions primarily for shore personnel (stevedores, dockers, lashers, tallyman etc) with lifting appliance safety being just a part of these requirements.

4.10.3. Bahamas Recognised Organisations are authorised to issue Statements of Compliance with ILO152 – see section 3.3 of the Bahamas National Requirements.

4.10.4. Where a ship undergoes survey and certification of any part of the on-board lilting plant under the provisions of ILO152, the Bahamas Regulations and SOLAS Regulation continue to apply concurrently.

4.10.5. Whilst compliance with SOLAS Chapter II-1 and the Bahamas Regulations is mandatory, except where non-applicability has been accepted by the BMA based on Regulation 3-13.1.2.2 of SOLAS Chapter II-1, compliance to ILO152 is voluntary. However, the BMA generally expects all existing ships that already carried ILO152 certification before 01 January 2026 to continue to comply with these requirements.

5. Survey and Load Testing Periodicity

5.1. Survey of lifting appliances and anchor handling winches shall be completed as part of the ship's Safety Construction/Passenger Ship Safety Certificate survey and at the periods specified in *A.1207(34) Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification*, as amended.

5.2. There are no requirements for any dedicated periodical 'lifting appliances survey'. All survey activities in respect of compliance with the requirements of the SOLAS Regulation are included in the scope of the ship's Safety Construction/Passenger Ship Safety Certificate survey.

5.3. No separate survey is required to be completed on or immediately after 01 January 2026. However, the dates of the last load test and annual thorough examination of lifting appliances shall not exceed the prescribed limits in order to maintain full compliance with the SOLAS Regulation.

5.4. The periodicity of the load testing required under Regulation 7(2) of the Merchant Shipping (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988 and Regulation 3-13.2.4 of SOLAS Chapter II-1[6] shall not exceed 5 years.

5.5. Unless the prescribed periodicity has been exceeded, the load test and the annual thorough examination, as referenced in para.3.2 of MSC.1/Circ.1663, are not required to be performed at the time of a scheduled Safety Construction/Passenger Ship Safety Certificate survey.

5.6. For the avoidance of doubt, in case of a ship with lifting appliances installed before 01 January 2026 where the last load test was completed to standards other than those specified in SOLAS Chapter II-1, the necessary amendment to the procedures as well as new load testing to the requirements of MSC.1/Circ.1663 shall be completed within 5 years from the date of the last load test or before the first Renewal Survey after 01 January 2026, whichever comes first. This includes marking as required by Regulation 3-13.2.3 of SOLAS Chapter II-1 (SWL marking).

6. Hatches

6.1. Regulation 4 of the Bahamas regulations requires every Company, Master and any person carrying out on board duties in relation to hatch covering to take full account of the principles and guidance in Chapter 16[7] of the United Kingdom Code of Safe Working Practice for Merchant Seafarers when operating or maintaining hatch covering.

6.2. The Company and Master shall ensure that any hatch covering[8] used on a ship is of sound construction and material, of adequate strength for the purpose for which it is used, free from patent defect and properly maintained.

6.3. The Master shall ensure that

i. a hatch covering is not used unless it can be removed and replaced, whether manually or with mechanical power, without endangering any person; and

ii. information showing the correct replacement position is clearly marked, except in so far as hatch coverings are interchangeable or incapable of being incorrectly replaced.

6.4. The Master shall ensure that a hatch is not used unless the hatch covering has been completely removed, or if not completely removed is properly secured.

[6] see paragraphs 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.4 of MSC.1/Circ1663
[7] The reference in the regulations is to Chapter 18 of the version of the Code that existed at the time the regulations were drafted; this is equivalent to Chapter 16 of the current version
[8] includes hatch covers, beams and attached fixtures and fittings

6.5. Except in the event of an emergency endangering health or safety, no person shall operate a hatch covering which is power-operated or a ship's ramp or a retractable car deck, unless authorised to do so by a responsible ship's officer.

7. Anchor handling winches

7.1. Anchor handling winches installed on or after 01 January 2026 shall be designed, constructed, installed and tested, based on circular MSC.1/Circ.1662 *Guidelines for anchor handling winches*.

