



# ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

### CIRCULAR N° GEN 025 - Rev 1.

#### COVID-19 ADVICE FROM MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

**TO:** **SHIP OWNERS/SHIP OPERATORS/MANAGERS,  
MASTERS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS  
AND FLAG STATE INSPECTORS**

**APPLICABLE TO:** All ships

**EFFECTIVE AS FROM:** 18 March 2020

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is resulting in various restrictions and limitations which seriously affect the continuity of maritime operations on a global scale.

Ability to travel, both nationally and internationally, has become increasingly difficult as travel bans have been imposed. Based on the above conditions, this Administration considers the COVID-19 outbreak to be a force majeure situation

In order to assist the Shipowners/Ship Operators/Managers and Recognized Organizations (RO) as much as possible please note the following:

#### **Scheduled Statutory Surveys**

In cases where RO surveyors are not able to undertake scheduled surveys due to restrictions imposed by COVID-19, this Administration will consider applications for extension/postponement under force majeure on a case-by-case basis. The Shipowners/Ship Operators/Managers should use application form as per GEN 001 circular. The application form should be stamped, signed and commented by RO.

#### **Dry docking surveys and servicing of ship's equipment**

Extension of a vessel's dry docking surveys or servicing of ship's equipment as required by IMO Conventions due to COVID-19 may be requested. The Shipowners/Ship Operators/Managers should use application form as per GEN 001 circular. The application form should be stamped, signed and commented by RO. The applications should be submitted before the due date of the surveys or expiry date of the statutory certificate in order to avoid port State Control issues.

#### **ISM internal audits**

This Administration will, at the ISM Manager's request, extend annual ISM internal audits for up to three (3) months, as per para 12.1 of the ISM Code in cases where audits cannot be carried out due to travel restrictions imposed due to COVID-19.

#### **Safety Management Certificates (SMC) and International Ship Security Certificates (ISSC)**

With regards to SMC and ISSC renewal audits, and noting the provisions of ISM Code 13.14 and ISPS Code A-19.3.5, this Administration may authorise its Recognised Organisations to issue three (3) month extensions to existing SMC and ISSC Certificates.

The ISM Manager should use application form as per GEN 001 circular. The application form should be stamped, signed and commented by RO.

## **Maritime Labour Certificats (ML Certificats)**

MLC 2006 does not allow extensions to existing MLC Certificates without an MLC inspection. Due to COVID-19 restrictions this Administration may authorise its Recognised Organisations to administratively issue a ML Certificate for three (3) months where the renewal inspection cannot be conducted.

## **Annual Flag State Inspections and Pre-registration inspections**

Due Annual Flag State Inspections will be carried out subject to availability of the Flag State Inspectors.

In case that Pre-registration inspection cannot take place due to COVID-19 restrictions an Inspector of this Administration will attend the vessel at a mutually agreed location, for an initial general inspection after the registration on a case-by-case basis.

## **Seafarers Employment Agreements and repatriation**

In cases where crew members may have to exceed the twelve (12) months or contractual period onboard as stated in their original Seafarers' Employment Agreement (SEA) because of travel restrictions imposed due to COVID-19, this Administration will consider such extensions to be force majeure and therefore not a breach of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended. A new SEA shall be signed by both parties with the clause that the seafarer is entitled to repatriation at no cost to the seafarer at seven (7) days notice.

## **Extension of the validity of STCW Endorsements attesting the Recognition of Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency**

Endorsements attesting the Recognition of Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency expire may be extended if national Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency are extended as well.

Applications should be submitted to this Administration including Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency endorsed with a new expiry date by the issuing Administration. Some of the issuing authorities have issued circulars with general extension of Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency until certain dates. A copy of such circular may be forwarded as supporting documentation.

**Seamen's Books** may be extended upon request to this Administration.

## **Medical Certificates**

Due to the exceptional circumstances this administration follows the Regulation I/9 of the STCW Convention as amended, and Regulation 1.2 of the MLC Convention 2006, as amended. Seafarers with a medical certificate about to expire or no longer valid will be allowed to keep serving on board for a period of up to three (3) months.

These temporary measures shall remain in place for a period of **three (3) months** starting from **18 March 2020** and are subject to review as the situation develops.

This Circular should be kept on board ready to be disclosed to PSC Officers.

Revision history:

REV-1, Added titles:

Extension of the validity of STCW Endorsements attesting the Recognition of Certificates of Competency or Certificates of Proficiency, Seamen's Books, Medical Certificates.