



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-285**

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**To: Ship-owners/Operators, of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Class Societies and Recognized Organizations (RO's).**

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**Subject: Principles of Minimum Safe Manning**

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**Reference:**

- a) **Resolution MSC. 325(90) of 24 May 2012 - Adoption of amendments to the international convention for the safety of life at sea, 1974, as amended, adopted by Resolution No. 106-OMI-118-DGMM**
  - b) **Resolution A. 1047(27) of 30 November 2011 – Principles of Minimum Safe Manning adopted through Res. 106-OMI-117-DGMM**
  - c) **Resolution 106-147-DGMM of October 15, 2013.**
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**Purpose**

1. This Merchant Marine Circular supersedes MMC. No. 21, 43, 65 and 73.

**Application**

2. Chapter V regulation 14 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended establishes that Contracting Governments undertake, each for its national ships, to maintain, or, if it is necessary, to adopt, measures for the purpose of ensuring that, from the point of view of safety of life at sea, all ships shall be sufficiently and efficiently manned.
3. Effective as of January 1983, Panama registry requires that every Passenger and Cargo Vessel of more than 200 GRT registered under the Panamanian Flag should have on board a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate. As well on 1986 and 1987 the requirement for a "Minimum Safe Manning Certificate" was extended to Mobile Offshore Drilling Units and Offshore Supply vessels registered with Panama. The Administration has revised all the existing Resolutions regarding the Rules for the Issuance of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificates contained in previous Resolutions Nos.614-308-ALCN of 31 December 1982, 603-04-222-ALCN of 27 October 1986 and 603-04-42-ALCN of 8 April 1987, through Resolution No.106-147-DGMM of October 15, 2013.
4. Article 3 of Resolution MSC.325 (90) establishes that in accordance with article VIII (b) (vii) (2) of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the amendments shall enter into force on 1 January 2014.
5. Considering the aforementioned, this Administration Adopted the Resolution A.1047 (27) which contains the Principles of Minimum Safe Manning, consisting of Guidelines for the application of principles of safe manning; Guidelines for determination of minimum safe Guidance on contents and model form of minimum safe manning document and Framework for determining minimum

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safe manning.

6. Having considered the Content of the Resolution A.1047 (27), this Administration has changed the form of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate in order to be in accordance with the model set out by the Resolution.
7. Article 2 of Resolution No.106-147-DGMM establishes that the requirements for a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate do not apply to the following vessels:
  - a. Fishing vessels
  - b. Floating Production Storage Offloading Units (FPSO)
  - c. Floating Storage Units (FSU)
  - d. Ships not propelled by mechanical means
  - e. Wooden ships of primitive build
  - f. Ships engaged to coastal trade within the jurisdictional waters of a same country
  - g. Any other ship less than 200 gross Tonnage different from the tugs or supply vessels.
8. This Administration is aware that under international law, Coastal States may impose their own regime of safety and pollution prevention requirements to vessels operating within their jurisdictional waters; therefore, the vessels in the listed in point 7 above-mentioned, will not be required to have a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC), unless a Coastal State provided otherwise.
9. In events where FPSOs/FSUs have to be disconnected and moved off location to avoid adverse/severe environmental conditions/loads, for dry-docking repair or maintenance work, it is recommended that they possess a level of safety equivalent to that afforded by the SOLAS; therefore, an authorization to ensure such safety level could be issued by this Administration through Segumar Offices, as a transitional measure until the event is completed and the FPSO/FSU returns to its stationary location.
10. Minimum Safe Manning Certificate New forms will start being issued from 1 October 2013 for vessels newly applying or requesting a new Minimum Safe Manning Certificate as well for existing ships holding a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate. It is important to indicate that Minimum Safe Manning Certificate already issued to Panamanian flag vessel will be re-issued at no cost for registered ships holding a previous Minimum Safe Manning Certificate, just please make sure to send your request for New Form of the Certificate together with copy of the SMC of the vessel or in case of vessels less than 500 GRT confirming the Name of the Company responsible for the operation of the ship. **In cases of reissuance, please attach to your e-mail, a copy of the latter MSM.**
11. The period of validity of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate is indefinite unless the circumstances of equipment, trading area and type of service change enough to affect the prescribed manning. The certificate is renewed every time there is a change of name of the vessel.
12. Furthermore the Administration stipulated as of 1 January 1987 the fee for issuance of this certificate has been US\$ 150.00.

