

Merchant Shipping Regulations 2026

Merchant
Shipping Act 2021

An Overview:
What
Shipowners,
Managers and
Yacht Operators
Need to Know



What is The Merchant Shipping Act?

A modernised regulatory
framework for The Bahamas' shipping industry

- ⚓ Global alignment
- ⚓ Competitive registration
- ⚓ Future-ready framework
- ⚓ Greater efficiency
- ⚓ Fleet growth

Registration Regulations

- ⚓ Provides a standalone regulatory instrument to allow quick registration revisions.
- ⚓ Technological advancements.
- ⚓ Clarifies scope of provisional registrations and terminations.

Fees Regulations

A clearer fee framework with more convenient ways to pay

- ⚓ Fees consolidated into one transparent framework
- ⚓ Modernised fee structure following the first comprehensive review in 15 years, aligning charges with current service delivery costs
- ⚓ More convenient payment options, including online payments, e-payments and drawdown accounts

Marine Safety Investigation Regulations

- ⚓ Legal clarity for the purpose and scope of marine safety investigations.
- ⚓ Align national legislation with the IMO Casualty Investigation Code.
- ⚓ Strengthen powers and independence of marine investigator.
- ⚓ Mandatory reporting and evidence preservation
- ⚓ Defined process, including cost recovery

Flag State Inspections Regulations

- ⚓ Standalone regulations to allow timely revision of flag state inspection requirements.
- ⚓ Provides for exemptions and flexibility on inspection intervals in the future.
- ⚓ Provide enforcement mechanism where inspection requirements are not satisfied.

Load Line and Tonnage Regulations

- ⚓ Standalone regulations to allow timely updates in line with amendments to international conventions.
- ⚓ Update and modernise domestic requirements for load line and tonnage
- ⚓ Clarity on enforcement provisions and update penalties
- ⚓ Define application of requirements to ships operating in Bahamian waters.

Maritime Labour Convention and Training, Certification, Manning and Watchkeeping Regulations

- ⚓ Update national seafarer requirements to align with industry standards.
- ⚓ Clarify key definitions.
- ⚓ Apply MLC 2006 requirements to non-Bahamian ships in Bahamian waters.
- ⚓ Provide for the acceptance of technological advancements.
- ⚓ Introduce alcohol policy provisions.

Yacht Regulations

- ⚓ Updated national yacht-related standards
- ⚓ Establish application of approved Yacht Code and BMA Yacht Notices
- ⚓ Provide for the acceptance of equivalent arrangement and prescribe penalties for non-compliance.



Questions about the new Merchant Shipping Regulations 2026?

Contact your BMA representative for support.

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The Bahamas
Maritime Authority