

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-261

- To:** Parties, Administrations, Port State Supervisory Authorities, Ship-owners / Operators, Recognized Organizations (ROs), Company Security Officers, Seafarers, Legal Representatives, Authorized Maritime Training Centers, Authorized Physicians, Private Consulates of Merchant Marine, Inspectorates, Authorized Offices, Brokers, and users of the Panama Ship Registry.
- Subject:** Provisions on the Medical Certificate.
- Reference:** 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, MLC, 2006, as amended, Law No. 4 of May 15, 1992, Law No. 2 of January 6, 2009, Resolution J.D. No. 076-2020 of October 8, 2020 and its modifications; Resolution J.D. No. 058-2021 of August 26, 2021, Resolution ADM No. 185-2021 of September 20, 2021, Resolution J.D. No. 052-2021 of August 2, 2021, and Resolution ADM No. 015-2023 of January 16, 2023.
Circular No. DGGM-003 **(Only Recommendation)**.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Circular is to communicate the users of the Panamanian Ship Registry that all seafarers requesting or holding a certificate or endorsement issued pursuant to the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, and providing service on board ships of Panamanian flag, must have a valid medical certificate issued according to Regulation I/9 and Section A-I/9 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended and its STCW Code and the MLC, 2006, as amended.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This Merchant Marine Circular applies to all seafarers, medical practitioners authorized by Panama Maritime Authority, ship-owners, operators, companies,



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international navigation fishermen based on the Article 4 of the Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (number 113) of the ILO, offshore personnel and offshore companies based on Resolution J.D. No. 052-2021 of August 2, 2021 of the PMA.

3. Seafarers working on board ships of Panama flag must demonstrate at intervals not exceeding two (2) years, that they meet the standards of medical fitness specified and hold a valid medical certificate.

- 3.1. A medical certificate that expires in the course of a voyage, will stay valid until the next port of call, in which the personnel may obtain a medical certificate from a medical practitioner qualified so long as this extension of validity does not exceed three (3) months.

- 3.2. In urgent cases, the Panama Maritime Authority may allow a seafarer and/or offshore personnel to work without a valid medical certificate until the date of arrival to the next port of call with a medical practitioner recognized so long as:

- 3.2.1. The permit does not exceed three (3) months, and

- 3.2.2. The interested seafarer or offshore personnel has a recently expired medical certificate.

- 3.3. The Panama Maritime Authority will issue a dispensation based in numeral 2, for which the following requirements must be complied with:

- 3.3.1. Request a dispensation including the name of the company, the ship-owner or operator, the name of the crew member and his/her position on board, through an e-mail to: seaextension@amp.gob.pa and certification@amp.gob.pa;

- 3.3.2. Copy of the recently expired medical certificate; and

- 3.3.3. Copy of the seaman's book.

4. The medical certificate of the seafarers working on board ships of Panamanian flag must comply with the following requirements:

- 4.1. The medical certificate must comply with the provisions of Regulation I/9 and Section A-I/9 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended and its STCW



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Code, and must comply as a minimum the following information:

- 4.1.1.** Competent authority and provisions regulating the issuance of the document.
 - 4.1.2.** Information of the seafarer:
 - 4.1.2.1.** Name;
 - 4.1.2.2.** Date of birth;
 - 4.1.2.3.** Gender; and
 - 4.1.2.4.** Nationality.
 - 4.1.3.** Declaration of the recognized medical practitioner.
 - 4.1.4.** Data regarding the issuing Authority:
 - 4.1.4.1.** Official Stamp (including the name) of the issuing Authority;
 - 4.1.4.2.** Signature of the authorized person.
 - 4.1.5.** Seafarer's signature, when required.
- 4.2.** The medical recognition of the seafarer and the medical certificate issued in the Republic of Panama will be issued by suitable medical practitioners certified by the Ministry of Health and recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority. Said documents must be issued in the form adopted by the Panama Maritime Authority.
- 4.3.** The medical certificate issued abroad, must be issued by a suitable medical practitioner, duly qualified and recognized by the due Maritime Administration to perform the medical recognitions of the seafarers, according to what is established in the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended. The form of the medical certificates issued abroad must contain the minimum requirements established in Regulation I/9 and Section A-I/9 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended and its STCW Code.
- 4.4.** The official form of the medical certificate adopted and approved by this Maritime Administration may only be used by the medical practitioner recognized by the Panama Maritime Authority.
- 4.5.** The medical certificate, including the medical stamp, must be issued in the official language of the issuing country and if this is not English, a translation to English must be made.



