



CIRCULAR

Panama Maritime Authority - Crew Dispensations under the Article VIII of the 1978 STCW Convention

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Notice to: Ship Owners / Managers / Operators / Surveyors / Auditors

The Panama Maritime Authority has updated Circular [MMC-175](#) to to inform users of the Panamanian Registry that in accordance with Article VIII of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, the Panama Maritime Authority may, under exceptional circumstances and when deemed necessary, issue a Dispensation allowing a specific seafarer to serve on a specific ship for a defined period, provided that, in the Authority's assessment, such authorization does not compromise the safety of persons, property, or the protection of the environment.

Requests for the Issuance of a Dispensation

Requests for the issuance of a Dispensation in accordance with Article VIII of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, shall be submitted to the Headquarters or the Regional Documentation Offices (RDO) of the General Directorate of Seafarers.

The Panama Maritime Authority specifies that Dispensations may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Force Majeur Cases
- Family related Reasons
- Medical Reasons
- Special Circumstances

To apply for a Dispensation the company shall comply with the technical and administrative requirements established by the General Directorate of Seafarers and submit a completed application form.

Special Requirements for the Issuance of a Dispensation

The Panama Maritime Authority specifies that, for the positions of Master and Chief Engineer, a Dispensation granted under Article VIII of the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, may only be issued in cases of force majeure and shall be limited to the shortest possible period necessary.

A Dispensation issued for positions other than those of Master and Chief Engineer, shall be granted for a defined period, which shall not exceed six (6) months.

[Act now](#)

Ship Owners / Managers / Operators should take note of the circular and be guided accordingly.