



EXTRAORDINARY
OFFICIAL GAZETTE
THE BAHAMAS
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

NASSAU

1st April, 2026

(A)

MERCHANT SHIPPING (TRAINING, CERTIFICATION, MANNING AND WATCHKEEPING) REGULATIONS, 2026

Arrangement of Regulations

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**MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 2021
(NO. 33 OF 2021)**

**MERCHANT SHIPPING (TRAINING, CERTIFICATION,
MANNING AND WATCHKEEPING) REGULATIONS, 2026**

The Minister, in exercise of the powers conferred under sections 59 and 227 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2021 makes the following regulations —

PART I - PRELIMINARY

1. Citation and commencement.

- (1) These Regulations may be cited as the Merchant Shipping (Training, Certification, Manning and Watchkeeping) Regulations, 2026.
- (2) These Regulations shall come into force on the 1st day of April, 2026.

2. Interpretation.

In these Regulations —

“**able bodied seafarer**” means a rating qualified in accordance with Regulation II/5 or Regulation III/5 of the Convention;

“**Act**” means the Merchant Shipping Act, 2021 (*No. 33 of 2021*);

“**appropriate certificate**” means a certificate issued and endorsed in accordance with the Act and these Regulations;

“**Authority**” means The Bahamas Maritime Authority as defined in section 3 of The Bahamas Maritime Authority Act (*Ch. 283*);

“**BCH Code**” means the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk;

“**certificate of competency**” means a certificate issued to a person under Part III showing their competency as a master or crew;

“**certificate of proficiency**” means a certificate issued to a person under Part III showing their proficiency as a master or crew;

“**chemical tanker**” means a ship constructed or adapted and used for the carriage in bulk of any liquid product listed in the BCH Code and the IBC Code;

“**constructed**” means a vessel —

- (a) the keel of which is laid; or
- (b) construction of which has commenced comprising at least 50 tonnes or 1 per cent of the estimated mass of all structural material, whichever is the less;

“crew” means the persons employed on board a ship including seafarers;

“electronic certificate” means a certificate issued in an electronic format;

“electronic signature” means data in electronic form to serve as a method of authentication of the issuer and contents of the electronic data;

“GC Code” means the Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk;

“GMDSS” means the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System;

“gross tonnage” means, for a ship having its tonnage determined, the measurement of a ship calculated in accordance with the –

- (a) International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969;
- (b) regulations relating to tonnage measurement;

“hazardous cargo” means a cargo which is or may be explosive, combustible, flammable, toxic, health-threatening or capable of polluting the environment;

“high-speed craft” means a craft capable of a maximum speed, in metres per second (m/s), equal to or exceeding: $3.7V^{0.1667}$ where: V = volume of displacement corresponding to the design waterline (m³), excluding craft the hull of which is supported completely clear above the water surface in non-displacement mode by aerodynamic forces generated by ground effect;

“IBC Code” means the 1994 edition of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Chemicals in Bulk, as amended, published by the International Maritime Organisation;

“IGC Code” means the 1993 edition of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk, as amended, published by the International Maritime Organisation;

“IGF Code” means the International Code of safety for Ships using Gases or other Low-Flashpoint Fuels;

“Information Notice” means a notice issued by the Authority providing additional information and guidance;

“inspector” means a person appointed under section 180;

“ISPS Code” means the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code;

“length” means the greater distance of the following distances —

- (a) the distance between the fore side of the stem and the axis of the rudder stock; or
- (b) ninety-six per cent of the distance between the fore side of the stem and the aft side of the stern;

the points and measurements being taken respectively at and along a waterline at eighty-five per cent of the least moulded depth of the ship; and for a ship having a rake of keel, the waterline shall be parallel to the designed waterline;

“liquefied gas tanker” means a ship constructed or adapted and used in the carriage of any liquefied gas or other product listed in the GC Code or the IGC Code;

“master” has the meaning assigned to it under the Act;

“near-coastal voyage” means a voyage which is made within the Caribbean Trading Area;

“officer” means a member of the crew with designated responsibilities aligned with a seafarer’s employment agreement in accordance with the Maritime Labour Convention 2006;

“oil tanker” means a ship constructed or adapted primarily to carry oil in bulk in its cargo spaces and includes a combination carrier when it is carrying a cargo or part cargo of oil in bulk;

“passenger ship” means a ship carrying more than twelve passengers;

“pleasure craft” means a vessel primarily used for sport or recreation;