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- 4.6.** The medical certificates issued in countries where the Panama Maritime Authority has adopted regulations for the recognition of the medical practitioners, must be issued by the medical practitioners recognized by this Administration in such countries. These medical certificates will be issued through a platform of an external software provider of online database to verify and store the information contained in the medical certificates of the seafarers authorized by the Panama Maritime Authority.
- 5.** A medical certificate will be valid for a two (2) year period, unless a shorter period is required regarding the tasks to be performed by the seafarers according to the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended.
- 5.1.** The colour vision test will be valid for a maximum period of six (6) years.
- 6.** The medical certificate must be issued according to what is provided according to the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, Resolution ADM No. 185-2021 of September 20, 2021 and its amendments; and the National guidelines for the conduct of the medical examinations of the seafarers.
- 7.** The Panama Maritime Authority recognizes that some companies conduct medical examinations for specific contractings in companies and industries, and that said medical examinations may include more requirements and/or standards than those provided in the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended or in the provisions of the MLC 2006, as amended. The medical certificates issued following said evaluations for specified contractings of companies and industries, may be accepted so long as they comply with the following:
- 7.1.** The medical practitioner performing medical examinations must be approved by the Panama Maritime Authority or a competent authority from a country that has ratified the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended or the MLC 2006, as amended. The document by means of which the medical practitioner is authorized must refer to the competent authority or the authorizing country.
- 7.2.** The medical certificate must be written in Spanish and English and contain as a minimum, the following information:
- 7.2.1** Data of the Seafarer: date of birth, passport, gender and nationality.

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- 7.2.2 Medical practitioner's declaration.
 - 7.2.3 Medical practitioner's stamp and signature.
 - 7.2.4 Seafarer's signature, when required.
- 7.3. The medical certificate addressed in this numeral 6, shall not be issued for the following ranks: Master, Chief Engineer Officer, Chief Mate, Second Engineer Officer, Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch, Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch, Electro-technical Officer, Rating Forming part of a Navigational Watch, Rating Forming Part of an Engineering Watch, Rating as Able Seafarer Deck, Rating as Able Seafarer Engine and Electro-technical Rating.
- 8. **Medical Certificate of International Navigation Fishermen:** Based on the Article 4 of the Medical Examination (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (number 113) of the International Labour Organization, the medical certificates of the international navigation fishermen will have the following validity period:
 - 8.1. In the case of young persons of less than twenty-one years of age, the medical certificate shall remain in force for a period not exceeding **one (1) year** from the date on which it was granted.
 - 8.2. In the case of persons who have attained the age of twenty-one years, the medical certificate shall remain in force for a period not exceeding **two (2) years** from the date on which it was granted.
- 9. **Medical Certificates for Offshore Personnel:** Based on Resolution J.D. No. 052-2021 of August 2, 2021, the medical certificates presented by the offshore personnel in the Categories "A, B or C", must comply with:
 - 9.1. Offshore industry recognized standards, or
 - 9.2. The medical regime of the Coastal State in whose jurisdictional waters are operating the Mobile offshore units.
- 10. For the medical certificates for offshore personnel, the Panama Maritime Authority provides the following:
 - 10.1. The offshore companies may use medical practitioners authorized in their

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Quality Management System to conduct medical recognitions and issued medical certificates to its offshore personnel, so long as they are recognized by the offshore industry or by the Coastal State.

10.2. In the case of the offshore personnel of Crew Member “D” Category working on board the Mobile offshore units, they must comply with the provisions of the certificate established in Section A-I/9 of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, the MLC, 2006, as amended, and the provisions of the regulations of the PMA.

10.3. The medical evaluation and medical certificate issued stating “Fit to work at offshore”, shall mean, in security terms that all the offshore personnel may work correctly, being able to be in areas where a critical work is taking place (Control room, drilling, crane work), without representing a risk for himself/herself or for the rest of the crew.

11. The medical certificate form adopted and approved by Panama Maritime Authority is available in the following link:

11.1. [Medical Certificate Form.](#)

12. The provisions of the Regulations that establishes the procedure by which the PMA recognizes the medical practitioners to issue the medical certificates of the seafarers in the Republic of Panama and the procedure for the issuance of a medical certificate for the seafarers who all the medical practitioners recognized by the PMA must comply with, inside and outside of the Republic of Panama, in accordance with the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended and its STCW Code, and the MLC 2006, as amended are available in the following links:

12.1. [Resolution J.D. No. 058-2021 of August 26, 2021.](#)

12.2. [Resolution ADM No. 185-2021 of September 20, 2021.](#)

12.3. [Resolution J.D. No. 052-2021 of August 2, 2021.](#)

12.4. [Resolution ADM No. 015-2023 of January 16, 2023.](#)

October, 2023 – New subject, the paragraphs # 1, 2 and 3 are modified, and the paragraphs # 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 are added.

February, 2019 – New Medical Examinations form (point 3).

June, 2018 – New Medical Certificate form added.



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December, 2017 – amendments to the followings paragraphs: 1, 2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10A. Inclusion of paragraphs 2.10B & 2.10C.

September, 2014 – Change of email address on footer below.

June, 2013 – New point 10.

April, 2013 – Change of Contact Points below.

April, 2013 – Addition of new form (point 13).

April, 2013 – Inclusion of 2 additional forms (points 11 and 12).

March, 2013 – Addition of new point 10.

December, 2012.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

Maritime Labour Affairs Department
General Directorate of Seafarers
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5059 /5060/ 5066 / 5067

E-mail: labormar@amp.gob.pa

Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/circulars/>