



Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MGN 134 (M+F)

Issue of Discharge Books to UK Seafarers - Changes to Categories of Eligible Seafarers

Notice to Shipowners and Managers, Masters, Officers and Crew of Merchant Ships, Skippers, Officers and Crew of Fishing Vessels and Masters, Officers and Crew of Pleasure Vessels (including Yachts) who receive Wages for their Employment.

Summary

This Marine Guidance Note sets out details of changes to the regulations governing the issue of UK Discharge Books which, in certain circumstances will permit the issue of UK discharge books to UK seafarers on non-UK registered ships. Changes have also been made to the categories of seafarers eligible to apply for a UK discharge book.

(A) ISSUE OF DISCHARGE BOOKS TO UK SEAFARERS ON NON-UK SHIPS

1. The Merchant Shipping (Seamen's Documents) Regulations 1987 provided that seafarers of whatever nationality who were, or had been, employed on a UK registered vessel could apply for a UK discharge book unless they already held a discharge book issued by one of the administrations listed in those regulations. Seafarers employed on non-UK vessels who had not previously served on a UK registered vessel were however ineligible to apply even if they were UK citizens.

2. The MCA recognises that inconvenience can be caused to UK seafarers who are unable to obtain a discharge book from either the UK or the flag state of the vessel upon which they are serving. The Merchant Shipping (Seamen's Documents) (Amendment) Regulations 1999 which came into force on 1 January 2000 seek to remedy this problem. They provide that if a person is a British Citizen as defined in the British Nationality Act 1981 (i.e. a person having the right of abode in the UK) they may be issued with a UK discharge book **if they are unable to obtain a discharge book from or acceptable to the flag state of the vessel upon which they are serving.**

3. Seafarers holding discharge books issued by one of the Governments listed in the annex to this

MGN will, however, still not be eligible for the issue of a UK Discharge Book.

(B) ISSUE OF DISCHARGE BOOKS TO UK SEAFARERS PREVIOUSLY INELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR ONE

4. Following a review of the restrictions on the issue of discharge books, applications can now be accepted from:-

- (i) persons employed in ships, other than "light ships", belonging to a general lighthouse authority;
- (ii) persons employed in ships of less than 80 registered tons engaged solely on coastal voyages;
- (iii) persons employed in pleasure vessels (including yachts) provided that they receive wages for their employment and that the vessels go to sea;
- (iv) persons employed in a ship solely to provide goods, personal services or entertainment on board, and employed by a person other than the owner or the person(s) employing the master, and who is not a member of the medical or catering staff in the ship;
- (v) persons employed in fishing vessels.

5. Only the following will continue to be excluded from applying for a UK discharge book

- (i) persons employed in vessels which do not go to sea;
- (ii) persons employed in pleasure vessels who receive no wages for their employment;
- (iii) persons employed in ships engaged on coastal voyages around the UK solely for the purpose of trials of the ship, its machinery or equipment, where such persons are not ordinarily employed as masters or seamen;
- (iv) persons in the employment of the Crown who are not ordinarily employed as masters or seamen;
- (v) persons employed in a ship solely in connection with the construction, alteration, repair or testing of the ship, and not engaged in the navigation of the ship unless such person is a normal member of the crew;
- (vi) persons holding documents containing substantially the same information, issued by one of the governments listed in the annex to this MGN;
- (vii) persons employed on un-registered vessels;
- (viii) persons, other than UK seafarers, employed on non-UK registered vessels.

APPLICATIONS

6. New application forms will be available in due course covering these changes. These will be available from Marine Offices and the Registry of Shipping, to whom applications should continue to be made in person or by post as appropriate. However existing forms may be used provided that the following **additional** information is provided:-

(a) **SEAFARERS ON UK REGISTERED VESSELS**

- (i) a declaration stating the name of the seafarer together with the name and registered number of the vessel and confirming that the seafarer has served or is, or will be, serving on that vessel and that he does not hold a discharge book issued by one of the administrations listed in the Annex to this MGN. The declaration is to be on company headed paper and is to be signed by the master, employer or employer's representative and be stamped with the company or ship's stamp; or

(b) **UK SEAFARERS ON NON-UK REGISTERED VESSELS**

- (i) a declaration stating the name of the seafarer together with the name, registered number and flag state of the vessel and confirming that the seafarer is or will be serving on that vessel. In addition the declaration should state why it has not been possible to obtain a discharge book from or acceptable to the flag state. The declaration is to be on company headed paper and is to be signed by the master, employer or employer's representative and be stamped with the company or ship's stamp, and;

- (ii) evidence that the applicant is a UK seafarer. This can be proved by sending a UK passport, Birth Certificate or Certified Extract of Registration of the seafarer's birth or any other document issued by a British Government representative or the Home Office which proves the seafarer's right of abode in the UK.

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COUNTRIES WHOSE DISCHARGE BOOKS OR SIMILAR DOCUMENTS ARE ACCEPTABLE FOR SEAMEN ON UK VESSELS - THE HOLDERS OF DOCUMENTS ISSUED BY THESE COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT APPLY FOR UK DISCHARGE BOOKS

Bangladesh	Jamaica	Sierra Leone
Barbados	Kenya	Singapore
Canada	Kiribati	South Africa
Falkland Islands	Malaysia	Sri Lanka
Fiji	Malta	Tanzania
Ghana	Mauritius	Tonga
Guyana	Nigeria	Trinidad & Tobago
Hong Kong	Pakistan	Tuvalu
India	Papua New Guinea	Western Samoa
Republic of Ireland	Saint Lucia	Zambia
Isle of Man	Seychelles	