“propulsion power” means the total maximum continuous rated output power in kilowatts of all the ship's main propulsion power as stated on the ship's certificate of registry or other official document;

“Polar Code” means the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters;

“rating” means a member of the ship's crew other than the master or an officer;

“ro-ro passenger ship” means a passenger ship with ro-ro cargo spaces or special category spaces as defined in Chapter 11-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974;

“Marine Notice” means a notice issued by the Authority providing additional technical instructions and requirements;

“minimum safe manning document” means a document, specifying the minimum manning level, issued —

(a) for a Bahamian ship, by The Bahamas Maritime Authority;
and

(b) for any other ship, by the Administration of the flag State;

“seafarer” includes the master and crew;

“seagoing” means going beyond the territorial waters of The Bahamas;

“STCW Code” means the Seafarers’ Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code adopted by the 2010 Conference of Parties to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978;

“STCW Convention” means the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978;

“tanker” means a chemical tanker, a liquefied gas tanker or an oil tanker;

“unique tracking number” means a series of numbers, letters or symbols used as an identifier to distinguish an electronic certificate issued by an Administration or its representative from any other electronic certificate issued by the same Administration or its representative;

“Yacht” has the meaning assigned to existing and new yachts under the Merchant Shipping (Yachts) Regulations;

“Yacht Certificate of Competency” means a certificate of competency or proficiency issued in accordance with a Marine Notice;

“Yacht Certificate of Proficiency” means a certificate of proficiency issued in accordance with a Marine Notice.

PART II - TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

3. Application.

This Part applies to masters and crew employed on ships registered in The Bahamas and engaged in near coastal navigation, or whose voyages exceed near coastal navigation, other than —

- (a) fishing vessels;
- (b) non-commercial yachts; and
- (c) vessels registered and manned under the Boat Registration Act.

4. Qualification as an officer.

A person is qualified to work on board ships, if the person holds a certificate of competency or licence in one of the following capacities —

- (a) master;

- (b) chief mate;
- (c) officer in charge of a navigational watch;
- (d) chief engineer officer;
- (e) second engineer officer;
- (f) officer in charge of an engineering watch;
- (g) electro-technical officer; or
- (h) GMDSS radio operator.

5. Recognition of certificate.

- (1) The Authority may recognise a certificate issued by the Authority of another Party to the STCW Convention, to a master, officer, GMDSS radio operator, electro-technical officer or any other trained person, if the Authority is satisfied that —
 - (a) the requirements of the STCW Convention, STCW Code or other relevant Convention or Code as applied by The Bahamas concerning standards of competence, standards of proficiency, the issue and endorsement of certificates, and record keeping are fully complied with; and
 - (b) prompt notification will be given to the Authority of any significant change in the arrangements for training and certification provided in compliance with the STCW Convention.
- (2) Where the Authority recognises a certificate pursuant to paragraph (1), the Authority may endorse such certificate to attest its recognition, if the Authority is satisfied that the requirements of the STCW Convention or the STCW Code have been complied with.
- (3) An endorsement referred to under paragraph (2), shall be in the form set out in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.

6. Revalidation of certificate, licence and endorsement.

- (1) A certificate, licence and an endorsement issued to masters, officers and other trained persons under regulations 4 and 5 shall not be valid for seagoing service unless revalidated at intervals not exceeding five years.
- (2) A certificate referred to in regulation 9 granted pursuant to the Merchant Shipping (Radio Installations) Regulations 1992 shall not be valid for seagoing service unless revalidated at intervals not exceeding five years.
- (3) A master and an officer shall, for continuing seagoing service on ships referred to in regulations 9 - 14, successfully complete refresher training as specified by the Authority.

7. Appropriate certificate.

- (1) An officer serving in a capacity specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority, shall hold an appropriate certificate for that capacity.
- (2) A person shall only be entitled to be issued an appropriate certificate if that person complies with the criteria in the regulations annexed to the STCW Convention as specified in column two of the table in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.
- (3) A person assigned shipboard safety, security or environmental protection shall have received training or instruction for the specific task, and an appropriate certificate or documentary evidence of the training shall be required.
- (4) A certificate of proficiency or documentary evidence shall contain —
 - (a) the name and signature of the duly authorised official;
 - (b) the certificate number;
 - (c) the name and date of birth of the holder of the certificate;
 - (d) the signature of the holder of the certificate;
 - (e) the title of the certificate;
 - (f) the number of the STCW Convention regulation or STCW Code section under which the holder of the certificate was qualified;
 - (g) the date of issue of the certificate;
 - (h) the date of expiry of the certificate;
 - (i) a photograph of the holder of the certificate; and
 - (j) any other information that the Authority deems necessary.
- (5) A certificate of proficiency shall be in the form in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority with such variations as the circumstances require.
- (6) A —
 - (a) certificate of competency, proficiency or endorsement;
 - (b) Seafarer's Record Book; or
 - (c) any other certificate as determined by the Administration,may be issued in electronic form with the electronic signature of the issuer.
- (7) In the case of certificate or document referred to in paragraph (6), no official seal, photograph, or signature of the seafarer shall be required and the verification of such shall be effected by means of an application, approved data storage, unique tracking number, seafarer identification number, or Quick Response (QR) code, or any combination thereof.

