



EXTRAORDINARY
OFFICIAL GAZETTE
THE BAHAMAS
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

NASSAU

1st April, 2026

(A)

MERCHANT SHIPPING (YACHTS) REGULATIONS, 2026

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

MERCHANT SHIPPING (YACHTS) REGULATIONS, 2026

The Minister, in exercise of the powers conferred under section 227(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2021 makes the following regulations —

1. Citation and commencement.

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

2. Interpretation.

In these Regulations —

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

“**Authority**” means The Bahamas Maritime Authority established under section 3 of The Bahamas Maritime Authority Act (*Ch. 283*);

“**company**” means, in respect of a yacht where —

- (a) the ISM Code applies, the owner of the yacht or any organisation or person such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has —
 - (i) assumed the responsibility for operation of the yacht from the owner; and
 - (ii) agreed to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed by the ISM Code;
- (b) the ISM Code do not apply, the managing owner;

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

“**ISM Code**” means the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (International Safety Management Code) 1993;

“**length**” has the meaning as defined in the International Convention on Load Lines 1966, and the Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966;

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

“Safety Convention” means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974, and the Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974;

“yacht” has the meaning ascribed in the yacht codes referred to in Marine Notice 98;

“Yacht Notice” means a notice issued by the Authority.

3. Application.

- (1) These Regulations apply to a yacht registered under the Act.
- (2) The Authority may exempt from these Regulations any yacht —
 - (a) that embodies features of a novel kind where the development of the features and their incorporation in yachts engaged on international voyages might be seriously impeded if the yacht had to comply with all the requirements of these Regulations;
 - (b) plying on international voyages between near neighbouring ports, if the Authority is satisfied that the sheltered nature and condition of the voyages makes it unreasonable to comply with these Regulations;
 - (c) of less than 500 gross tonnage;
 - (d) that does not ply on international voyages; or
 - (e) that does not ply on international voyages but is, in exceptional circumstances, required to undertake a single international voyage.
- (3) Where a yacht is exempted under paragraph (2), an exemption certificate shall be issued by the Authority and shall —
 - (a) state the conditions with which the yacht is to comply; and
 - (b) be available on the yacht for inspection at all times.

4. Compliance with yacht codes and notices.

- (1) A yacht to which these Regulations apply shall be regulated in accordance with applicable yacht codes referred to in Marine Notice 98 issued by the Authority.
- (2) A company and the master of a yacht shall ensure compliance with —
 - (a) relevant Marine Notices; and
 - (b) any approved equivalent arrangements approved by the Authority, or standards in force at the time of the initial survey, as applicable.
- (3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Authority may issue further Yacht Notices and Information Notices in respect of yachts.

5. Compliance with Safety Convention.

A company and the master shall ensure that a passenger yacht of any length, carrying more than thirty-six passengers complies with the Safety Convention applicable to passenger ships.

6. Equivalent arrangements.

Upon submission of a proposal of an application of alternative standards, the Authority may approve the equivalent arrangement proposed in respect of a yacht.

7. Penalty.

- (1) A person who contravenes any provision of these Regulations commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or to both.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (1), a yacht may be detained by the Authority in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

8. Revocation of Sub. Leg. Ch. 268 – p. 187.

The Merchant Shipping (Yachts) Regulations¹ are revoked.

Made this 1st day of April, 2026.

Signed
JOBETH COLEBY-DAVIS
MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS

¹S. I. No.13 of 2011.