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MARINA: ONE YEAR EXTENSION OF EXPIRING STCW CERTIFICATES FROM MARCH 13 TO DECEMBER 31, 2020 NOW IMPLEMENTED

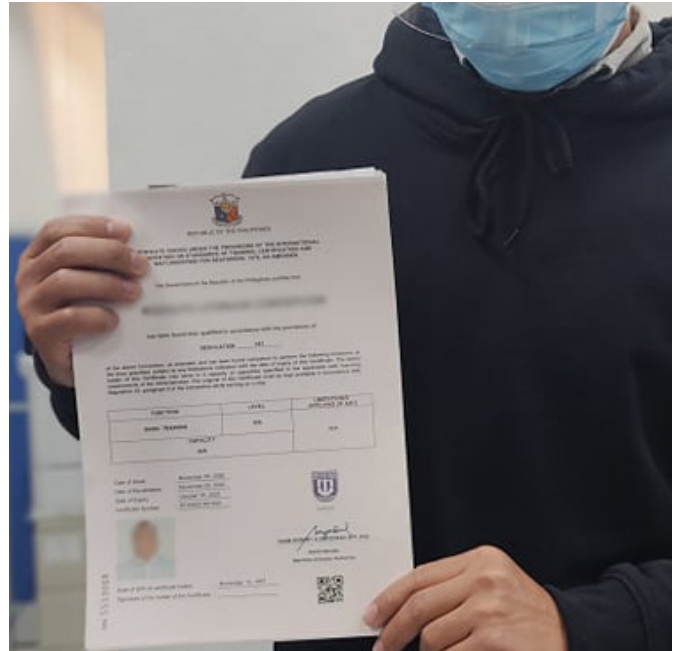
The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), through its Advisory No. 2020-73 has recently issued a one year extension for expiring STCW Certificates of Filipino seafarers which are expiring from 13 March 2020 to 31 December 2020. This extension is broader compared to the previous extension for STCW certificates which only covered those expiring on 01 September 2020 to 31 December 2020.

STCW Certificates expiring on the above-mentioned dates will be extended for one (1) year from the date of expiry. Consequently, the extension applies to all Filipino seafarers who are either on board or ashore at the time of their certificates' expiry.

The MARINA directed all concerned licensed manning agencies (LMAs) and shipping companies to submit the list of their crewmember/s whose validity of STCW Certificate/s have been extended pursuant to MA 2020-73.

The Advisory also provided guidelines on the revalidation and to expedite processing of applications.

All applications for revalidation of certificates for seafarers who were affected by the suspension or



A Filipino seafarer holds his certificate after undergoing processes at the MARINA Central Office in Port Area, Manila.

unavailability of trainings and assessments whose Certificates of Proficiency (COPs) and Certificates of Competency (COCs) have expired or will expire within the period 13 March 2020 to 31 October 2020 will still be processed as revalidation. Applications covered by this provision will still be given five (5) years validity from the date of issuance as long as they have complied with the complete documentary requirements.

Meanwhile, applications for revalidation of STCW certificates without the required refresher training or practical assessment of competence, shall be accepted and processed online. COPs and COCs which have been revalidated in line with this advisory shall have a validity of one (1) year only from their date of issuance subject to requirements which are listed in the Advisory.

Furthermore, the MA 2020-73 stipulates that applications covered by the Advisory shall be filed for expedited processing through the Liaison Officer of the concerned LMAs/shipping company. The documentary requirements required for the application that could

see page 2

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Members of the Editorial Board assume full responsibility for all articles and contributions published in this Newsletter.

EXTENSION OF EXPIRING STCW CERTIFICATES..

be expedited such as letter from the concerned LMA duly signed by an authorized official and a Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA)-approved employment contract shall be uploaded into the MARINA Integrated Seafarers Management Online (MISMO) system.

The MARINA encourages all seafarers to apply for revalidation of their COCs and COPs once they have completed their online/offline courses at the earliest opportunity in order for the 5-year validity date to be reckoned from the original expiration date of their previous certificate.

Lastly, the provisions of MARINA Advisory Nos. 2020-63 and 2020-66 together with all other issuances contrary to the provisions of the MA 2020-73 are now revoked.

The MARINA assures its stakeholders that it will continue to implement the necessary issuances for Filipino seafarers to gain continuous employment opportunity on board ships in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on training completion, revalidation of certificates, and conduct of crew changes.