- (8) A seafarer who holds a valid electronic certificate issued in accordance with this section, shall be deemed to hold an original certificate.

8. Ratings.

- (1) A rating forming part of a navigational watch on a ship of 500 gross tonnage or more, other than ratings under training and ratings whose duties while on watch are of an unskilled nature, shall hold a certificate as —
- (a) an able seafarer deck that complies with the criteria specified in regulation 11/5.2;
 - (b) a navigational watch rating that complies with the criteria specified in regulation 11/4.2,
- in the Annex to the STCW Convention.
- (2) A rating forming part of an engine-room watch or designated to perform duties in a periodically unmanned engine-room on a ship powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more, other than ratings under training and ratings whose duties are of an unskilled nature, shall hold a certificate as an —
- (a) able seafarer engine that complies with the criteria specified in regulation 111/5.2;
 - (b) engine-room watch rating that complies with the criteria specified in regulation 111/4.2,
- in the Annex to the STCW Convention.
- (3) An electro-technical rating serving on a seagoing ship powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more, other than ratings under training and ratings whose duties are of an unskilled nature, shall hold a certificate that complies with the criteria specified in regulation 111/7.2 in the Annex to the STCW Convention.

9. GMDSS radio operator.

A person is qualified as a GMDSS radio operator, if the person —

- (a) is at least eighteen years of age;
- (b) has completed approved education and training; and
- (c) meets the standard of competence specified in section A-IV/2 of the STCW Code.

10. Training and qualifications of master, officer and other personnel on tanker.

- (1) An officer assigned specific duties and responsibilities related to cargo or cargo equipment on a tanker shall have completed an approved basic training or approved seagoing service required by the STCW Code and specified in a Marine Notice for the tanker on which the officer serves.
- (2) A master, chief engineer officer, chief mate, second engineer officer and any person with immediate responsibility for loading, discharging and care in transit or handling of cargo on tankers shall, in addition to meeting the requirements of paragraph (1), have —
 - (a) sufficient experience determined by the Authority; and
 - (b) completed the approved advanced training in accordance with the STCW Code and specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority,appropriate to their duties on the tanker on which they serve.
- (3) A master and an officer shall not be qualified in accordance with paragraph (1) or (2) unless they hold an appropriate certificate or their existing certificate is endorsed in the manner provided under these regulations.
- (4) Where —
 - (a) training is completed by a person other than a person referred to under paragraphs (1) and (2); and
 - (b) the training is not included in the qualifications for a certificate or license to be issued,a separate certificate of proficiency or documentary evidence, which indicates that the holder of the certificate has attended a course in basic training shall be required.

11. Training and qualifications of master, officer, rating and other personnel on passenger ship.

- (1) This regulation applies to masters, officers, ratings and other personnel serving on board a passenger ship including a ro-ro passenger ship.
- (2) A seafarer shall complete the training required by paragraphs (4) to (7) in accordance with their capacity, duties and responsibilities before being assigned shipboard duties on a passenger ship.
- (3) A seafarer, who is required to be trained in accordance with paragraphs (4), (5) and (6) shall, at intervals not exceeding five years, undertake appropriate refresher training as specified by the Authority.

- (4) A master, officer and any other personnel designated on muster lists to assist passengers in emergency situations shall have completed training in crowd management as specified in section A-V/2, paragraph 1 of the STCW Code.
- (5) A master, chief engineer officer, chief mate, second engineer officer and any person designated on muster lists as having responsibility for the safety of passengers in emergency situations on board passenger ships shall have completed approved training in crisis management and human behaviour as specified in section A-V/2, paragraph 3 of the STCW Code.
- (6) The personnel providing direct service to passengers in passenger spaces shall have completed the safety training specified in section A-V/2, paragraph 2 of the STCW Code.
- (7) A master, chief engineer officer, chief mate, second engineer officer and any person assigned immediate responsibility for embarking and disembarking passengers, loading, discharging or securing cargo, or closing hull openings on board a ro-ro passenger ship shall complete approved training in passenger safety, cargo safety and hull integrity as specified in section A-V/2, paragraph 4 of the STCW Code.