7.2. Anchor handling winches installed before 01 January 2026 shall be tested and thoroughly examined, based on the provisions outlined in MSC.1/Circ.1662, no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 01 January 2026.

7.3. Anchor handling winches, regardless of installation date, and all loose gear utilised with anchor handling winches, shall be operationally tested, thoroughly examined, inspected, operated and maintained, based on MSC.1/Circ.1662 and MSC.1/Circ.1663 *Guidelines for Lifting Appliances*.

8. Lifting Plant

8.1. ***General***

8.1.1. The requirements for testing and thorough examination as outlined in Regulations 7-(1) and 8 of MS (Hatches and Lifting Plant) Regulations 1988 apply to **all** lifting plant on board every Bahamian ship, independent of SOLAS Regulation applicability. See 9.4 below.

8.1.2. Regulation 5 of the Bahamas Regulations require every Company, Master or any person carrying out on board duties in relation to lifting plant to take full account of the principles and guidance in Chapter 19[9] of the United Kingdom Code of Safe Working Practice for Merchant Seafarers.

8.1.3. Where any part of lifting plant has been duly surveyed and tested to the provisions of Regulations 3-13.2 or 3-13.3 of Chapter II-1 of SOLAS, it shall be assumed the same covers the requirements of the Bahamas regulations. No separate survey, testing or record keeping pursuant to the Bahamas Regulations is required in such cases for those parts of lifting plant.

[9] The reference in the regulations is to Chapter 17 of the version of the Code that existed at the time the regulations were drafted; this is equivalent to Chapter 19 of the current version

9. Design, construction and installation

9.1. ***General***

9.1.1. The Company and Master shall ensure that any ship's lifting plant is of good design, of sound construction and material, of adequate strength for the purpose for which it is used, free from patent defect, properly installed or assembled and properly maintained.

9.1.2. The Master shall ensure that any pallet or similar piece of equipment for supporting loads or lifting attachment which forms an integral part of the load or one-trip sling or preslung cargo sling is not used on a ship unless it is of good construction, of adequate strength for the purpose for which it is used and free from patent defect.

9.1.3. All lifting appliances, shall be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the rules of a Bahamas Recognised Organisation, or alternative standards acceptable to the Recognised Organisation that provide an equivalent level of safety.

9.1.4. The Company and Master shall ensure that no lifting plant is used after manufacture or installation without first being suitably tested by a competent person. See 9.3 below.

9.2. ***Operation and use of lifting plant***

9.2.1. The Company and Master shall ensure that lifting plant is not used other than in a safe and proper manner.

9.2.2. The Company and the Master shall ensure that, except to carry out a load test, the lifting plant is not loaded in excess of its SWL.

9.2.3. No person shall operate any lifting appliances unless they are fully trained, familiar with the operating procedures and competent[10] to do so and they have been duly authorised by a Responsible Person. The ship's Master and Responsible Person must ensure all operators have the necessary practical competence and knowledge of safe lifting practices, emergency response procedures, and equipment limitations.

9.3. ***Load testing***

9.3.1. The Company and the Master shall ensure that a lifting appliance is not used unless it has been suitably tested by a competent person within the preceding five years, or after any repair or modification which is likely to alter the SWL or affect the lifting plant's strength or stability.

[10] Please refer to BMA Marine Notice 89

9.3.2. All lifting appliances shall be load tested and thoroughly examined after installation and before being taken into use for the first time and after repairs, modifications or alterations of major character to the satisfaction of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.

9.3.3. For load testing of lifting appliances intended for use while the ship is in port or in sheltered waters, the test load, as set out in Table 1 below, should be established using the SWL.

SWL of the lifting appliance, tonnes	Test load, tonnes
SWL ≤ 20 t	1.25 x SWL
SWL 20 t to ≤ 50 t	SWL + 5 t
SWL > 50 t	1.10 x SWL

Table 1 – Lifting appliance minimum test loads

9.3.4. For lifting appliances intended for open-sea operations, the test loads should take into account the applicable dynamic loads. The additional dynamic load factor shall be determined on the basis of the rules and standards of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.

