



INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 140

Minimum Age Requirements for Seafarers

Guidance and Instructions for Bahamas Recognised Organisations, Bahamas Approved Nautical Inspectors, Ship Owners, Managers, Masters, Seafarers, Recruitment & Placement Service and Duly Authorised Manning Agents

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) specifies a minimum age requirement for seafarers employed or engaged or working onboard a ship and the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978, as amended, (STCW) specifies minimum age requirements for certification of some seafarers onboard a ship.
- 1.2. This Bulletin outlines the Bahamas requirements in relation to the minimum age for the purpose of compliance with MLC 2006 and STCW.
- 1.3. This Bulletin shall be read in conjunction with BMA Information Bulletins 103, 104, 105, 107, 118, 127, 144, 145, 146, 147 and 148.

2. Application

- 2.1. The minimum age requirement is applicable to all ships registered with the Bahamas and to all seafarers, except where expressly provided otherwise.

3. General Requirements

- 3.1. No person below the minimum age of 16 years shall be employed, engaged or work on a Bahamas registered ship.

- 3.2. No person below the minimum age of 18 years shall be employed, engaged or work on a Bahamian registered ship in the following capacities:
- Master
 - Chief Mate
 - Chief Engineer
 - Officer In charge of a Navigational Watch
 - Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch
 - Electro-Technical Officer
 - GMDSS Radio Operator
 - Offshore Installation Manager
 - Ballast Control Operator
 - Barge or Maintenance Supervisor
 - Ship Cook
- 3.3. No seafarer under the age of 18 shall work at night. For the purpose of these requirements, 'night' means a period of at least nine (9) hours starting no later than midnight ship's time and ending no earlier than 05:00 ship's time.
- 3.4. The requirement for night work may be waived where:
- i. the seafarer is engaged in a training programme that has been established by the shipowner. The training programme and schedule of night time work should be documented in the Safety Management System; or
 - ii. the specific nature of the duty or training programme, as recognised by the BMA, requires the performance of duties at night. The Company¹ shall undertake a shipboard assessment which should determine that the work will not be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of the person under 18, taking into consideration the hazards outlined in the paragraph 3.5 below.
- 3.5. No person under the age of 18 shall be employed or engaged or work on board a ship where the work is likely to jeopardise their health or safety. The Company shall take into consideration the guidelines contained in BMA Information Bulletin 145 and ensure that the Shipboard Occupational Health and Safety Plan (SOHSP) specifically address seafarers under the age of 18, including any work or activity deemed hazardous and restrictions or training requirements for such work or activity.

¹ The "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act

- 3.6. Prior to employment, the Company shall assess the competency and ability of a seafarer under the age of 18 to perform the requirements of the proposed shipboard tasks.

4. Revision History

Rev.0 (31 August 2012) – First issue