



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**Directorate General of Merchant Marine**  
**International Representative Office**

**Merchant Marine Circular No. 134**

---

<b>To:</b>	Shipowners/Operators & Merchant Marine Officers and Ratings of Panamanian Flagged Vessels.
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Validity of Course Certificates and Course Endorsements</b>
<b>References:</b>	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended in 1995 (STCW Convention)

---

In order to comply with Regulation I/6 and Section A-I/6 of the STCW78 convention, in its amended form, with regards to the training and assessment of all seafarers working aboard Panamanian flagged vessels and related, the Panama Maritime Authority hereby notifies:

**DEFINITIONS**

1. Course Certificate: document issued by the training center under which the seafarer has received specialized maritime training, which is submitted with the application for licensing and/or course endorsement.
2. Course Endorsement: document issued by a recognized maritime administration certifying the validity of the course certificate being presented, and confirming that the bearer has shown the proficiency necessary to carry out specific duties, in accordance with STCW95 regulations.

**APPLICATION:**

1. For purposes of license applications and course endorsements, all course certificates issued by Panama Maritime Authority Authorized Training Centers have a validity of:
  - a. 5 years from the date of issue; or
  - b. until the date of expiration, if such date is stated in the course certificate.
2. Any course certificate (or course endorsement) presented by a seafarer for the purposes of licensing or course endorsement, that has an issue date of more than 5 years at the time of application, or which is already expired at the time of application according to an expiration date stated in the course certificate (or course endorsement), must be presented along with evidence explicitly stating the continued validity of the course certificate (or course endorsement) under the STCW95 regulations. This evidence can be:
  - a. An STCW95 revalidation stamp upon the course certificate (or course endorsement) stating the new date of revalidation and/or expiration; or
  - b. An STCW95 course revalidation certificate; or
  - c. A statement from the regulating Maritime Administration (such as letter or regulation) concerning the continued validity (beyond 5 years or date of expiration) of the course certificate (or course endorsement) as per STCW95 regulations.
3. All course endorsements issued by the Panama Maritime Authority have a validity of 5 years. The administrative format for course endorsements has varied throughout the years. The following information is provided to help determine the validity of the endorsements, according to their date of issuance:



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**Directorate General of Merchant Marine**  
**International Representative Office**

**Format # 1:** Course Endorsements issued up to the year 2002: These documents only mention the course being endorsed and the date of issue (stated in the lower left corner) of the course endorsement. As such, they will remain valid up to 5 years from the date of the endorsement.

**Format # 2:** Course Endorsements issued between 2002 and 2004: These documents are similar to Format # 1, but have a new line located beneath the name of the course being endorsed, stating the date of issue of the course certificate (e.g. **\*\*ISSUED ON 17/06/2003**). These endorsements will remain valid for a period of 5 years from the date of issue of the course certificate. This date is not to be confused with the date of issue of the course endorsement, located in the lower left corner of the course endorsement, and which has no relevance to its time validity.

**Format # 3:** Course Endorsements issued starting 2004: These course endorsements are similar to Format # 2, but the line stating the date of issue of the course certificate has been changed to state the date of expiration of the course endorsement (e.g. **\*\*ISSUED ON 17/06/2003** changes to **\*\*EXPIRES ON 17/06/2008**).

**CLARIFICATION:**

Course endorsements are not subject to the expiration date of the license under which they were issued (license number is stated in the upper right hand corner of the course endorsement), and will continue to be valid up to their allotted time, as explained in Application Point 3.

April 2004

Revised on July 19, 2004 (Application 1., 2. and 3.)

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

Directorate General of Merchant Marine  
International Representative Office  
6 West 48<sup>th</sup> Street, 11<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10036  
U.S.A.

Phone: (212) 869-6440/1

Fax: (212) 575-2285