

	SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY MARINE NOTICE NO 10 OF 2021 www.samsa.org.za 146 Lunnon Road, Hillcrest, Pretoria 0083			PO Box 13186 Hatfield 0028 Tel: +27 12 366 2600 Fax: +27 12 2601 Email: marinenotices@samsa.org.za	
	ISSUE DATE	31 March 2021	EXPIRY DATE	31 July 2021, unless withdrawn	REFERENCE
COVID-19 - PROCESS FOR EXTENSION OF CERTIFICATES					
TO SHIP MARITIME ADMINISTRATION, OWNERS AND OPERATORS, SEAFARERS, MARITIME TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, EXAMINERS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS					
Affected Marine Notices					
<i>Cancelled or superseded</i>	45 of 2020	<i>Read in conjunction with:</i>			
SUMMARY					
This Marine Notice seeks to advise Seafarers, employers and crewing agencies of the process to obtain documents to extend the validity of certificates issued in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Safe Manning, Training and Certification) Regulations 2013, as amended					

Background and Introduction

1. The World Health Organisation recently declared the outbreak of COVID-19 Coronavirus as a pandemic.
2. On 15 March 2020, the Republic of South Africa declared the state of disaster following the outbreak of the COVID-19 Coronavirus. Further to this, the President of the Republic has declared a lockdown which include the shutdown of education institutions.
3. On 17 March 2020, through circular letter no. 4202/add.5, the International Maritime Organisation encouraged all parties to the STCW Convention to "...take a pragmatic and practical approach with regard to the extension of the above-mentioned certificates and endorsements..."
4. On 23 March 2020, the President of the Republic declared a lockdown, effective on Thursday, 26 March 2020, 23:59, to stop the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Depending on each particular situation, it may well be necessary for some seafarers to be onboard beyond the validity on their certificates.
5. SAMSAs offices are open and all services are available at Level 2. Therefore, if a seafarer has all documentation in place, then application for revalidation should be made in the normal manner rather than seeking an extension.
6. The provisions of this Marine Notice apply to all certificated seafarers holding certificates issued by SAMSAs and those issued by institutions accredited by SAMSAs.

Validity and Revalidation of Certificates

7. Certificates of Competency (COC) and/or Certificates of Proficiency (COP) issued in accordance with the International Convention of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended (STCW Convention or the Convention) are generally valid for a period of five (5) years from the date of issue.
8. SAMSAs has considered the predicament many seafarers and their employers are finding themselves in and have granted an extension until 31 July 2021 to any certificate that may expire during the national lockdown and/or shortly thereafter.
9. Applications for extensions shall be made electronically, with documents that have exceeded their validity date, may be acceptable provided that the certificate was valid on/before 15 December 2019.
10. Employers who find themselves with seafarers onboard their ships whose certificates are due to expire whilst on an extended tour of duty, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, shall apply as per paragraph 13 below.

11. South African registered ships who have seafarers holding certificates that will be expiring soon and are being affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic shall follow the process indicated in paragraph 13 below.
12. South African registered ships who has seafarers holding foreign COC's shall take the direction regarding seafarers Certification from that Administration and communicate to the Principal Officer where the ship is registered regarding any challenges they may encounter regarding validity of the seafarer's certificates. Those whose administrations have extended their certificates may be permitted to continue serving on such ships.

Application for Extension of Certificates

13. Seafarers and Employers who seek documentary proof of the extension of seafarer certification shall:
 - 13.1. apply through electronic means by following the instructions found here – <http://www.samsa.org.za/Pages/Application-for-the-extension-of-Certificate.aspx>
 - 13.2. In the event difficulty is experienced with the above procedure, please contact your nearest SAMSA office via e-mail as found here on SAMSA's website - <http://www.samsa.org.za/Pages/Contact-Us.aspx> . Please include both a copy of the CoC/CoP and the form in 13.1 above
14. Seafarers working onboard ships operating in South African ports do not need to have individual extensions but must keep a copy of this Marine Notice to show that they are operating under this extension – provided they are permitted to operate under the Disaster Management Act, 2002, as amended.

Rendering of services during the National Lockdown

15. All seafarers' related services are being provided in accordance with Marine Notice 41 of 2020, or the latest Marine Notice to replace it.
16. The following services may be rendered, to the best possible extent, from SAMSA employees without the need for them to be physically present in the office:
 - 16.1. Application and issue of endorsement of foreign certificates (only Confirmation of Receipt of Application will be issued during the lockdown) including any related assessments thereof
 - 16.2. Issue of extension of seafarers' certificates as stated 13 above
17. Seafarer certificates issued during this time will be in electronic format. Masters, owners and administration (flag states & PSCO's) shall accept these certificates at face value, provided that the verification of certificate, if necessary, is positive.