12. Training and qualifications of masters, officers, ratings and other personnel on ships subject to the IGF Code.

- (1) This regulation applies to masters, officers, ratings and other personnel serving on board ships subject to the IGF Code.
- (2) A seafarer shall complete the training required by paragraphs 4 to 9 in STCW Regulation V/3 in accordance with their capacity, duties and responsibilities before being assigned shipboard duties on board a ship subject to the IGF Code.
- (3) A seafarer responsible for designated safety duties associated with the care, use or in emergency response to the fuel on board a ship subject to the IGF Code shall hold a certificate of proficiency in basic training for service on the ship issued by the Authority.
- (4) A master, engineer officer and personnel, with immediate responsibility for the care and use of fuels and fuel systems on a ship subject to the IGF Code, shall hold a certificate of proficiency in advanced training for service on the ship issued by the Authority.
- (5) The training referred to under this regulation shall be approved by the Authority, and documentary evidence of successful completion of the training shall be required prior to issuing a certificate of competency by the Authority.

13. Training and qualifications of masters and officers, ships subject to the Polar Code that are trading in polar areas.

- (1) A master, chief mate and officer in charge of a navigational watch on a ship operating in polar waters shall hold a certificate of proficiency issued by the Authority in basic training for the ship as required by the STCW.
- (2) A candidate for a certificate in basic training for a ship operating in polar waters shall have completed an approved basic training for the ship and —
 - (a) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-V/4, paragraph 1, of the STCW Code; and
 - (b) the Authority shall issue a certificate of proficiency.
- (3) A master and chief mate on a ship operating in polar waters, shall hold a certificate of proficiency issued by the Authority in advanced training for the ship as required by the STCW.
- (4) A candidate for a certificate in advanced training for a ship operating in polar waters shall —
 - (a) meet the requirements for certification in basic training for the ship;
 - (b) have at least two months of approved seagoing service in the deck department, at management level or while performing watchkeeping duties at the operational level, within polar waters or other equivalent approved seagoing service; and
 - (c) have completed approved advanced training for the ship and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-V/4, paragraph 2 of the STCW Code.

14. Training and qualifications of master, officer, rating and other personnel on high-speed craft.

- (1) This regulation applies to masters, officers, ratings and other personnel serving on high-speed craft constructed on or after 1st January, 1996.
- (2) A master and officer with an operational role shall complete training in accordance with section 18.3 of the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft before being assigned shipboard duties on a high-speed craft.
- (3) The training referred to in this regulation shall be approved by the Authority, and documentary evidence of successful completion of the training shall be required.

15. Familiarisation training and instruction, basic safety training and instruction.

- (1) A seafarer shall receive familiarisation training in personal survival techniques or receive sufficient information and instruction in accordance

with paragraph 1 of section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code before being assigned to shipboard duties.

- (2) Where familiarisation training is pursuant to paragraph (1), the training shall be approved by the Authority.
- (3) A seafarer with designated safety or pollution prevention duties in the operation of a ship shall have completed appropriate basic safety training or received appropriate basic safety instruction in accordance with paragraph 2 of section A-VI/1 of the STCW Code before being assigned to any such duties.
- (4) Where basic safety training is pursuant to paragraph (3), the training shall be approved by the Authority.
- (5) Where training is completed in accordance with this regulation and the training is not included in the qualifications for a certificate or licence to be issued, a separate certificate of proficiency or documentary evidence, which indicates that the holder of the certificate has attended a course of training in basic safety shall be required.

16. Training in survival craft, rescue boat and fast rescue boat.

- (1) A person designated to launch or take charge of survival craft or rescue boats other than fast rescue boats shall have a certificate of proficiency in the craft.
- (2) No person shall be issued a certificate of proficiency, unless the person meets the criteria specified in regulation VI/2.1 in the Annex to the STCW Convention.
- (3) A person designated to launch or take charge of fast rescue boats shall have a certificate of proficiency in the boats.
- (4) No person shall be granted a certificate referred to in paragraph (3), unless the person meets the criteria in regulation VI/2.2 in the Annex to the STCW Convention.
- (5) For the purposes of this regulation —
 - “**survival craft**” means a craft capable of sustaining the lives of persons in distress from the time of abandoning the ship;
 - “**rescue boat**” means a boat designed to rescue persons in distress and to marshal survival crafts;
 - “**fast rescue boat**” means a rescue boat which —
 - (a) is not less than 6 metres and not more than 8.5 metres in length; and
 - (b) is capable of maneuvering for at least 4 hours at a speed of at least 20 knots in calm water with a qualified crew of three

persons and at least 8 knots with a full complement of persons and equipment.

