



To whom it may concern

## Norwegian COVID-19 measures

During the COVID-19 outbreak the Norwegian government has taken drastic actions to prevent the virus from spreading. These actions affect shipping to a great extent. Ships must be able to sail in order to ensure export and import of necessary goods and medicines.

To meet the challenges caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, and mitigate the disruption to the maritime sector, the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has adopted the following measures:

### 1. General

In general, the NMA recommends that companies and seafarers keep up to date and follow the medical advice from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and Norwegian authorities. This applies to advice on preventive measures as well as travel advice for affected areas. The NMA cannot give any further advice, for instance on how a company should relate to different geographical areas. All companies must work out guidelines in agreement with their employees and the local health authorities

Information from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health:

<https://www.fhi.no/en/id/infectious-diseases/coronavirus/>

Link to website with updated guidelines from NMA:

<https://www.sdir.no/en/news/corona/>

### 2. Extending the validity of personal certificates, medical certificates and CRA

The NMA has received several indications that seafarers will have problems with completing refresher courses, etc. required for the renewal of personal certificates. This could be caused by cancelled courses, quarantine or travel bans.

As a result, the NMA has decided to grant a general extension of the validity of personal certificates in order to allow seafarers to work legally.



Norwegian Certificates of Proficiency and Certificates of Competency which will expire before 1 November 2020, are granted a general extended validity of up to 6 months. The individual seafarer will not be required to apply.

The six month extended validity has been granted in order to provide enough time for the situation to get back to normal, and to avoid reduced capacity issues when new courses are offered.

## **2.1 Endorsement of foreign certificates**

The validity of Norwegian endorsements will be linked to the validity of the seafarer's national Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) or Certificate of Competence (CoC). If the seafarer's national CoC or CoP is renewed, it will be possible to apply for a new endorsement at the NMA. The seafarer will then automatically be granted a Certificate of Receipt of Application (CRA) and will be able to sail on Norwegian ships for up to 3 months.

If the administration that has issued the seafarer's national CoC or CoP chooses a general extension of the validity of the national CoC or CoP, the validity of the Norwegian endorsement issued based on the current CoC/CoP will automatically be considered extended accordingly.

It will not be necessary to apply for such an extension.

## **2.2 Extending the validity of Certificate of Receipt of Application (CRA)**

The coronavirus pandemic has led to challenges related to the delivery of endorsements to Norwegian vessels. Consequently NMA has decided that CRAs expiring after 13 March 2020 will have an extended validity of up to 6 months, but no longer than 31 December 2020.

Normally, CRAs are issued upon application for endorsement and primarily provide the seafarer with the opportunity to operate on board for 3 months. Due to delays in the postal service and restrictions on persons allowed on board, some seafarers are not getting their endorsement on time. By extending the validity of CRAs, the NMA will help ensure the manning of Norwegian vessels during this period.

It will not be necessary to apply for such an extension.

## **2.3 Extended validity of Norwegian medical certificates**

In cases where the coronavirus makes it difficult for seafarers to renew their Norwegian medical certificates, the NMA may permit a seafarer to work with an expired medical certificate, provided that the period does not exceed 6 months and the seafarer concerned holds an expired medical certificate of recent date.

Norway has notified relevant authorities and organisations of the national decisions that have been made. Therefore, there is nothing to suggest that Norwegian shipping companies or seafarers on board Norwegian ships will experience challenges in the context of, for instance, port State controls.

For urgent matters, please call the NMA's emergency number: +47 52 74 50 00.

### **3. Extending the validity of all trading certificates and vessel instruction expiring in 2020**

Initially, the extended validity of trading certificates applied to certificates expiring before 12 June.

The NMA has now decided that all trading certificates and vessel instructions expiring in 2020 will be granted a 3-month extension without further approval from the NMA.

### **4. SMC, ISPS and MLC audits**

There are reasons to believe that the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent restrictions will continue for a long time, and the NMA has therefore chosen to expand the range of remote surveys to include all audits and supervisions for SMC, ISPS and MLC in cases where physical supervision on board the vessel or the company's office is not possible due to restrictions or the risk of infection. The NMA will allow the recognised organisations (RO) to carry out remote surveys for ships and companies for which the ROs are delegated certification duties.

The following surveys can be managed with remote survey techniques:

- renewal and annual DOC audits at the company's office;
- renewal and intermediate SMC audits on board the ship;
- renewal and intermediate ISSC verifications on board the ship;
- renewal and intermediate MLC inspections on board the ship;
- verifications of interim SMC, DOC, ISSC and MLC audits;
- additional audits.

Requests for surveys must be submitted in the regular way, and the NMA will determine if it is possible to carry out a remote survey.

Remote surveys will require the use of digital communication solutions, such as a telephone, Skype, Teams, video conference options, etc. The company must make sure that documents are presented electronically by means of remote access, e-mail and conferencing tools, including audio, video and data sharing.

This will apply until further notice.

#### **4.1 Alternative ways to comply with the requirements for internal audits**

ISM 12.1, Part A of the ISPS Code, sections 9.4.8 «procedures for auditing the security activities» and 9.4.1 lay down requirements for carrying out internal audits, which may be difficult to conduct during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Therefore, the NMA has decided that companies may carry out internal audits for both ISM and ISPS remotely by means of digital communication solutions and data sharing and by the help of shipboard personnel (if applicable).

The company must carry out a risk assessment.

An approval by the NMA is not required, provided that the company carries out a risk assessment of the remote audit process. Moreover, documented procedures for an alternative internal audit process must also be established.

If alternative processes are not available, internal DOC/SMC audits due by 31 December 2020 will have the deadline extended by three months.

If the 12-months interval for internal audit is exceeded, this must be reported in the non-conformity systems and handled according to the company's internal procedures for non-conformity management.

## **5. Crew change on vessels in Norway**

The NMA has made a document that outlines Norwegian protocols regarding crew change on ships for foreign national signing on or off in Norway:

<https://www.sdir.no/en/news/news-from-the-nma/guidelines-regarding-seafarers-signing-on-and-off-ships-in-norwegian-ports/>

### **5.1 Documentary requirements for change of crew**

In addition to necessary documentation of seafarers' and fishermen's qualifications, training, medical issues, etc. it is sufficient that the following documentation is available at the time of crew change:

- A copy of the employment agreement. A copy must be available of the seafarers' employment agreement (SEA) and of the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) which forms a part of the employment agreement. The same applies to copies of contracts for other persons working on board.
- Persons who work on board shall hold an identification document. Norwegian citizens may use their Sea Service Book or passport.
- For those who do not hold a Sea Service Book, a valid passport and a copy of their employment agreement will be sufficient to document that they work on board a Norwegian vessel.