MARINA REGION 10 PARTICIPATES IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL - NORTHERN MINDANAO

The MARINA Regional Office 10, represented by Dir. Felisa N. Orangan, attended the 123rd Regional Development Council-X (RDC-X) Northern Mindanao Full Council Meeting on 08 October 2020 via ZOOM Platform.

One of the agenda items discussed was the recommendation for endorsement of the Passenger e-Tracer System for Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) and Returning Overseas Filipinos (ROFs) as presented by the RDC-X Infrastructure and Utilities Development Committee (InfraCom). The RDC-X Full Council approved to endorse the same to the DOTr and MARINA.

NEWS FROM THE SHIPYARDS REGULATION SERVICE

MARINA SETS RULES ON THE CONSTRUCTION, CERTIFICATION OF VESSELS USING COMPOSITE MATERIALS

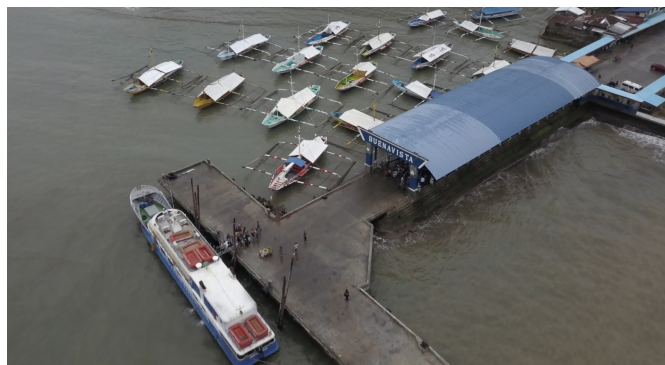
To improve and enhance boat construction standards in the country, the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) has recently issued its rules on the construction and certification of vessels using composite materials through the issuance of MARINA Circular No. SR-2020-03.

A composite material is a combination of two or more constituent materials with significantly different physical or chemical properties that, when combined, produce a material that is stronger, lighter, or resistant to corrosion and electricity. Among those used in boat building are fiber-reinforced plastic (FRP) and polyester, among other similar materials.

The said rules supplement the MARINA Circular (MC) No. 2015-07, which contains the rules and regulations on the construction, alteration, conversion and modification of vessels. It covers all vessels using composite materials, either imported or locally constructed, including fishing vessels.

Aside from this, it will also complement with the first five (5) programs of the Maritime Industry Development Plan (MIDP) particularly in the Upgrading of Domestic Shipping in Support of the Nautical Highway Development; the Development of Shipping Services for Maritime Tourism; the Development of Coastal and Inland Waterways Transport (CIWT) System; the Strengthening of Safety Standards of Philippine-Registered Fishing Vessels; and, the Development of a Global Maritime Hub.

With these rules, the MARINA aims to encourage the development of the boatbuilding industry; strengthen and support the expansion and modernization of the Philippine domestic merchant fleet and its strict adherence to safety standards, which will ensure the seaworthiness of all sea-borne structures; and, to ensure that all Philippine registered vessels constructed in the Philippines using composite materials are in accordance with the



A drone shot of a ship and motorbancas at Port of Buenavista.

safety and environmental standards imposed by the Administration.

Moreover, this supports the implementation of the phase-in, phase-out of wooden-hulled passenger ships under MC 2016-02, which sets revised rules on the phase-out of wooden-hulled ships carrying passengers in domestic shipping.

The rules likewise introduced new provisions such as hull form requirement for commercial passenger boats using multi-hull vessels; operational limitation of the vessel, which shall be determined based on the sea condition of the route using available naval architecture/ marine software approved by the Administration; compliance with applicable national standards; regulation for Fiber Reinforced Plastic (FRP) vessels up to 24 meters in length and above.

Meanwhile, safety obligations & responsibilities of stakeholders are also introduced recognizing that "safety of ships in the domestic shipping" is a shared responsibility between the concerned government agencies and all stakeholders in the maritime industry such as: the shipowners and operators for maintaining and operating the ships; Naval Architects for designing and drafting the ship plans and specifications; shipbuilders or boatbuilders for manufacturing or modifying the ships; recognized organizations for reviewing and surveying the ships; and, concerned government agencies for approving statutory certificates, and monitoring and enforcing laws, rules and regulations.