17. Training in advanced fire-fighting.

- (1) A seafarer designated to control fire-fighting operations shall —
 - (a) have successfully completed advanced training in techniques for fighting fire in accordance with section A-VI /3 of the STCW Code; and
 - (b) meet the standards of competence specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.
- (2) Where training in advanced fire-fighting is not included in the qualifications for a certificate or licence to be issued, a separate certificate of proficiency or documentary evidence, which indicates that the holder of the certificate has attended a course of training in advanced fire-fighting shall be required.

18. Training in medical first aid and medical care.

- (1) A seafarer designated to provide medical first aid on board a ship shall meet the standard of competence in medical first aid as specified in paragraphs 1 to 3 of section A-VI/4 of the STCW Code and specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.
- (2) A seafarer designated to take charge of medical care on board a ship shall meet the standard of competence in medical care as specified in paragraphs 4 to 6 of section A-VI/4 of the STCW Code and specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.
- (3) Where training in medical first aid or medical care is not included in the qualifications for a certificate or license to be issued, a certificate of proficiency or documentary evidence, which indicates that the holder of the certificate has attended a course of training in medical first aid or medical care shall be required.

19. Training in security.

- (1) A person designated as a ship security officer shall have completed security training as specified in regulation VI/5.1 in the Annex to the STCW Convention and a certificate of proficiency which indicates that the holder of the certificate has attended a course of training in security shall be required.
- (2) A seafarer on board a ship to which the ISPS Code is applicable shall, prior to being assigned any such duty —
 - (a) have received security-related familiarization;

- (b) have completed security-awareness training or received instruction in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 4 of section A-VI/6 of the STCW Code; and
 - (c) meet the standards specified in the STCW Code.
- (3) A seafarer with designated security duties shall meet the standards of competence specified in paragraphs 6 to 8 of section A-VI/6 of the STCW Code.
- (4) Where training in security is not included in the qualifications for a certificate or licence to be issued, a certificate of proficiency shall be required.

20. Validity, record and surrender of certificate, licence or endorsement.

- (1) A certificate, licence and endorsement issued under these Regulations shall be issued by the Authority on receipt of a fee payable, and delivered to the person applying for that certificate, licence or endorsement.
- (2) A certificate, license or endorsement shall remain valid for seagoing service only so long as the holder can comply with the standards and conditions as to medical fitness and professional competency or proficiency to act in the appropriate capacity specified by the Authority.
- (3) A record of all certificates, licences and endorsements issued under this Part, or which have expired or re-validated, suspended, cancelled or reported lost or destroyed and any alteration of or any other matter affecting the certificate, licence or endorsement shall be kept by the Authority.
- (4) Where a holder of a certificate is issued with an appropriate certificate at a higher level, the holder shall surrender the first mentioned certificate to the Authority for cancellation.
- (5) Where —
 - (a) a person is convicted of an offence under section 62 of the Act; or
 - (b) a certificate, licence or endorsement is issued and the conditions for its issuance under this Part, or specified by the Authority have not been complied with,
 then the holder of the relevant certificate, licence or endorsement shall deliver that certificate, licence or endorsement to such person as directed by the Authority for cancellation.

21. Refusal to issue or revalidate certificate, licence or endorsement.

- (1) Notwithstanding that an applicant for a certificate of competency, certificate of proficiency, license or endorsement complies with the

standards or fulfills the conditions specified under this Part, the Authority shall not issue or re-validate the certificate, licence or endorsement applied for unless satisfied, having regard to all the relevant circumstances, that the applicant is a fit person to be the holder of the certificate, licence or endorsement and to act in the capacity to which it relates.

- (2) Where the Authority intends to refuse to issue or re-validate a certificate of competency, certificate of proficiency, licence or endorsement, the Authority shall give notice in writing to the applicant, who shall be entitled, before a date specified in the notice, to require the application to be reviewed at an inquiry.
- (3) Where an applicant, before the date mentioned in paragraph (2), has required his case to be reviewed at an inquiry, the Authority shall cause an inquiry to be held by one or more persons appointed by the Authority.