### New Form

13. Taking into account the great volume of Minimum Safe Manning Certificates that are going to be re-issued, we strongly recommend, in order to avoid unnecessary delays while guaranteeing a proper distribution of the work load, that the users of our Registry use, for this purpose, the SEGUMAR office closer to their geographical area.
14. It is important to mention that the total main propulsion machinery power shall be stated in Kilowatts (KW) which is the measure unit used for certification of chief engineer officers and

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second engineer officers of ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 KW and 3,000 KW propulsion power.

15. All new application forms to request the minimum safe manning certificates are available in our MMC. 191.
16. We remind you that our Administration is fully committed to grant you the best service in the most prompt and efficient possible way.
17. Last but none the least, this Administration understood that some ships due to their size are carrying personnel in addition to the minimum certified manning, and considering that many times the manning does not include this personnel, the Administration has decided to include the following notation on the Minimum Safe Manning Certificates as follows: “The certificate of competency (CoC/CoP) provided shall also authorize the holder thereof to perform any lower ranking position, as long as it is of the same nature as the one for which the respective CoC or CoP was issued” for example in case that One Able Seaman (II/4) is not on board the Able Seafarer Deck (II/5) could perform such duties.

### **New STCW regulations**

18. In order to clarify some frequent inquiries about the STCW Manila Amendments 2010 in terms of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate:
  - a. The Able Seafarer Deck (ASD) and the Able Seafarer Engine (ASE), whose standards of competence were included through STCW Convention’s Manila Amendments 2010 under the regulations II/5 and III/5 respectively will be inserted on the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate as an alternative Grade / Capacity to the existing Rating forming part of the Navigational Watch (II/4) and Rating forming part of a Watch in an Engine Room (III/4).
  - b. The Electro-technical Officer (ETO) and the Electro-technical Rating (ETR) (whose standards of competence are III/6 and III/7 respectively), also included through said Amendments, are not mandatory to be inserted on the MSMC issued by this Administration.
  - c. In virtue of the STCW Regulation I/14, companies will have responsibility to ensure if a dedicated ETO is or not required onboard it vessels. Please bear in mind the content of IMO Res. A. 1047 (27), on submission from the Companies for determination of the minimum safe manning of a ship, which should be based on operational functions, Operational factors, task capabilities and workload assessments.
19. Considering the above described, the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate of a ship could be amended by this Administration if, after an evaluation and request submitted by the company, is determined that an additional Grade/ Capacity on it is required to ensure that its ship/unit is sufficiently, effectively and efficiently manned.
20. In case of having questions related to Certificate of Competence (CoC), Certificate of Competence’s Endorsement, Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) or any other consultation of certification to be held by Seafarers onboard, in those particular cases, they shall directly be sent to our colleagues of the Directorate General of Seafarer whose email addresses are as follow:  
[gentemar@amp.gob.pa](mailto:gentemar@amp.gob.pa)  
[certification@amp.gob.pa](mailto:certification@amp.gob.pa)

**October, 2017** - Paragraphs 7,8 and 9 added, after than all paragraphs has been renumbered. Typo error amended in subparagraphs a) and c) of paragraph 18.

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**August, 2016** – Amendment to paragraph 14 and adding point 15 to 17.

**July, 2014** – Adding new point 2 and point 3; renumbering points 2, 3, 4 and 5 as 4, 5, 6 and 7; adding new point 8 and 9; and renumbering point 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

**December, 2013** – Modification of point 5 and addition of new point 10 and reference c).

**September, 2013** – Modification of point 5 and addition of new points 6 and 9

**September, 2013**

**Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular or any request should be directed to:**

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