The MARINA assures the public and its stakeholders that it will continue to formulate and craft policies for the implementation of the shipbuilding and ship repair sector's plans, programs and projects, standards, criteria, policies, and rules that will ensure the betterment of the local shipbuilding industry, as well as its other developmental activities in the whole maritime industry.

MARINA RELEASES GUIDELINES ON REMOTE INSPECTION, MONITORING, SURVEILLANCE OF MTIS, ACS, OMATPS

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) through the MARINA Advisory No. 2020-71, has issued the guidelines on the implementation of remote inspection / re-inspection relative to the conduct of course approval of Maritime Training Institutions (MTIs) and other MARINA-Authorized Training Providers (OMATPs) and Accreditation of Assessment Centers (ACs), including the conduct of monitoring and surveillance activities.

The issuance of this Advisory is to ensure that the processing of applications for course approval and accreditation, monitoring, and surveillance by the MTIs, ACs, and OMATPs remains unhindered without compromising the safety and health of the MARINA STCW Office Evaluation Team (ET) and the institutions' personnel.

MA 2020-71 advises that the approach on the method of assessment will entail the remote evaluation of the MTIs'/ACs'/OMATPs' capability to provide quality training and assessment. The remote evaluation will be done by making use of telecommunication devices to conduct discussions and presentations between the institutions and the MARINA ET who are in various locations.

The MTIs'/ACs'/OMATPs' will be assessed according to their compliance with existing MARINA Circulars and MARINA Advisory Nos. 2020-36, 2020-59, and other related issuances.

The Advisory also provides the general guidelines in the implementation of remote evaluation for accreditation, monitoring, and surveillance of MTIs, ACs, and OMATPs in place of the on-site evaluation in compliance with the applicable MARINA issuances and their subsequent amendments.

MTIs'/ACs'/OMATPs' are urged to ensure that all the details in the key areas of evaluation, facilities,



The MARINA Central Office located at Port Area, Manila.

equipment and instruments/publications under verifications conform to the specifications of the document(s) submitted and are readily available.

The complete guidelines for the conduct of the remote evaluation, including the specific responsibilities of the MARINA STCW is available for viewing on the official MARINA website.



A typical scene for maritime students wherein they get ready for their training onboard vessel.



Also part of learning for maritime students is being inside the four corners of their classrooms while listening to the lectures about the maritime industry.

MARINA ONE-STOP SHOP CONTINUES NON-STOP ASSISTANCE FOR REPATRIATED SEA-BASED OFWS

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), in coordination with other attached agencies of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), continues to exert its maximum efforts in providing assistance for the repatriated sea-based Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) through the One-Stop Shop (OSS) for repatriation.

First launched in April of this year, the OSS for repatriation was established as part of the government's initiatives to ensure the swift and timely repatriation of OFWs, tourists / non-OFWs, and Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) amid the COVID-19 pandemic. One Stop Shops can be found in all three terminals of the NAIA where staff and personnel oversee the processing of Returning Overseas Filipinos (ROFs), from the conduct of the RT-PCR test to their transfer to their respective provinces.

The MARINA's role in the OSS is round the clock monitoring and assistance of arriving seafarers. The Agency also continues to take charge of communicating with the Local Manning Agencies (LMAs) for the arrangement of the returning seafarers' accommodations and transportation going to the quarantine facilities.

The MARINA has also made use of the OSS as a Help Desk for seafarer-related concerns such as certificates, trainings, queries about the Balik-Probinsya program, and etc. Currently, thirteen (13) personnel and two (2) drivers from the MARINA are assigned to report at the OSS daily.

Since its establishment in April, the MARINA has assisted a total of 73,689 returning seafarers through the OSS located in NAIA, as of 07 September 2020. The Agency expects this number to increase in the following months as more and more seafarers continue to be repatriated through the tireless efforts of concerned government agencies together with the LMAs.



MARINA exerts its maximum efforts in providing assistance for the repatriated sea-based Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) through the One-Stop Shop (OSS) for repatriation at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

PORT OF CEBU ACTIVATES CREW CHANGE HUB, STARTS ACCEPTING SEAFARERS FOR CREW CHANGE OPERATIONS

Following the successful dry run to test its operation protocols, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) confirmed the activation of the crew change hub at the Port of Cebu last 16 October 2020. As part of the hub's activation, the One Stop Shop (OSS) was also launched to provide assistance to on-signing / off-signing seafarers.

