



Paris, April 28, 2020

FRENCH MARITIME AUTHORITIES MEMO
(Courtesy translation)

Objet : Emergency response Covid-19

Extending the validity of safety, security and prevention of ships pollution, social certification, STCW and STCW-F Certificates, endorsements, documentary evidences for seafarers, and maritime education and training institutions approvals, marine medical certificates for seafarers, during the state of health emergency aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Références :

- Code des transports Art L.5241-4, L.5514-1, L.5514-3, L.5521-1, L.5521-2, L.5547-3 et L. 5549-1
- Loi n° 2020-290 du 23 mars 2020 d'urgence pour faire face à l'épidémie de covid-19
- Ordonnance n° 2020-306 du 25 mars 2020 relative à la prorogation des délais échus pendant la période d'urgence sanitaire et à l'adaptation des procédures pendant cette même période
- Décret n°84-810 du 30 août 1984 relatif à la sauvegarde de la vie humaine en mer, à la prévention de la pollution, à la sûreté et à la certification sociale des navires
- Décret n°2015-723 du 24 juin 2015 relatif à la délivrance des titres de formation professionnelle maritime et aux conditions d'exercice de fonctions à bord des navires armés au commerce, à la plaisance, à la pêche et aux cultures marines
- Décret n°2015-1575 du 3 décembre 2015 relatif à la santé et à l'aptitude médicale à la navigation
- Décret n°2019-640 du 25 juin 2019 relatif à l'agrément des organismes de formation professionnelle maritime
- Décret n°2020-260 du 16 mars 2020 portant réglementation des déplacements dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation du virus covid-19
- Décret n°2020-370 du 30 mars 2020 complétant le décret n° 2020-293 du 23 mars 2020 prescrivant les mesures générales nécessaires pour faire face à l'épidémie de covid-19 dans le cadre de l'état d'urgence sanitaire
- Décret n°2020-480 du 27 avril 2020 portant mesures d'urgence en matière d'encadrement des activités et professions maritimes
- Lettre circulaire n°4204/Add1 de l'Organisation maritime internationale
- Lettre circulaire n°4204/Add5 de l'Organisation maritime internationale
- Instruction relative au fonctionnement des services de santé au travail pendant l'épidémie de Covid-19 du 17 mars 2020 - DGT



1. Context

Exceptional circumstances ensuing from the state of health emergency hamper the regular functioning of State services, recognized organizations and maritime professional training organizations. Consequently, the renewal or the visa of ships certificates as well as the renewal of STCW and STCW-F certificates, training documentary evidences, endorsements, and marine medical certificates for seafarers, which would expire during the state of health emergency, can no longer take place.

Ships have safety and pollution prevention certificates, some of which derive from the application of international conventions or European directives. Their issue, renewal and validation are subject to visits on ships.

Due to the measures taken to contain the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, ship visits cannot be carried out on time and according to the procedures laid down. It follows that certain certificates will expire without the possibility of maintaining their validity by carrying out a visit.

Seafarers hold certificates of competency, certificates of proficiency, training documentary evidences attesting to their qualifications and professional experience at sea, some of which come from the application of international conventions and European directives. Also, seafarers in possession of a Certificate of Competency (CoC) or certain Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) issued by an Administration other than France are in possession of a Flag State endorsement issued by the French maritime authorities in order to work on French flag vessels.

Their certification and continued professional competences are subject to the completion of training in approved maritime professional training institution and approved seagoing service.

Due to the implementation of measures to contain the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, maritime trainings have been suspended, vessel traffic has been restricted. As a result, seafarers can no longer fulfill the conditions for certification and continued professional competences. Similarly, the exercise of the activity of maritime training institutions is restricted by the period of containment reducing the effective duration of their approvals.

Seafarers must also have a valid marine medical certificates to enter training, to obtain or renew certificates or endorsements and to board. They must therefore undergo a medical examination before the seafarer's health doctor.

Due to measures taken to contain the outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus, this visit is no longer possible.

The following provisions are therefore necessary for transport and maritime services to keep going. They consist for the services of the French Maritime Authorities in extending the validity of the various certificates (navigation, controls, social certification, medical aptitude, training ...) essential to ships operations and which cannot be because of the circumstances related to the COVID 19.

