

Conversion of Fishing Vessel Certificate of Competence to Merchant Navy Certificate of Competency under M.S. (STCW) Rules, 1998.

M.S. Notice 24 of 2003

No. 7-NT(19)/2002

Dated: October 1, 2003

Sub: Conversion of Fishing Vessel Certificate of Competency to Merchant Navy Certificate of Competency under M.S.(STCW) Rules, 1988

1.INTRODUCTION

1. Fishing vessel personnel working on board Indian fishing vessels were issued certificate of competency under Merchant Shipping (Examination for Skipper and 2nd Hand of a Fishing Vessel) Rules 1964 subsequently amended by Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mate of Fishing Vessels) Rules 1987. The provisions under the stated rules did not comply with Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 Convention or Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (Fishing) Convention in totality.
2. Based on the above certificates of competency, many Fishing Vessel Personnel found employment on smaller vessels in the Arabian/Persian Gulf, West African waters, offshore fields and other restricted operation. Such personnel mainly, sailed on support vessels, stand-by vessels, survey and research vessels of less than 500 GT mainly operating in Tropical waters (areas roughly between parallels of Latitude 23- North and South). They proved themselves proficient in the area of responsibilities assigned to them and continued gainful employment till 31st January 2002 i.e. prior to implementation of STCW 78/95 Convention.
3. Consequent to adoption and coming in force of STCW 95 Code, such personnel of Fishing Vessels Certificate of Competency (COC) were no longer permitted to work on stand-by, support vessels or other aforesaid vessels w.e.f. 1st February 2002. Since the Fishing Vessel COCs were not issued in accordance with STCW 78 Convention, they could not be converted to STCW 95 COCs.
4. Recognizing that COC held by such officers coupled with hands on experience gained on such vessels ensured adequate restricted competency for stated purpose, the

arrangement in place for such officers had worked well and that the redundancy of these arrangements has caused undue hardship to the officers concerned, created manning difficulties (of reliable and trained officers) and social problem of unemployment to such officers working in this sector, matter was carefully examined at this Directorate.

5. It was observed that whilst proficiency in Navigation function was adequate, there were inadequacies in topics such as Cargo Work and Ship Operation & Care of Personnel in syllabus of Fishing grade examination system when compared with competences of STCW Code.
6. Understanding the need for conversion and taking cognizance of the experience and competence of such certificate holders, the Directorate General of Shipping (D. G. Shipping) has decided to adopt a process for issuance of restricted (R) certification to such Certificate of Competency holders. These inadequacies (in cargo and ship operation function) are intended to be met with in oral examination and the criteria for such conversion are mentioned under the sub-title New Certification (R) further in this M.S. Notice.

2. PROVISIONS

1. Under Regulation 46 of Indian M.S. (STCW) Rules 1998, the Directorate can issue such limited certificate. Similar provisions under Article IX of STCW 78/95 Convention allow administrations to adopt or retain equivalent standards for special type of trades. Further, provisions under regulation II/3.7 (exemptions) permit administrations to exempt from the full requirements of regulation II/3 and STCW Code A-II/3 to a reasonable and practicable extent bearing in mind safety of all ships, which may be operating in those waters.
2. Therefore, under the aforesaid provisions, D.G. Shipping exercising powers vested under section 456 of Indian Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, hereby approves following procedures for conversion of Fishing Grade COC into Nautical Grade COC (restricted) for above mentioned justifiable reasons.

3. APPLICATION

1. The provisions of this M.S. Notice are applicable to persons holding COC issued under either M.S. (Examination for Skipper and 2nd Hand of A Fishing Vessel) Rules 1964, or (as amended by) M.S. (Examination of Skippers and Mate of Fishing Vessels) Rules 1987 and having sailing experience on type of offshore support vessels (as stated below under Para 3.2) on or before 31.1.2002 (i.e. prior to enforcement date of M.S. STCW Rules, 1998). No further relaxation will be considered for such candidates. "This exemption shall remain only one time measure".

Such officers should also qualify under one of the following categories:-

Category	Existing Certificate held	Experience as uncertificated officer in last 5 years before 01-02-2002 on stated type of vessels
A	Skipper Grade-I (1987 Rules)	12 months in command .
B	Skipper Grade-II (1987 Rules) or Skipper (1964 Rules)	12 months in command.
C	Mate of F/ V (1987 Rules) or 2nd Hand of a F/V (1964 Rules)	12 months as 1st Mate.
D	Mate of Fishing Vessel (1987 Rules) or 2nd hand of a F/V	36 months as Navigational Watch-keeping Officer (NWKO)

- 2) For the purpose of above categories, service on one or more of following of type "i">

type of vessels (less than 500 GT) will be permitted:

1. Standby Vessels.
2. Seismic Survey Vessels.
3. Oceanographic Vessels.

4. DEFINITIONS

- 1) For the purpose of this notification, following definitions (unless expressed otherwise) shall apply-

(a) New Certificate means a certificate issued in accordance with this Notification in compliance with provisions of STCW 78/95 valid for Restricted (R) trade (as expressed therein) applicable for area bounded by parallels of 23- North and South, extending upto a limited plying range (as expressed therein) from nearest coast line or base port.

(b) Base port means a Home Port or Offshore facility which extends operational and logistic support to vessels plying in that region.

5. NEW CERTIFICATION (R) PROCESS

A candidate qualifying under one of the above categories can apply in prescribed form ([Annex-II](#)) to Mercantile Marine Department (MMD), Mumbai/Kolkata/Chennai. On satisfactory compliance with the 'Additional Requirements' listed below, he will be assessed for conversion of Fishing Grade COC to Nautical Grade COC as applicable. Eligible cases will be forwarded to the Nautical Branch of D.G. Shipping for issuance of New Certificate. This process is described in [Annex -I](#).

Notes:

- i. Fee structure, other details, oral syllabus, etc. will be publicized through notice boards of various examination centers
- ii. All applicants prior to making application (on Annex II) are required to obtain INDos number from Lal Bahadur Shastri College of Advanced Maritime Studies & Research, Mumbai in accordance with M.S. Notice No. 2 of 2001.
- iii. Further progress is possible by obtaining additional appropriate approved sea service, attending prescribed courses and passing prescribed examination.
- iv. Requirements for upgrading/Revalidating such certificates shall be issued in due course of time.

This notice is issued with the approval of the Director General of Shipping & Ex-officio Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

Sd/-

(Capt. S.K.Shukla)

Nautical Surveyor