According to DOTr Assistant Secretary for Maritime Narciso Vingson, after several consultative meetings with the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for Crew Change, Regional Task Force Central Visayas (RTF-7), and the Cebu Provincial and Local Government Units, the crew change protocol of Cebu had been approved. Further, the Cebu Provincial Government issued Executive Order No. 27 dated 14 October to officially confirm the activation.

"Cebu is a strategic location for crew change, as it is at the heart of the Visayas. With the approval of the Port of Cebu as a crew change hub, the port can begin to facilitate the process for arriving and departing seafarers coming to and from the Visayas. We thank all our partners, especially the Regional Task Force 7, the Cebu Provincial Government and the Cebu City Government, for their strong and unwavering support since the planning stage. The whole-hearted cooperation and close coordination afforded to the team made the swift activation possible," Asec Vingson said.

For his part, Office for Transportation Security (OTS) and One-Stop Shop (OSS) Head Raul Del Rosario said that the OSS Cebu has been organized, with the Cebu Ports Authority (CPA) as lead and Secretariat.

Operations at the OSS will be handled by the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) Regional Office 7, led by Regional Director Marc Anthony Pascua. The Agency's participation in the OSS ensures that the concerns of arriving or departing seafarers are duly addressed. Meanwhile, the PCG Coast Guard District Central Visayas, led by its Commander, RADM Jose William U Isaga, is in-charge of providing service support and maritime law enforcement during crew change

operations.

The MARINA's role in the OSS is round the clock monitoring and assistance of arriving seafarers. The Agency also continues to take charge of communicating with the Local Manning Agencies (LMAs) for the arrangement of the returning seafarers' accommodations and transportation going to the quarantine facilities.

"We have established the OSS here in Cebu Port, with the CPA as lead and Secretariat, so that seafarers can undergo a smooth flow of processing, especially in terms of ensuring their health. Mahalaga ho itong OSS upang mas mapabilis at ligtas na makauwi ang mga marino, lalo na ang ating mga kababayang matagal nang nasa laot at sabik na makapiling ang kanilang mga mahal sa buhay," Usec Del Rosario shared.

The crew change hub at the Port of Cebu served (1) Filipino seafarer who joined a ship docked in the Philippines for overseas (outbound), (2) Filipino seafarers who left a ship (inbound), (3) foreign seafarers who joined a ship docked in the port from an airport (airport to ship) and (4) foreign seafarers who left a ship docked in the port to an airport (ship to airport). *see page 7*



Cebu Port Authority welcomes the arrival of Filipino seafarers who will undergo the crew change operations at the Port of Cebu.

GM Miele has assured the public that safety protocols are already in place to avoid any possible transmission of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) during crew change operations. Consequently, disembarking seafarers and those facilitating the operations are required to observe health and safety protocols such as disinfection, handwashing, social distancing and wearing of full personal protective equipment (PPE).

On arrival at the Port of Cebu's OSS facility, seafarers must then immediately proceed to the registration booth and undergo mandatory swab testing procedure.

After completing the OSS procedures, seafarers must immediately board their assigned vehicles that will take them to their designated quarantine facilities as approved by the Bureau of Quarantine (BOQ) while waiting for the results of their swab tests.

For embarking vessel crew members, only seafarers with negative COVID-19 test results and a Certification of Containment will be allowed to board vessels. Health and safety protocols must also be observed by all embarking crew members.

The activation of crew change hubs in the Philippines was directed by DOTr Secretary Tugade to help address the global need for the fresh crewing of vessels, and to ensure the health, safety, welfare and employment of seafarers, as they can only serve on board a vessel without a leave only up to 11 months, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

Crew change hubs in the country will primarily benefit seafarers, who are stranded onboard ships with expired contracts due to imposed travel restrictions due to COVID-19. The MARINA, in coordination with the DOTr and other concerned agencies, will continue to issue the necessary advisories and issuances to further expedite the process of repatriation and crew change in other crew change hubs across the country.

Aside from the Port of Cebu, the Philippines also operates crew change hubs at the Port of Manila, the Port of Capinpin in Bataan, and at the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

Meanwhile, the ports in Batangas and Davao are waiting for the activation of their respective crew change hubs. *(c/o DOTr Communications Team)*

DOTR FORMALLY AUTHORIZES OPERATIONS AT PORT CAPINPIN QUARANTINE FACILITY



Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago leads the ribbon-cutting as part of the formal commissioning of Port of Capinpin Quarantine Facility.