22. Approval of training and seagoing service.

- (1) A company shall submit a written request to the Authority to issue an appropriate certificate, where the approval of training or seagoing service is required.
- (2) The Authority may grant an approval to a company referred to in paragraph (1), if satisfied that the required standards of training under the STCW Convention, STCW Code or other relevant Convention or Code, have been complied with.
- (3) Detailed requirements for an approval granted pursuant to paragraph (2) shall be issued in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority.

PART III - MANNING

23. Application.

This Part applies to —

- (a) seagoing ships which are registered in The Bahamas wherever they may be, except ships registered under the Boat Registration Act; and
- (b) other ships when in the territorial waters of The Bahamas, but does not apply to fishing vessels or pleasure crafts.

24. Responsibilities of company, master and others.

- (1) A company shall ensure that —

- (a) a seafarer assigned to any of its ships holds an appropriate certificate in respect of any function that seafarer is to perform on that ship;
 - (b) a seafarer on any of its ships has the training specified in Part II, in respect of any function that seafarer is to perform on that ship; and
 - (c) documentation and data relevant to a seafarer employed on its ship are maintained and readily available for inspection and include, documentation and data on their experience, training, medical fitness, proficiency and competency in assigned duties.
- (2) Nothing in paragraph (1) shall prohibit the allocation of tasks for training under supervision or in case of *force majeure*.
- (3) A company shall provide written instructions to the master setting out the policies and procedures for seafarers who are newly employed on board its ship.
- (4) The policies and procedures referred to in paragraph (3) shall include —
 - (a) allocation of a reasonable period of time during which each newly employed seafarer will have an opportunity to become acquainted with the —
 - (i) specific equipment the seafarer will be using or operating; and
 - (ii) ship-specific watchkeeping, safety, security, environmental protection and emergency procedures and arrangements that the seafarer needs to know to perform the assigned duties properly; and
 - (b) designation of a master and a knowledgeable crew member who will be responsible for ensuring that an opportunity is provided to each newly employed seafarer to receive essential information in a language the seafarer understands.

25. Minimum safe manning document.

- (1) A company shall ensure that, in relation to every cargo ship of 500 gross tonnage or more, passenger ships and any other ship as determined by the Authority —
 - (a) a minimum safe manning document is in force in respect of the ship and the manning of the ship;
 - (b) a minimum safe manning document is kept on board the ship at all times; and
 - (c) the manning of the ship is maintained at all times at levels not lower than those specified in the minimum safe manning document.

- (2) No ship shall proceed to sea unless —
 - (a) there is on board a valid safe manning document issued in respect of the ship; and
 - (b) the manning of the ship complies with that document.
- (3) A company applying for a minimum safe manning document in respect of a ship registered in The Bahamas shall —
 - (a) submit to the Authority a proposal as to the numbers and grade of personnel the company determines to be sufficient for the ship to be safely manned; and
 - (b) in preparing the proposal under subparagraph (a), take into account any guidance issued by the Authority and the International Maritime Organisation.
- (4) A company shall, after issue of a minimum safe manning document, promptly notify the Authority of any changes to that document.

PART IV - WATCHKEEPING

26. Application.

This Part applies to —

- (a) seagoing ships which are registered in The Bahamas wherever they may be; and
- (b) other ships when in the territorial waters of The Bahamas, but does not apply to fishing vessels or pleasure crafts.

27. General duty of company, employer and master.

- (1) Subject to regulation 29 —
 - (a) a company or an employer shall ensure that the master and seamen do not work more hours than is safe in relation to the safety of the ship and the master's and seamen's performance of their duties; and
 - (b) a master shall ensure that the seamen do not work more hours than is safe in relation to the safety of the ship and the seamen's performance of their duties.
- (2) An owner shall establish procedures for the purpose of preventing alcohol abuse and any seafarer who contravenes any of the procedures commits an offence.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph (2), “**alcohol abuse**” means the consumption of alcohol resulting in —

- (a) a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) exceeding 0.05% or a breath alcohol concentration exceeding 0.25 mg/l; or
- (b) any level of alcohol consumption that impairs masters, officers and other seafarers in the performance of designated safety, security and marine environmental protection duties.

28. Duties of master and seafarer.

A master or a seafarer shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that he is properly rested when commencing duty on a ship and that he obtains adequate rest during the periods when he is off duty.

