

Directions of the Maritime Administration of Latvia Regarding the Emergency Situation Declared in the Country

In the light of the statement by the WHO regarding Covid-19 pandemic, the government of Latvia has declared emergency situation in the country; Cabinet Order No. 103 of 12.03.2020. “On the Declaration of Emergency Situation” with further amendments. See [here \(in Latvian\)](#), [see here \(in English\)](#).

In order to adjust to the emergency situation for restriction of dissemination of coronavirus in the country, SJSC “Maritime Administration of Latvia” has determined a special working regime:

REGISTRY OF SEAMEN (RS)

1. The premises of the Registry of Seamen shall have a status of restricted access determined.
2. Order of seamen servicing shall be changed. In-person contact of seamen with the employees of the Registry of Seamen shall be restricted up to a minimum. The administration of the Registry of Seamen shall not accept the visits of seamen.
3. By 20 March 2020, it shall be possible to enter the Registry of Seamen by presenting the Seaman’s Discharge Book confirming that more than 2 weeks have passed after their decommissioning from the ship. Seamen having visually noticeable symptoms of disease are not accepted. It is also possible to perform measuring of temperature by using electronic (forehead) thermometer.
4. Starting from 23 March, the entrance in the premises of the Registry of Seamen shall be possible only after receiving invitation from the Registry of Seamen in order to prepare documents. Should you have any questions, please call for information to the Registry of Seamen at: 67099419

TRAINING OF SEAMEN

The implementation of full-time training courses and education programs has been suspended in the country. Within the limits of their possibilities, educational institutions ensure the implementation of professional educational programs of seamen at a distance.

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CERTIFICATION OF SEAMEN

1. In the week from 16 March to 20 March, there are no changes made in the document accepting, receiving and certification procedure. The assessment of competence is performed in a regular way.

2. Starting from 23 March, no documents shall be accepted in presence. The operation of examination commissions is suspended. Special order for servicing seamen is introduced.

3. Only seamen who are supposed to depart at sea within the following 30 days' time (employer's confirmation) and for whom the revalidation of documents is required shall be served. Re-certification of seamen for a higher qualification shall not be performed. The validity of only existing qualification documents will be extended.

4. In order to perform COC revalidation for captains or officers and COP revalidation for ratings, the following order shall be determined:

- A seaman shall send a request in e-mail, written in a free form, by indicating information about him/her and the reason why he/she would like to prolong the validity of the document, the recruitment company via which they are planning to work and the planned length of the contract. A signed and scanned **application for a qualification certificate** (see the form in the Annex), a scanned qualification document (COC, endorsement, or COP for ratings), a scanned medical certificate and a digital photograph is to be enclosed;
- After receiving a confirmation from the Registry of Seamen, and the date / time of receipt, a payment shall be made in Netbank to the account indicated by the Maritime Administration of Latvia;
- On the date and in time determined, the seaman shall arrive in the Registry of Seamen and brings the original of the document to be changed (prolonged), Seaman's Discharge Book and the proof that the payment for the service has been made;
- Captains and officers shall have new "endorsement" issued with the extension of validity for 6 months (if refresh courses have not been completed);

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- Ratings and refrigeration engineers (who do not have Endorsement) shall have new COP issued with the extension of validity for 12 months.

Important: In order to ensure the preparation of valid documents and their receiving in due time, all aforementioned requirements are to be fulfilled precisely. The exam will not have to be passed.

The application is to be sent to the following email addresses: seafarer@lja.lv cc: svetlana.sevcova@lja.lv

DELAY IN VOYAGE

Due to the restrictions determined in the countries throughout the world, it is possible that there will not be a possibility to change seamen in due time.

In cases when due to force majeure situation a seaman has to work for a considerable longer period of time that it has been envisaged in the contract and there is a risk that a seaman will not be decommissioned from the ship till the end of the validity of the qualification documents, the Registry of Seamen shall issue a document on the extension of the validity of the certificates.

In order to perform it, the ship owner or the recruitment company shall send to the Registry of Seamen email address jr@lja.lv, by putting a copy to email address jazeps.spridzans@lja.lv a digitally signed (with a time seal) application, which has been prepared on an official form of the company, with a short description of the situation and information about the period of time for which the extension is required and if the extension of the documents will be accepted by the administration of the state of the flag of the ship. On the basis of the application, there will be a scanned (unless required otherwise) confirmation of the extension sent. The confirmation will be issued only if the application contains all required information.