In a bid to strengthen its commitment to make the Philippines an international hub, the Department of Transportation (DOTr), through its Maritime sector agency, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), spearheaded the formal commissioning of Port Capinpin Quarantine facility on 09 October 2020 at Orion, Bataan.

This new quarantine facility, which spans 1,271.6 sqm, has a 124 bed capacity which includes 25 cubicles intended for high risk persons and separated by a fully equipped Nurse Station. In addition, 2 rooms with 12 bunk beds each is allotted for medical frontliners catering to OFWs and Non-OFWs.

PPA GM Jay Daniel Santiago, who led today's inaugural rites, expressed his gratitude to the local government unit of Bataan for the help and support they extended in this project, as well as in enabling the recent crew change operations successful and possible.

"Malaking pasasalamat po ng Philippine Ports Authority, sa ilalim ng Department of Transportation, sa local government unit ng probinsya ng bataan, dahil kung hindi dahil sa tulong ng probinsya ng Bataan at munisipyo ng Orion, hindi po natin magagawa itong ating quarantine facility at ang ating crew change dito sa Capinpin Port sa Orion, Bataan. Nagapasalamat din po ako sa National Government," PPA GM Santiago expressed. *(c/o DOTr Communications Team)*

OTHER RELEVANT ARTICLE: GLOBAL DEMAND FOR PH SEAFARERS STILL HIGH

Employment opportunities for Filipino seafarers, even during stringent quarantines to contain the Covid-19 pandemic, remain substantial according to the Department of Labor and Employment and local maritime employers.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello 3rd said there had been no problems with work applications as Filipino seafarers remained the most preferred globally.

"While Covid-19 has slowed down the deployment of seafarers, foreign shipowners still prefer Filipinos," he said.

"There will also be no problem with re-employment because we have sped up the processing of documents through the Green Lane. We are ensuring that deployment processes of our sea-based workers, who are the biggest contributors of dollar remittances, are expedited."

This was confirmed by local maritime players.

Seafarers lost jobs at the height of the enhanced community quarantine when lockdowns forced people to stay indoors, suspending pre-departure trainings, renewals of certificates and licenses, applications for visas, and medical examinations.

The manning sector's warning that the situation could force foreign shipowners to replace Filipino seafarers with other nationalities led to the creation of the Green Lane. The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) has forwarded initiatives such as the establishment of the Philippines Green Lane, which aims to facilitate the safe and speedy disembarkation of seafarers so that crew change operations remain unhindered.

"Filipino seafarers are still highly in demand among foreign shipowners even when the pandemic drastically slowed down, and at one point halted, our deployment," said Jeffrey Solon, founder of the Association of Licensed Manning Agencies and deputy administrator of the MARINA.

Based on the statistics generated by the Agency, about 100,000 ships carry almost 80 percent of the world's trade. "These ships are operated by close to 1.5 million seafarers, 378,000 of which are Filipinos. This pandemic has left 300,000 seafarers stranded



Filipino seafarers in action onboard overseas ship.

onboard ships and are needed to be replaced," Solon said.

Travel, health restriction hurdles

"There were instances that we lost job opportunities over to foreign seafarers," said Iris Baguilat, president of Doehle Seafront, the Philippine crewing arm of Germany-based Doehle Group.

She attributed this to the limited mobility of seafarers, particularly those living in distant island provinces, port restrictions and strict requirements for Covid-19 test validity in joining ports/countries, and the inability of manning agencies to process visa applications as foreign embassies in the Philippines were closed.

"The stern restrictions imposed by most ports of convenience and the stringent health protocols was such that it's almost as if they are telling us not to do crew change at all," Solon said.

With aviation grounded and factories idled, reduced global oil demand also dampened the outlook for the oil tanker industry. A surge in e-commerce and online shopping, on the other hand, provided a silver lining of sorts by boosting the logistics sector.

Global shipping consultancy Drewry, in its Manning Annual Review and Forecast 2020/2, said an existing shortage of ship officers for the global merchant fleet was expected to expand despite the dampening effect of Covid-19.

This is due to an expected surge in demand as revised employment practices anticipate extended leave periods and lessened time at sea.

As per the International Chamber of Shipping, global demand for seafarers is estimated at 1.545 million with the industry requiring approximately 790,500 officers and 754,500 ratings. The demand for officers has increased by around 24.1 percent with a shortage of approximately 16,500 even before the pandemic hit. (c/o Manila Times.net)