9.3.5. Where the SWL of the lifting appliances is undocumented and design information is not available, e.g. for lifting appliances which are installed on board before 1 January 2026 and the manufacturer no longer exists, the test load should be calculated using Table 1 above based on the SWL demonstrated through the historic operation of such lifting appliances and after a review and assessment conducted by the Company in cooperation with and to satisfaction of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship. The BMA does not intend to establish any separate criteria for lifting appliances with undocumented SWL.

9.3.6. Load testing shall be always performed by duly trained and experienced competent personnel. In case of lifting appliances referenced in paragraph 4.4 the load testing shall be witnessed by a surveyor of the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship.

9.3.7. Where lifting equipment requires specialist equipment or procedures that can only be carried out in a shipyard during a dry-docking period (e.g. cargo grabs etc.), and the load test does not coincide with the docking period, the competent person(s) should assess the equipment for continued use until docking, with careful consideration and assessment of the potential risk of continued use beyond 5 years against operational risks of testing in service. In such cases, the BMA shall be approached with full details.

9.3.8. All lifting gear referenced in paragraph 3.3.ii, when purchased by the Company, should be provided with a manufacturer's test certificate. Manufacturer's load testing based

on national or regional requirements may be accepted provided that the test load is not less than that outlined in paragraph 9.3.3. Such equipment does not require separate load testing before the first use, unless this is required under the Company's safety management system.

9.3.9. Where purchased lifting gear has been delivered on board without a manufacturer's test certificate, or where the test certificate does not satisfy the criteria outlined in paragraph 9.3.7, initial load testing shall be completed before the first use by a competent person either on board, or at suitable shore facilities, to the satisfaction of the Master.

9.3.10. Lifting gear provided with a manufacturer's test certificate may be used until the certificate expires, or 5 years from the date of testing on the certificate, whichever is sooner, subject to annual examination as described in paragraph 9.4. Procedures relating to the timely replacement or load testing shall be included in the safety management system.

*9.4. **Periodical testing and thorough examination***

9.4.1. The Company and the Master shall ensure that any lifting plant is not used unless it has been thoroughly examined by a competent person:

i. at least once in the preceding 12-month period; and
ii. following a load test.

9.4.2. All lifting appliances with a SWL of 1000kg and above regardless of installation date, and all loose gear utilised with any lifting appliances, shall be operationally tested and thoroughly examined based on MSC.1/Circ.1663.

9.4.3. In view of the provisions outlined in 8.1.1 above, the BMA recommends utilising the guidelines outlined in MSC.1/Circ.1663 for testing and examination of lifting appliances with a SWL below 1000kg.

*9.5. **Maintenance***

9.5.1. Regular preventive maintenance is essential to ensure lifting appliances remain in sound working condition.

9.5.2. Maintenance schedules should be based on manufacturer recommendations and operational usage, and must include, amongst others, lubrication, adjustment of moving parts, inspection of structural integrity, and calibration of control systems as applicable. Procedures relating to the maintenance of lifting plant should be included in the safety management system, and a responsible person should authenticate

records. Guidelines with regard to the maintenance manual and its contents are contained in MSC.1/Circ.1663.

9.6. ***Safe Working Load (SWL)***

9.6.1. The Company and the Master shall ensure that each lifting appliance and lifting gear, including loose gear, is clearly and legibly marked with its SWL and a means of identification.

9.6.2. The Company and the Master shall ensure that any crane or derrick that is carried on the ship and whose SWL varies with its arm, boom or jib operating lift angle is fitted with an accurate indicator, clearly visible to the driver, showing the lift angle of the load lifting attachment at any time and the SWL corresponding to that lift angle.

9.6.3. In case of derricks operating in union purchase mode, the SWL limitation dependant on the boom swing and lift angles shall be available and taken into account when planning lifting operations by the responsible officer on board.

9.6.4. The Company and the Master shall ensure that each item of loose/lifting gear which weighs a significant proportion of the SWL of any lifting appliance with which it is intended to be used is, in addition to being marked with its SWL, clearly marked with its weight.

