

MEASURES, ADOPTED AND ENFORCED BY THE BULGARIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION WITH RESPECT TO COVID-19

I. General

On the 13 March 2020 in relation to COVID-19 outbreak the Bulgarian government announced “emergency situation”, introducing number of restrictive measures, affecting all areas of our life. Following these measures and the prescriptions of the specially assigned National task force COVID-19, as well as the communications and guidelines of the European Commission, the International Maritime Organization, the World Health Organization, and other international bodies, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has adopted and enforced emergency procedures with respect to maritime transport and calls of Bulgarian ports. Updated information is available on the BMA’s website: www.marad.bg

II. Flag State

Currently special instructions with regard to ships’ certificates and their validity are under preparation and shortly will be circulated among the parties concerned.

III. Port State Control

1. Prior to the arrival in Bulgarian port shipmaster shall submit through the National Maritime Single Window (NMSW) a Statement containing information on the status of the ship's documents and the documents of the crew member. In case of expired documents the Statement must be accompanied by information issued by the flag or other issuing Administration on the matter.
2. The periodic inspections of foreign flagged ships are suspended.
3. Inspections may only be carried out on ships with applicable priority factors, such as:
 - a) Ships suspended or withdrawn from class for safety reasons since the last inspection carried out in the European Union or the MOU area.
 - b) Ships that are subject of a report or notification by another Member State.
 - c) Ships that cannot be identified in the inspection database.
 - d) Ships that:
 - have been involved in a collision, stranded or ran aground on the way to the port,
 - have been accused of failing to comply with the provisions in force regarding the discharge of dangerous substances or effluents,
 - have manoeuvred erratically or in unsafe way, without applying IMO-approved maritime traffic management rules or other safe navigation practices,
 - received MLC-2006 complaint.

IV. State Environmental Control of Maritime Shipping in the Bulgarian Seaports

1. In a state of emergency, state environmental control of ships will be carried out remotely, mainly through the National Maritime Single Window (NMSW)
2. The regular physical State Environmental Inspections on board ships and the control of the sulfur content of the marine fuels (Sulfur Inspections) are temporary suspended. No inspections will be carried out on board the following ships:
 - arriving from high-risk countries;

- having on board one or more persons (crew members or passengers) infected with COVID-19 or who have resided in/traveled to/via high-risk countries during the last 30 days prior to the arrival at a Bulgarian port, and on grounds for suspecting the possibility of contamination.
3. Physical inspections on board ships may be carried out in the following circumstances:
 - upon receiving a legitimate request/report/signal from a foreign authority;
 - upon receiving a signal for pollution or other violation of regulatory requirements for the prevention of environmental pollution by ships in a Bulgarian seaport;
 - when a violation related to the submission by the NMSW of documents required before arrival or departure is established.
 4. Alerts for pollution, caused by ship or other violation of the environmental requirements in the field of shipping will be received 24/7 by MRCC (contact details: <https://www.marad.bg/en/node/1281>). Signals may also be submitted to the inspectors on duty in the State Environmental Control on Shipping on the following telephone numbers 00359 888 91 07 69 for DMA - Varna and 00359 887 78 73 19 for DMA - Burgas.
 5. With respect to ships, calling Bulgarian ports, the documents control will be intensified. Extra copies of ships' certificates, plans, logbooks, photographs, etc. may be required at the discretion of the inspectors. To this end, ship agents are required to fully cooperate with the officials of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration.
 6. Ship agents are required to familiarize the masters of all ships, calling the Bulgarian ports with the specific regulatory requirements of the Bulgarian seaports, related to the prevention of the environment from pollution from ships. A general notice thereto is available at: <https://www.marad.bg/bg/node/1635>.

V. Ships in quarantine

1. Ships having on board one or more persons (crew members or passengers) infected with COVID-19 shall stay at anchorage quarantine area for 14days.
2. Ships arriving from high-risk countries for cargo operations are inspected by health inspectors. The crew is placed in quarantine for 14 days on board, cargo operations are carried out.
3. Ships arriving from high-risk countries for dry dock/ ships repair shall stay at anchorage quarantine area for 14days.

VI. Signing in/out on board a ship in Bulgarian ports

Currently, signing in/out on board a ship is not possible in Bulgarian ports. Nevertheless, in case of need to change crew members in a Bulgarian port, the competent authority will take individual decision and respective instructions will be given to the master.

VII. Validity of Seafarers's certificates

1. Extension of the validity of seafarers documents beyond their expiry date

1.1 Certificates of Competency and Certificates of Proficiency

The Bulgarian Maritime Administration has decided that the validity of Bulgarian Certificates of Competency (CoC) and Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) of the seafarers on board vessels which will be expired before 13 June 2020 are granted a general extended validity of up to 3 (three) months.

The individual seafarer will not be required to submit an application.

1.2. Medical certificates

Considering the this situation as a *force majeure*, in respect of the Bulgarian medical certificates, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration has decided to follow provisions for urgent cases allowed by the Regulation I/9 of the STCW Convention 1978 as amended and Regulation 1.2. of the MLC Convention 2006 as amended.

Based on that, the Bulgarian Maritime Administration permits a seafarer to work without a valid medical certificate provided that:

- The period does not exceed 3 (three) months; and
- The seafarer concerned holds an expired medical certificate on recent date.

1.3. Endorsement of foreign certificates

The validity of Bulgarian endorsements will be linked to the validity of the seafarer's national CoC and CoP.

If the seafarer's national CoC or CoP is revalidated, it will be possible to apply for a new endorsement to the Executive Director of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration.

The seafarer will be granted a Temporary endorsement valid for the period of up to 3 (three) months.

If the administration that has issued the seafarer's national CoC or CoP chooses a general extension of the validity of the national CoC or CoP, the validity of the Bulgarian endorsements issued based on the current CoC or CoP will automatically considered extended accordingly.

The individual seafarer will not be required to submit an application.