

PART B – CHAPTER 3

SHORT TERM AND EXTENDING CERTIFICATES

3.1 Responsibilities

3.1.1 MCA has a duty to issue certificates if a ship complies with the requirements for that certificate. A ship may be issued with a full term certificate when only minor defects need to be rectified which are not considered to significantly affect safety and pollution prevention and there is no reason to believe that the owner and master will not complete rectification by the assigned date.

3.1.2 Following satisfactory survey a surveyor submits a completed declaration of survey to the Principal Surveyor who will sign the full term certificate. This system acts as a peer review of the work carried out before a certificate is issued. Under normal circumstances the MCA will be able to arrange for the issue of a full term certificate shortly after satisfactory completion.

3.1.3 When, in the course of a survey or an inspection, it comes to the MCA's attention that a ship is unsafe, or fails to comply with merchant shipping legislation then appropriate action must be taken to prevent the ship from proceeding on a voyage. If necessary, the master, skipper or owner should be reminded that it is an offence to proceed on a voyage without a valid certificate or if the ship is unsafe for the intended voyage.

3.2 Short term certificates

3.2.1 Short term certificates (maximum validity 5 months unless agreed otherwise) may be issued by the surveyor who completed the survey in the following circumstances;

At completion of renewal survey

3.2.2 In cases where the existing certificate is due to expire within a short time and MCA is unable to arrange for the issue of the full term certificate in time the surveyor may endorse the relevant section of the harmonised certificate for a period of up to 5 months. (e.g. in accordance with Regulation I/14(d) of the SOLAS Convention, as modified by the 1988 Protocol).

3.2.3 Where the vessel does not yet have a 1988 Protocol certificate, the surveyor may issue a short term certificate for a maximum validity of 5 months. The short term certificate can be prepared in the office before final survey or alternatively a hand written certificate could be issued on board. 'Letters of satisfactory survey' or similar unofficial permissions should not be used.

Outstanding defects

3.2.4 When significant defects remain outstanding and a timescale for remedial action or strict conditions have been agreed (normally after consultation with a Principal Surveyor).

3.2.5 Safety and pollution prevention should be to an acceptable standard.

3.2.6 Serious defects must be rectified before the vessel is certificated. A Report of Inspection (MSF 1602/3) must detail defects, the required action, the timescale and the date by which the master or skipper must report to the MCA. In certain circumstances defects may prevent the full operation of the vessel. Where it is considered the owner may not complete rectification by the specified time, a short term certificate should be issued which stipulates any special conditions. See also part C chapter 4.

3.2.7 A vessel which has suffered damage may be specially considered and permitted to sail on a single voyage to effect repairs, in such circumstances the existing certificate should be cancelled and a short term certificate which stipulates any special conditions should be issued for the single voyage.
Pending Stability Approval

3.2.8 When the stability has not yet been finally approved. Provisional stability information must be available to demonstrate that the ship is safe and complies with the required standards. Approval requires confirmation of the computer definition and that the vessel complies with the criteria following lightship and inclining tests. Before the vessel is certificated, the following actions must be completed:

- (a) Provisional stability book submitted to MCA;
- (b) Confirm that the provisional stability book is on board;
- (c) Surveyor has confirmed the inclining or lightship data (as appropriate) is an accurate record, relevant to the operation of the ship and that all presented conditions meet the required stability criteria.

3.2.9 In the case of existing ships, where modifications have been made which could effect stability, the stability book should no longer be considered a valid document and the surveyor must be satisfied by submission of amendments or new stability data for approval.

3.2.10 Where the stability has not been approved and the existing certificate is due to expire, the owner may request the issue of a further short term certificate. Such a certificate may be issued by the Principal Surveyor subject to the following:

- (a) A check is made on SIAS that no incident has been reported (e.g. on the 'watch list');
- (b) A check with the Lead Surveyor or Customer Service Manager, that it is reasonable to issue a further short term certificate; and

(c) A check has been made with the Stability Unit (or other person responsible for approval of stability) that they have no objection to the issue of a further short term certificate.

3.3 Extension of Certificates

Extensions should only be given where it is reasonable and proper to do so. For example, extension requests towards the end of the re-survey window, citing non-availability of dry dock /resources available is not a justified reason as the owner has had plenty of opportunity to arrange it. However, if for example, a dry dock was booked, but the shipyard has gone out of business without warning and there is no fault on the owner, then the extension may be reasonable. In all cases the extension must be agreed by a Principal Surveyor. The IMO guidance for extensions before renewal surveys, below, should also be followed for non convention ships and surveys however where ships are on short voyages, and are in port frequently, the extension should be limited to a maximum of 1 month rather than 3 months.

(a) In SOLAS and other mandatory IMO instruments the following provision applies: "If a ship at the time when a certificate expires is not in a port in which it is to be surveyed, the Administration may extend the period of validity of a certificate but this extension shall be granted only for the purpose of allowing the ship to complete its voyage to the port in which it is to be surveyed, and then only in cases where it appears proper and reasonable to do so. No certificate shall be extended for a period longer than three months, and a ship to which an extension is granted shall not, on its arrival in the port in which is to be surveyed, be entitled by virtue of such extension to leave that port without having a new certificate."

(b) If a ship is in a port where the required survey cannot be completed, and where the Convention allows the Administration to extend the certificate when it is proper and reasonable to do so, the Administration should be guided by the following:

(c) an additional survey, equivalent to at least the same scope of an annual survey required by the relevant certificate(s) should be carried out;

(d) the renewal survey should be progressed to the maximum extent possible;

(e) in cases where a dry docking is required, but cannot be carried out, an underwater inspection of the ship's bottom should be carried out;

(f) in cases where an underwater inspection is not possible (e.g.poor water visibility, draft restrictions, excessive current, refusal by the port

Authority), an internal inspection of the ship's bottom structure, to the maximum extent practicable, should be carried out;

(g) the ship should be allowed to sail directly to a named final agreed cargo discharge port and then directly to a named agreed port to complete the survey and/or dry docking;

(h) the extension period should be for the minimum amount of time needed to complete the survey and/or dry docking under the relevant certificate(s);

(i) the condition of the ship found by the surveys indicated above should be considered in determining the duration, distance and operational restrictions, if any, of the voyage needed to complete the survey and/or dry docking; and

(j) the extension period of the relevant statutory certificate(s) should not exceed the period of validity of the certificate which may be issued to document compliance with the structural, mechanical and electrical requirements of the recognized classification society.

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