29. Schedule of duty and rest period.

- (1) A company shall produce a schedule of duties and rest periods for masters and seamen.
- (2) A schedule complies with this regulation, where that schedule —
 - (a) sets out the hours of work and rest periods for the master and seamen whose work include regular watchkeeping duties and designated safety, security and prevention of pollution duties in accordance with the provisions of section A-VIII/1 of the STCW Code;
 - (b) specifies the periods of watchkeeping, the rest periods between watches, and the total daily and weekly periods of watchkeeping and rest periods;
 - (c) provides a minimum of 10 hours of rest in any 24-hour period and 77 hours in any 7-day period.
 - (d) subject to subparagraph (c), the hours of rest may be divided into not more than two periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours in length and the intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours.
- (3) Notwithstanding paragraph (2)(c), the required hours of rest may be —
 - (a) reduced on condition that the rest period is not less than 70 hours in any 7-day period and shall not extend beyond two consecutive weeks and the intervals between two periods of exceptions on board shall not be less than twice the duration of the exception; and
 - (b) divided into not more than three periods, one of which shall be at least 6 hours in length and neither of the other two periods shall be less than one hour in length and shall not extend beyond two 24-hour periods in any 7-day period and the intervals between consecutive periods of rest shall not exceed 14 hours.

- (6) A company shall ensure that the schedule is displayed on the ship to which it relates in a position accessible to the crew.
- (7) A master shall —
 - (a) ensure that the rest periods provided for are not less than the periods specified in a Marine Notice issued by the Authority; and
 - (b) maintain a copy of the schedule and a record of all deviations from its requirements for rest periods for a period of two years from the date the schedule was introduced, and make the copies and records available for inspection by an inspector.
- (8) A master or a person authorised by him shall keep record of a seafarer's hours of rest and the record shall be signed by the seafarer and master or a person authorised by him at least once each month.

30. Exception for emergencies.

- (1) The requirements for rest periods specified in regulation 29(2) need not be maintained in case of an emergency or in other overriding operational conditions.
- (2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), a master or a seafarer may participate in a navigational, engine-room or machinery watch although he has not had the rest period provided by the schedule produced pursuant to regulation 29, and the master may exceed, and a seafarer may be required to exceed, the schedule's work or duty periods, where in the opinion of the master it is necessary in an emergency threatening the safety of the ship or the life of any person or threatening damage to property or the environment.
- (3) Pursuant to paragraph (1), where the master or seafarer has worked within a rest period prescribed by the schedule, his name shall be entered in the record required to be maintained by regulation 29 together with the reason for so working.

31. Arrangements for watchkeeping.

- (1) A master shall ensure that the watchkeeping arrangements for the ship are at all times adequate for maintaining safe navigational and engineering watches in accordance with Chapter VIII of section A of the STCW Code.
- (2) Without prejudice to the duties of the master under paragraph (1), the master shall give directions to the deck navigational watchkeeping officers responsible for navigating the ship safely during their periods of duty, in accordance with Part 3-1 of section A-VIII/2 of the STCW Code and any requirements specified by the Authority.

- (3) A chief engineer officer shall ensure that the engineering watchkeeping arrangements for the ship are at all times adequate for maintaining a safe watch, in accordance with Part 3-2 of section A-VIII/2 of the STCW Code, and when deciding the composition of the watch shall observe the principles specified in Part 3-2 of that section and any requirements specified by the Authority.

32. Watchkeeping arrangements in port.

- (1) A master of a ship which is safely moored or safely at anchor under normal circumstances in port shall arrange for an appropriate and effective watch to be maintained.
- (2) The arrangements referred to in paragraph (1), shall be in accordance with Part 4 of section A-VIII/2 of the STCW Code and any operational guidance issued by the Authority.

33. Watchkeeping arrangements in port for ship carrying hazardous cargo.

- (1) A master of a ship which is carrying hazardous cargo and which is in port, even when safely moored or safely at anchor, shall, in addition to any watchkeeping arrangements required under regulations 31 and 32, in the case of —
 - (a) a ship carrying hazardous cargo in bulk, ensure that a safe deck watch and safe engineering watch are maintained by the ready availability on board of duly qualified officers, and ratings, where appropriate; and
 - (b) a ship carrying hazardous cargo other than in bulk, ensure that in organising safe watchkeeping arrangements, he takes account of the nature, quantity, packing and stowage of the hazardous cargo and of any special conditions on board, afloat and ashore.
- (2) The watchkeeping arrangements referred to in paragraph (1), shall take account of any principles and requirements specified by the Authority.