9.6.5. All lifting appliances shall be provided with the current documentary evidence for the SWL including the latest load testing report.

9.7. ***Documentation***

9.7.1. Certificates of thorough examination and load testing of lifting appliances and loose gear, as per Appendix 1 and 2 of MSC.1/Circ.1663, should be issued by the competent person after completion of the respective examination or testing. The BMA does not expect these documents to be issued by a Recognised Organisation unless the Company has nominated a Recognised Organisation surveyor as a competent person.

9.7.2. The load test certificate and load test report shall be provided on board upon completion of load testing and should be attached to the Register of the ship's lifting appliances and cargo handling gear.

9.7.3. The current documentary evidence of the SWL, such as load test certificates or reports, should be retained onboard at all times for all lifting plant and anchor handling winches, as applicable.

9.7.4. Records of thorough examination and load testing shall be maintained in the Register and should be available on board at all times. Similarly, records of thorough examination and load testing shall be maintained on board for all anchor handling winches.

9.7.5. Results of load testing and thorough examination shall be documented in the format of a Certificate as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to MSC.1/Circ.1663.

9.7.6. For ships with lifting appliances installed before 01 January 2026:

i. the 5-yearly Load Testing Certificate issued prior to 01 January 2026 remains valid and is considered as covering the requirements of paragraphs 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663 for 5 years from date of completion of the load test; and

ii. the Annual Thorough Examination Certificate issued prior to 01 January 2026 remains valid and is considered as covering the requirements of paragraphs 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 of MSC.1/Circ.1663 for 12 months from the date of the thorough examination.

9.7.7. Where the Load Testing and Annual Thorough Examination were completed prior to 01 January 2026 and the respective Certificate was issued in a different format than that specified in Appendix I to MSC.1/Circ.1663, albeit covering at least the same level of detail, such certificates shall be considered as being valid and equivalent to those issued in the format specified in the Circular. However, where the format of such certificates falls short of covering the level of detail in Appendix I to MSC.1/Circ.1663 or where one or both certificates were not issued, a new Factual Statement shall be issued by the Competent Person in accordance with the requirements outlined in MSC.1/Circ.1696. Such Factual Statements shall remain valid for 5 years from the date of completion of the load test and/or 12 months from the date of thorough examination, respectively.

10. Inoperative lifting appliances, anchor handling winches and defective lifting gear items

10.1. Except when an accident occurs or a defect is discovered, while all reasonable steps shall be taken to maintain lifting appliances and anchor handling winches in working order, malfunctions of that equipment shall not be assumed as making the ship unseaworthy or as a reason for delaying the ship in ports, provided that action has been taken by the Master to take the inoperative lifting appliance or anchor handling winch into account in planning and executing a safe voyage.

10.2. Any part of the lifting appliances on board found to be defective, damaged, or unsafe must be immediately removed from service, clearly tagged or quarantined, and not

used until it is repaired, re-tested, and re-certificated.

10.3. Any worn or damaged lifting gear shall be immediately removed from service, indelibly marked and correctly disposed of at the earliest opportunity. The replacement lifting gear shall be of a similar or equivalent design, fully tested and certificated and of the same SWL. The BMA discourages repairs to worn or damaged lifting gear, but where such repairs are unavoidable, they shall only be undertaken by a competent person based on the manufacturer's repair procedures or other standards acceptable to the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship. Any repairs to lifting gear used on lifting appliances with SWL of over 1000kg shall be verified by the Recognised Organisation.

10.4. ***SOLAS certificated ships***

10.4.1. For all lifting appliances with a SWL of 1000kg and above and anchor handling winches, any defects affecting the SWL or making the equipment inoperable shall be reported to the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship and a temporary exemption sought as per BMA Marine Notice 8.

10.4.2. Whilst out of service, the relevant actions for inoperative equipment outlined under section 5 of MSC.1/Circ. 1663 or MSC.1/Circ. 1662, as appropriate, shall be taken into account to mitigate risks posed. Minor defects not affecting the SWL or operational status of the equipment are not required to be reported.

