



NIGERIAN MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AGENCY (NIMASA) EXTENDS CERTIFICATE VALIDITY FOR SEAFARERS

The Nigerian Maritime Administration Agency (NIMASA) issued a notice extending the validity of Statutory and Trading Certificates for all Nigerian Registered vessels including the Standards of Training Certification and Watch-Keeping (STCW), to all Ship Owners, Shipping Agents, Operators, Masters, Seafarers, Flag States, Port States, Recognized Organizations and the Public, as a result of COVID-19. The Director-General of NIMASA, Dr. Bashir Jamoh, said it was necessary to ensure uninterrupted shipping, despite the pandemic, stressing that shipping is one of the major ways of moving medical aid across the globe.

This is in line with its mandate and complying with the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) circular encouraging Flag States to take pragmatic steps and practical approach concerning extending the validity of certificates. As a result of IMO's recent guidelines on the certification of seafarers and fishing vessel personnel, NIMASA had extended the validity of relevant certificates, including STCW; Mandatory and Safety certificates; and Certificates of medical fitness. Others are the Statutory and Trading Certificates related to SOLAS '74 as amended, MARPOL 73/78 as amended, Certificates of Ship Registry, National requirements for Power Driven Small Crafts (PDSC), and MLC, 2006, as amended. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the entire world, it is not only imperative that the global shipping chain keeps moving, but that the seafarers are kept in job while not jeopardizing their safety in terms of contracting the deadly virus.

The IMO Circular mandated governments around the world to designate professional seafarers and

marine personnel regardless of nationality as key workers providing essential service and grant them any necessary and appropriate exemption from national travel or movement restriction in order to facilitate their joining or leaving. Notwithstanding, Crew change or travels from or to vessels in Nigeria is subject to obtaining clearance from the Port Health and Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

The Circular further requested that extension of the validity/revalidation of related certificates with expiration dates starting from March 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020, should be for three (3) months or until the full resumption of working operations in the Agency etc. The period of extension is also subject to review; however, on revalidation of the expired certificate, the new validity shall be dated from the original certificate expiry date.

Kindly contact us for further clarifications, guidance, information or legal advice.

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Disclaimer

The write-up is meant for general information purposes only. It is not a fully comprehensive work or legal advice on this area of law. In any event, if more clarifications, questions or our assistance is required, kindly, contact us at J-K Gadzama LLP, J-K Gadzama Court, Plot 1805, Damaturu Crescent by Kabo Way, P.O.Box 20304, Garki, Off Ahmadu Bello Way, Garki 2, Abuja, FCT. Tel: +234(0)96233600, E-mail: info@j-kgadzamallp.com, website: j-kgadzamallp.com.