This measure is taken according the international provisions recommended and decided by the IMO on the matter.



2. Provisions for French vessels certificates

In compliance with government provisions to fight against the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and in order to allow ships to keep going their operations, the validity of French vessels certificates, including navigation license, expiring from March 12, 2020, is extended from this expiration date, up to six months after the end of the state of health emergency.

The end of the state of health emergency is now planned for July 24, 2020.

Shipowners will not have to make a request to the administration as this extension is ipso jure, not necessarily entailing the issuance of a new document. However, under request, French maritime administration may issue a statement.

The French maritime authority may reduce this extension depending on the resumption of activity of the administration, shipyards, classification societies, before this deadline

3. Provisions for STCW and STCW-F certificates, endorsements, documentary evidences for seafarers, and maritime education and training institutions approvals, issued by French maritime authorities

In compliance with Government measures to fight against the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and in order to allow seafarers and ships to keep going their activities, the period of validity of the following documents, expiring from March 12, 2020, is extended from this expiration date, up to six months after the end of the state of health emergency set by the French law :

- STCW and STCW-F certificates of competency and certificates of proficiency ;
- Documentary evidences of a training approved ;
- Flag State endorsements issued by the French Maritime authorities ;
- Recognition of professional qualifications certificates for seafarers on fishing vessels and shellfish sector ;
- Maritime education and training institutions approvals.

The end of the state of health emergency is now planned for July 24, 2020.

Seafarers will not have to make a request to the administration as this extension is ipso jure, not entailing the issue of a new document.

The French maritime authority may reduce this extension depending on the resumption of activity of the administration, training centers, before this deadline.



4. Provisions for medical certificates issued to seafarers by French maritime authorities

In compliance with Government measures to fight against the spread of the COVID-19 virus, validity of medical certificates for seafarers essential for ships operations, expiring from March 12, 2020, is extended from this expiration date, up to six months after the end of the state of health emergency.

The end of the state of health emergency is now planned for July 24, 2020.

Seafarers will not have to make a request to the administration as this extension is ipso jure, not entailing the issue of a new document.

The French maritime authority may reduce this extension depending on the resumption of activity of the administration, seafarers' doctors, before this deadline.

5. Provision about Port State Control, including inspections on the sulfur content of marine fuels

Regular inspections have been suspended until the end of the covid-21 urgency health emergency, under the provisions of the law n ° 2020-290 of March 23, 2020 emergency to deal with the covid-19 epidemic, except in the event of a serious risk to the safety of a ship, the crew, the environment or security.

Covid-19 crisis countermeasures taken by the administration of a flag State will be taken into account during this period, in the respect of the instructions provided by the Paris Memorandum of Understanding.

6. Provision about the providing of information to ships and crews on basic protective measures against COVID-19 based on WHO advice

Information and guidelines are provided to the French operators and French flagged ships by GRIS-NEZ MRCC as international point of contact for all safety, health and security issues.



7. Decree No. 2020-370 of March 30, 2020 supplementing Decree No. 2020-293 of March 23, 2020 prescribing the general measures necessary to deal with the Covid-19 epidemic in the context of the state of health emergency

This text provides, unless an exemption is granted by the representative of the competent authority :

- The prohibition of any cruise ship, with or without passengers, from stopping, stopping or anchoring in French internal waters and territorial sea
- The prohibition for all merchant ships to carry more than 100 passengers, excluding drivers accompanying their freight transport vehicle. In no case may the number of passengers and drivers exceed a quarter of the maximum capacity of the ship.
- For river transport, the distance rules must be observed on board. The maximum number of passengers cannot exceed a quarter of the maximum capacity of the boat

The hygiene rules already imposed for land transport must be followed: hydro alcoholic gel compulsory if there is no soap, disinfection of spaces that have welcomed passengers

For ships operating on international connections or longer than 2 hours, passengers must justify their trip otherwise they will be denied boarding

These provisions apply to the entire metropolitan territory, Corsica and to the overseas departments and territories taking into account their own powers.

8. Contact :

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