11. Special consideration of lifting plant installed on certain offshore construction and installation ships.

11.1. As derives from the provisions of Regulation 13-3.1.2.2 of SOLAS Chapter II-1, the Administration may except lifting plant of SWL over 1000kg installed on certain offshore construction and/or installation ships from compliance with the SOLAS Regulations.

11.2. In general, in such cases the Bahamas Regulations continue to apply, however the BMA may consider acceptance of equivalent standards, including those of the State(s) in whose waters the ship operates.

11.3. SOLAS Chapter II-1 does not provide a clear definition of offshore construction and installation ships. The BMA considers that an offshore ship may be considered to qualify for an exception, as per Regulation 13-3.1.2.2 where certain lifting appliances installed on board form a part of project lifting plant equipment and are otherwise not used for lifting or handling cargo, ship's articles, stores and spares or used in ship maintenance or repairs or for any other purpose unrelated to the project activities of the ship.

11.4. In order to consider an exception, the following provisions apply:

i. The standards of design and construction of said project lifting plant equipment shall not be any inferior to those prescribed in SOLAS Chapter II-1 and may be based on industry standards, or those regional or national standards applicable in the area of ship operations. It is the Company's responsibility to ensure the project lifting plant equipment selected for installation on board complies with the required standards.

ii. Where the project lifting plant equipment has been installed on board and the ship operates in waters under the jurisdiction of a coastal State, the associated testing and maintenance procedures and the associated verification provisions may be based on the regulatory regime of the coastal State. Where such testing and maintenance procedures meet the minimum requirements specified in points iii. And iv. below, the BMA can accept these arrangements as grounds for issuing an exception, as per Regulation 3-13.1.2.2.

iii. The minimum requirements of design and construction as well as minimal testing and maintenance provisions shall be not less than those prescribed in the Bahamas Regulations, including the annual thorough examination and the 5 yearly load testing completed by a competent personnel;

iv. For project lifting plant equipment on board ships operating in waters under the jurisdiction of a coastal State the minimum requirements shall include at least an annual thorough examination and 5 yearly load testing to be performed to the satisfaction of, and to standards set by, the competent authority of the coastal State.

11.5. For the purpose of this section, "waters under the jurisdiction of a coastal State" may be accepted as the extent of the respective State's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

11.6. For a ship with the installed project lifting plant equipment covered in paragraph 11.4, the Company may apply the same alternative provisions to lifting plant installed and used for lifting or handling cargo, ship's articles or used in ship maintenance or repairs, such as engine room cranes, workshop cranes, store cranes, cargo cranes and similar, and the BMA may accept this as equivalent compliance under Regulation 5 of SOLAS Chapter I.

11.7. Where requirements outlined in paragraphs 11.4, and optionally 11.6, have been met in full, subject to receiving a supported application from the Recognised Organisation that classes the ship, the BMA will issue a ship specific Statement of Non-Applicability for Regulation 3-13 of SOLAS Chapter II-1 for the project lifting plant equipment and, if

necessary, an Equivalence Acceptance document, with associated GISIS[11] entry, for other lifting plant on board.

11.8. When a ship that has been issued with a Non-Applicability Statement leaves the waters of the respective coastal State, the maintenance, load testing and survey for lifting plant on board shall be covered by the Recognised Organisation based on Regulation 3-13 of SOLAS Chapter II-1, unless otherwise agreed with the BMA.

12. Queries

Any enquiries on this Notice may be addressed to tech@bahamasmaritime.com or any BMA office.

[11] GISIS is the International Maritime Organization Global Integrated Shipping Information System: https://gisis.imo.org

Revision History

Version	Description of Revision
1.0	First Issue
1.1	General revision based on feedback received. Added detailed provisions on Competent Person and Responsible Person, introduced treatment of less-frequently-used lifting plant and clarified when SOLAS II-1/3-13 applies concurrently with Bahamas Regulations, expanded transitional arrangements for load testing, thorough examination and certification completed prior to 01 January 2026, added new section addressing offshore construction and project lifting plant, including criteria for non-applicability and equivalence.