Extension of Accreditations and Approvals

18. Training institutions shall apply for re-accreditation in accordance with the relevant process.
19. Medical Practitioners shall apply for approval in accordance with the relevant process

Certificates issued by SAMSA Accredited Training Institutions

20. The provision of this paragraph applies to all course completion certificates issued in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Safe Manning, Training and Certification) Regulations, 2013, as amended, by institutions accredited by SAMSA.
21. Seafarers who have not applied for a Certificate of Proficiency (or Competency) after completing SAMSA Accredited Training - and as such need an extension of an expiring course completion certificate - may apply for an extension to the issuing Institution. In such cases Accredited Institutions are required to issue an extension, by

letter referencing the certificate number, or by amendment or re-issue of the course completion certificate. Extensions shall be valid until 31 July 2021 as per paragraph 7 and 8 above.

22. Each institution shall, before granting any such extension ensure that:
 - 22.1. They only issue an extension for certificates which they have issued.
 - 22.2. Keep records of any such extension granted.
 - 22.3. Where no process exists, the institution shall create a means to extend certificates.

Validity of Medical and Eyesight Certificates

23. Validity of all Medical and Eyesights certificates shall be in accordance with the certificate.

Training Institutions - Operation at various Risk Levels

24. In the determination of the timing and extent of the resumption of operations, Training Institutions shall be guided by the latest Regulations from COGTA, the Department of Health, the DHET and the Department of Labour – and operate under those conditions. Reference www.sacoronavirus.co.za for the latest directives.
25. Institutions should be mindful of compliance with the requirements of the above government departments from the perspective that they are both businesses and educational institutions.
26. Each institution has the obligation to ensure that they meet all government requirements for operating under different Risk Levels. Institutions may therefore be subject to inspection by officials executing their duties under the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs regulations and the Department of Employment and Labour.
27. Records of compliance to government requirements for the COVID-19 pandemic shall be kept, maintained, and be available for inspection by SAMSA if required.
28. All institutions accredited for medical training and any course that deals with medical emergencies shall take note of the following guidelines from the [Resuscitation Council of Southern Africa](#) for:
 - 28.1. CPR for Everyone COVID-19 Algorithm
 - 28.2. BLS Algorithm for COVID-19
 - 28.3. Suggested Training of ALS Courses

Special case – Medical Care exception

29. With the limitations effected by the COVID-19 pandemic on the STCW Medical Care course, SAMSA had desired to preserve the practical component of training due to the immeasurable value it adds to the training experience. Having observed the working out of this arrangement and looking forward, it would appear to be practically infeasible to continue with this approach.
30. The previous edition of this MN (MN 45 of 2020) limited the issue of Certificates of Completion for Medical Care (STCW Code Section A-VI/4-2) to one year from when the candidates completed the course in due regard to the limitations placed on Institutions and Hospitals allowing for practical training of seafarers in hospital.
31. The limitation to one year certificate is hereby repealed, all candidates who have completed the training post the initial lockdown may request a re-issue of the certificate for a full term and SAMSA will recognise in full the certificate for revalidation or application towards the issue of a certificate.

32. In the period that the practical component is not permitted, institutions have informed SAMSA that they have increased the practical training on casualty responses.
33. Institutions will resume this practical component of the STCW Medical Care course at the earliest possible time after it is deemed Medically safe for candidates to return.
34. For existing applications for revalidation or Level 3 assessment, SAMSA will infer a 5-year validity on course completion certificates Medical Certificates issued since the beginning of the National Lockdown.

Resumption of Seafarer Related Service

35. This part must be read together with Marine Notice No. 41 of 2020 or its succeeding Marine Notices.
36. SAMSA conducted a risk assessment to identify the COVID-19 risk level which it considers safe to providing seafarer services, below is the summary outcome and indications as to when these assessments may begin:

JOB DESCRIPTION	5	4	3	2	1
Level 3 Assessments	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Revalidation or Re-issue of Certificates	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eyesight Examination	Provided for separately in a Marine Notice				
Accreditation & re-accreditation of training institutions	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Approval & Re-approval of Medical Practitioners	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Extension of Certificates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Application & Issue for Seafarer Record Books ³	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1: Seafarers Services and Related activities

Validity of the Marine Notice

37. The provisions of this Marine Notice shall remain valid until withdrawn.
38. Enquiries regarding this Marine Notice may be directed to the Chief Examiner via e-mail to exams@samsa.org.za

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