The order shall not be applied to the cases which the ship owner or the recruitment company could have forecasted.

SEAMAN'S DISCHARGE BOOK

When travelling to regions which have visa-free travel from Latvia, the Seaman's Discharge Book does not give any advantages. There might be the cases when the

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procedures applicable in port or ship owners require having the Seaman's Discharge Book.

Seaman's Discharge Book will be issued only in the cases of emergency by sending a prior notice to email eva.gotfrida@lja.lv, cc: verify@lja.lv, and notifying personal data, contact telephone and by enclosing a scanned statement issued by a company. The inspector shall determine the time and order for document issuing.

Recruitment companies have the right to issue a statement for receiving a new Seaman's Discharge Book only in cases of emergency.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

1. If the validity of a medical certificate issued in Latvia for the period of two years expires during the voyage, due unplanned length of it caused by the consequences of Covid-19 virus, the Administration shall permit to use it for no more than three months till the moment when the seaman returns to Latvia provided that no new contraindications have occurred of the seaman.

In the opposite case, Article 6 of Regulation I/9 of STCW Convention is to be strictly complied with.

2. In order to ensure the protection of seaman's doctors against Covid-19 virus, a seaman shall have the right to arrive at a seaman's doctor for the purpose of medical certification not earlier than on the 15th day after returning from the voyage and provided that the seaman does not have visible symptoms of disease.

SURVEYS, INSPECTIONS AND AUDITS ON LATVIAN FLAG SHIPS

1. Surveys, inspections and audits on Latvian flag ships

For Latvia flag ships on international voyages:

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- Maritime Safety inspectorate has decided not to carry out Flag State inspections until at least 14 April for ships outside Latvian ports. For ships in Latvia, Flag State inspection will only be carried out after careful assessment of the situation with COVID-19;
- In case of reaching deadlines for ISM/ISPS/MLC verifications the Maritime Safety inspectorate will either delegate these verifications to Recognized Organizations or extend the validity of appropriate certificates.
- Upon request from Recognised Organisation for extensions for due surveys and statutory conditions/findings, Maritime Safety inspectorate may allow the validity of appropriate certificate or statutory conditions/finding to be extended for a period of one month by the Recognized Organisation.
- If situation gets worse in Latvia and worldwide due COVID-19 restrictions, the new short-term certificates with a period of validity of 3 months will be issued, without carrying out physical surveys/inspections and audits as a temporary short-term solution. In this case, after the appropriate survey/inspection and audit has been carried out, the validity of a new certificate should not exceed 5 years from the expired date of full-term certificate.

For domestic ships:

- The surveys and supervision of repair works on domestic ships will be carried out in routine manner except in cases when posing COVID-19 risks to surveyors. Each such case will be assessed separately by Maritime Safety inspectorate and solutions will be agreed with shipowner.
- In case situation gets worse in Latvia due to COVID-19 restrictions, all surveys and supervision of repair works on domestic ships might be suspended. The extension of the validity of ship's documents may be granted as a short-term solution.

For service suppliers:

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- The inspection on service stations and repair facilities will be carried out in routine manner except in cases posing COVID-19 risks to surveyors.
- Each such case will be assessed separately by Maritime Safety inspectorate and solutions will be agreed with the company.

PORT STATE CONTROL INSPECTIONS

2.PSC inspections

PSC inspections on ships having PI and PII will not be carried out until at least 14 April. In some exceptional cases such as grounding, collision, pollution, erratic manoeuvres and similar, PSC inspection will be carried out after careful assessment of the situation with COVID-19 on particular ship.

SHIP AND PORT / PORT FACILITIE SECURITY INSPECTIONS

Inspections for foreign vessels are suspended, until **14 April 2020**, unless there are emergency issues with the ships security;

Port / port facility security inspections shall be postponed until **14 April 2020**;

Certificates of Conformity for Ports and Port facilities that will expire during the state emergency, shall be automatically prolonged until **14 April 2020**;

Supervision of ISPS provisions shall be carried out in close co-operation with security officers of ports and port facilities, restricting physical contact with personnel at ports and port facilities;

Current information regarding security measures shall be recorded by security officers.

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