



SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY
MARINE INFORMATION NOTICE NO 2 OF 2021

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ISSUE DATE	11 February 2021	EXPIRY DATE		REFERENCE	SM6/5/2/1
SEAFARERS NEEDING TO RENEW PASSPORTS					

TO ALL SEAFARERS, SHIP OWNERS, CREWING AGENTS, SHIP OPERATORS

<u>Affected Marine Notices</u>	
<i>Cancelled or superseded</i>	<i>Read in conjunction with:</i>
SUMMARY	
This Marine Notice serves to extend assistance to the seafarers who have been affected by the decision of the Department of Home Affairs to suspend certain services.	

a) Introduction

Maritime transport carries over 80% of traded goods by volume. This makes it a very important player in trade and transportation of goods required for our day to day living. Covid-19 as it developed into a pandemic resulted in huge loss of lives worldwide and affected livelihoods. As the pandemic swept across the world South Africa was not spared which resulted in the President of the country declaring a State of Disaster with a national lockdown commencing on 26 March 2020. Through the intervention of SAMSA, the Department of Transport and other role players, maritime transport remained operational during the lockdown. Several countries around the world began to shut their borders and instituted bans on international travel. The maritime transport remained critical as it ensured that essential goods such as food and medical supplies continued to be transported without interruption.

However, as much as Maritime Transport remained essential in the eyes of the world’s authorities as it continued to be allowed to operate under different lockdown regimes around the world, seafarers were forgotten. Crew changes were banned in many countries during the first half of 2020. This caused mayhem in the maritime industry as seafarers struggled to sign-off vessels and relievers struggled to get to ships. This resulted in what some termed as the humanitarian crisis at sea as seafarers had to stay on board for extended periods. Another humanitarian crisis was brewing at home as seafarers who had made it home before travel bans struggled to get back to the ships and were left without income for extended periods.

This prompted the ILO to issue Resolution GB.340/Resolution (Rev.2) which was supported by the IMO and called for seafarers to be designated “key workers”. IMO recently issued - Circular Letter No.4204/Add.35/Rev.3 which also encouraged member states to designate seafarers as “key workers” to allow them to travel to and from ships unhindered. To date 53 Member States including South Africa have supported the call.

b) Minister of Home Affairs statement

On 12 January 2021 the Minister of Home Affairs Dr Aaron Motsoaledi announced that due to the pressure brought to his Department by the second of wave of Covid-19, his Department was going to scale down operations. He stated that to ease pressure the following services will be suspended:

1. Applications of Smart ID Cards, except for matriculants.
2. Applications for passports, except for people who fall in the categories permitted to travel in the amended Disaster Management Act Regulations.
3. Marriage services such as solemnisation and registration.

South African seafarers have been allowed to disembark and join vessels within the South African ports from as early as level 1 of lockdown. From 10 June 2020 they could travel internationally via repatriation flights to fulfil contractual obligations.

Even though seafarers fall under category 2 above as they are permitted to travel to and from vessels. Several seafarers are reported to have encountered problems when trying to renew their passports at various offices of the Department of Home Affairs across the country. SAMSA and the Department of Transport are currently engaged in talks with the relevant departments to ensure this matter is resolved.

C. Way forward

When renewing a passport, the seafarer must take the following documents to the Department of Home Affairs office:


- 1) Letter from the company, declaring you as a seafarer, employed and an essential key worker.
- 2) Copy of the IMO Circular Letter No.4204/Add.35/Rev.3 which states that seafarers have been declared key workers (essential workers). A copy is attached to this Marine Notice.

Should a seafarer experience any problems regarding renewal of a passport, kindly forward the following to welfare@samsa.org.za:

1. Name and Surname.
2. Contact details.
3. Company name.
4. Department of Home Affairs office visited.

This will allow SAMSA to take the matter up with the relevant authorities

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4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
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Circular Letter No.4204/Add.35/Rev.3
25 January 2021

To: All IMO Member States
United Nations and specialized agencies
Intergovernmental organizations
Non-governmental organizations in consultative status with IMO

Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Designation of seafarers as key workers**

1 In view of the ongoing crew change crisis, which is impacting seafarers as well as other marine personnel*, the Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the matter of designation of these professionals as key workers, referring in particular to the provisions of:

- .1 resolution MSC.473(ES.2) - *Recommended action to facilitate ship crew change, access to medical care and seafarer travel during the COVID-19 pandemic*, adopted by the MSC on 21 September 2020;
- .2 resolution A/75/L.37 - International cooperation to address challenges faced by seafarers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic to support global supply chains, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 1 December 2020; and
- .3 resolution GB.340/Resolution(Rev.2) - Resolution concerning maritime labour issues and the COVID-19 pandemic, adopted by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office on 8 December 2020.

2 Resolution MSC.473(ES.2) states, in operative paragraph 1.2:

- "1 URGES Member States and relevant national authorities to: ...
- .2 designate seafarers as 'key workers' providing an essential service, in order to facilitate safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel and consider legal possibilities for accepting internationally recognized documentation carried by seafarers as evidence of their status as 'key workers', and for the purpose of their travel and movement for crew change;"

* Other marine personnel may include, inter alia, fishing vessel personnel, marine pilots, marine surveyors, marine superintendents, offshore energy sector personnel, offshore support personnel and port workers.

3 Resolution A/75/L.37 states, in operative paragraph 3:

"3. Urges Member States to designate seafarers and other marine personnel as key workers;"

4 Resolution GB.340/Resolution(Rev.2) states in operative paragraph 1, inter alia:

"1. Urges all Members, in accordance with applicable national laws and regulations, to: ... designate seafarers as 'key workers', for the purpose of facilitation of safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel, and the facilitation of shore leave, and when necessary, to shore-based medical treatment;"

5 By the date of this Circular Letter, the Secretary-General has received 53 notifications from Member States and one from an Associate Member that have designated seafarers as key workers, as listed in the annex.

6 Member States that have not yet done so are strongly encouraged to take action to address this issue and designate seafarers as key workers as a matter of urgency.

ANNEX

**LIST OF MEMBER STATES AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS
THAT HAVE DESIGNATED SEAFARERS AS KEY WORKERS**

AZERBAIJAN	LIBERIA
BAHAMAS	MARSHALL ISLANDS
BANGLADESH	MOLDOVA
BARBADOS	MONTENEGRO
BELGIUM	MYANMAR
BRAZIL	NETHERLANDS
CANADA	NEW ZEALAND
CHILE	NIGERIA
CYPRUS	NORWAY
DENMARK	PANAMA
DOMINICA	PHILIPPINES
EGYPT	POLAND
FRANCE	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
GABON	ROMANIA
GEORGIA	SAUDI ARABIA
GERMANY	SINGAPORE
GHANA	SOUTH AFRICA
GREECE	SPAIN
INDIA	SWEDEN
INDONESIA	THAILAND
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	TURKEY
IRELAND	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
ITALY	UNITED KINGDOM
JAMAICA	UNITED STATES
JAPAN	YEMEN
KENYA	
KIRIBATI	Associate Member:
LEBANON	HONG KONG (CHINA)