34. Carriage of documents.

Without prejudice to regulation 24, a company and master shall ensure that there are carried at all times on board a ship all original certificates and other documents issued pursuant to the STCW Convention and other relevant international requirements indicating the qualification of any member of the crew to perform functions which they are required to perform aboard the ship in the course of their designated duties.

35. Inspection of foreign registered ship.

- (1) An inspector may inspect any ship which is not a Bahamian ship for the purposes of —
 - (a) verifying that seamen or persons serving on board, who are required to be certificated, hold valid appropriate certificates;
 - (b) verifying that the number of persons serving on board comply with the safe manning requirements; and
 - (c) assessing the ability of the seamen on the ship to maintain the watchkeeping standards required by these Regulations, where there are grounds for believing that such standards are not being maintained because, while in a port in The Bahamas or in the approaches to that port, any of the following has occurred —
 - (i) the ship has been involved in a collision, grounding or stranding;
 - (ii) there has been an unlawful discharge of substances from the ship when underway, at anchor or at a berth;
 - (iii) the ship has been maneuvered in an erratic or unsafe manner, or navigational course markers or traffic separation schemes have not been followed; or
 - (iv) the ship has otherwise been operated in such manner as to pose a danger to persons, property or the environment.
- (2) Where an inspector finds on inspection any deficiency specified in paragraph (3), the inspector shall notify in writing, the master of the ship, and in the case of a ship registered outside The Bahamas, the nearest maritime, consular or diplomatic representative of the flag State.
- (3) For the purposes of paragraph (2) a deficiency is —
 - (a) a failure of any seafarer, required to hold an appropriate certificate, to have a valid appropriate certificate or valid exemption or dispensation from that requirement;
 - (b) a failure to comply with the safe manning document;
 - (c) a failure of navigational or engineering watch arrangements to conform to the requirements specified for the ship by the competent authority of the country in which the ship is registered;
 - (d) absence on watch of a person qualified to operate equipment essential to safe navigation, safety radio communications or the prevention of marine pollution;
 - (e) an inability of the master to provide adequately rested persons or persons who are otherwise fit for duty for the first watch at the commencement of a voyage and for subsequent relieving watches;

- (f) a failure to provide proof of professional proficiency for the duties assigned to seafarers for the safety of the ship and the prevention of pollution.

36. Power to detain ship.

Where it is found that —

- (a) in relation to a Bahamian ship, there is any contravention of these Regulations; or
- (b) in relation to a foreign ship, there is —
 - (i) any contravention of regulations 24, 31, 32, 33; or
 - (ii) a failure to correct a deficiency specified in regulation 35(3) after notification to a master pursuant to regulation 35(2), and there is in consequence a danger to persons, property or the environment,

the ship may be detained if it is a foreign ship or the certificate of registry suspended if it is a Bahamian ship in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

PART V - MISCELLANEOUS

37. Guidance on training, certification, manning and watchkeeping.

The Authority may provide guidance on training, certification, manning and watchkeeping in a Marine Notice or Information Notice issued by the Authority.

38. Penalties.

- (1) An owner which contravenes regulation 24(1) or (3), 25(1), 27(1), 29(1) or (6) or 34 commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.
- (2) A master who contravenes regulations 10, 24(5), 27, 28, 29(7) - (9), 30(2), 31(1) - (2), 32 - 34 commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.
- (3) A chief engineer officer who contravenes regulation 31(3) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.
- (4) An employer who contravenes regulation 27(1) commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars.
- (5) A seafarer who contravenes regulation 27(2) or 28 commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred dollars.

- (6) It shall be a defence for a person charged with an offence under these regulations, that he took all reasonable steps to avoid commission of the offence.
- (7) In any proceedings for an offence under these regulations consisting of a failure to do something as far as is reasonably practicable, it shall be the duty of the accused to prove that it was not reasonably practicable to do more than was in fact done to satisfy the duty or requirement.

39. Exemptions and dispensations.

The Authority may grant, on such terms, if any, as the Authority may specify, exemptions and dispensations from any or all of the provisions of these Regulations for classes or individual cases.

40. Revocation of Sub. Leg., Vol. IV, Ch. 268 – p. 66.

The Merchant Shipping (Training, Certification, Manning and Watchkeeping) Regulations¹ are revoked.

Made this 1st day of April, 2026.

Signed
JOBETH COLEBY-DAVIS
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS

¹ S.I. No. 111 of 2011.