Guidelines for the Issue of Hong Kong Licences to holders of non-Hong Kong Certificates under the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as Amended

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with Regulations I/2 and I/10 of STCW Convention and the Hong Kong legislation, a seafarer manning an officer's station on a Hong Kong registered ship is required to hold either a valid Hong Kong certificate of competency or a Hong Kong licence of the appropriate class and with an endorsement in conformity with the requirements of the STCW Convention.

2. Issue of Full Term Licences

2.1 It is the general duty of shipowners and ship managers to ensure that officers with the right qualifications are recruited from reliable sources to avoid fraudulent certificate holders being employed by the companies, which may result in subsequent repatriation and possible port State detentions after their employment onboard ships. STCW certificates of competency issued by the following Administrations are recognized for the issue of full term Hong Kong licences, with a period of validity up to the expiry date of the original certificate being recognized:

Australia	Liberia
Bangladesh	Lithuania
Belgium	Malaysia
Bulgaria	Marshall Islands
Canada	Montenegro
China, People's Republic of	Myanmar
Croatia	Netherlands
Cyprus	New Zealand
Czech Republic	Norway
Denmark	Pakistan
Dominica	Panama
Egypt	Papua New Guinea
Estonia	Philippines
Ethiopia	Poland
Fiji	Portugal
Finland	Romania
France	Russia
Georgia	Serbia
Germany	Singapore

Ghana	Slovenia
Greece	South Africa
Iceland	Spain
India	Sri Lanka
Indonesia	Sweden
Iran	Thailand
Ireland	Turkiye
Jamaica	Ukraine
Korea, Republic of	United Kingdom
Latvia	Vietnam

3. Issue of Short Term Licences

3.1 STCW certificates of competency issued by the following Administrations are recognized for the issue of short term Hong Kong licence with a period of validity of 12 months or up to the expiry date of the original certificate being recognized, whichever is earlier:

Argentina	Brazil
Malta	Solomon Islands

4. Revalidation of Short Term Licences

4.1 Subject to the validity of the STCW certificates of competency, holders of short term Hong Kong licences can apply for revalidation of their licences for another period of 12 months if they can produce satisfactory proof of their continued employment on a Hong Kong registered ship. The fee for revalidation of the short term licence is HK$155.

4.2 Upon a decision of full recognition of those STCW certificates issued by the Administrations listed in paragraph 3, the issue of short term licences based on such certificates will be discontinued and full term licences will be issued instead. Holders of these short term licences can then apply for renewal of their short term licences with full term licences. The fee for such renewal will be HK$400.

5. Issue of GMDSS Operator Endorsement

5.1 Applicants holding a recognized STCW certificate of competency as deck or engineer officer, if they are also holding an appropriate and valid GMDSS radio operator certificate issued by one of the Administrations listed in paragraph 2 or paragraph 3 above, may apply for a GMDSS operator endorsement together with the licence application. The GMDSS operator endorsement, if approved, will be included in the Hong Kong licence. The endorsement will expire on the same date as the recognized GMDSS radio operator certificate. Holders of such GMDSS operator endorsements are considered to be qualified to work as radio operators on

Hong Kong registered GMDSS ships.

5.2 As an alternative to paragraph 5.1 above, if deck officers or engineer officers who also hold an appropriate and valid GMDSS radio operator certificate issued by the Administrations listed in paragraphs 2 or paragraph 3 above, they may apply to the Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) for a stand-alone certificate of equivalent competency for the purpose of serving as radio operators on board Hong Kong registered GMDSS ships. Radio officers holding a radio operator certificate issued by the Administrations listed in paragraphs 2 and 3 above should apply to OFCA for the issue of a stand-alone certificate of equivalent competency for serving as radio operators on board Hong Kong registered GMDSS ships.

6. Issue of Dangerous Cargo Endorsement

6.1 Applicants for a Hong Kong licence, if they are also holding an appropriate and valid dangerous cargo endorsement issued by the Certification Authority of their original certificates of competency for service on board tankers, may apply for an equivalent dangerous cargo endorsement on the Hong Kong licence.

7. Application Procedures

7.1 Application for the issue of a Hong Kong licence should be made on the prescribed application form (MD 680). Application forms can be obtained from the Seagoing Examination and Merchant Marine Office on the 3rd floor of the Harbour Building, or can be downloaded from the Marine Department's website (https://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/pdf/md680.pdf). Application for Hong Kong licence can be made in person, by post/ fax/ email or on-line through the Marine Department Electronic Business System (eBS). Detailed procedures for application by post is stipulated in the Appendix 1 and procedures for on-line application through eBS is stipulated in Appendix 2.

8. Authenticity of Documents

8.1 In accordance with the guidance promulgated by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for preventing fraudulent certificates, the authenticity of the original certificate of competency will be verified with the issuing authority prior to the issue of Hong Kong Licence.

9. Rejection of Application

9.1 The Director of Marine reserves the right to reject an application for a Hong Kong licence or an endorsement if he is not entirely satisfied that the applicant is a fit person to be a holder of the licence or endorsement and to act competently in the capacity to which it relates. He also reserves the right to subsequently cancel a licence or endorsement if it is established that the licence or endorsement was issued based on fraudulent information.

10. Enquires

10.1 Enquiries relating to certification, licensing and GMDSS operator endorsement procedures for deck and engineer officers should be directed to:

Senior Surveyor
Seagoing Examination and Mercantile Marine Office
Marine Department
3/F, Harbour Building
38 Pier Road, Central
Hong Kong

Tel. No.: (852) 2852 4383
Fax No.: (852) 2541 6754
E-mail : sssem@mardep.gov.hk

10.2 Enquiries relating to certificate of equivalent competency for radio operators should be directed to:

Support Services Sub-section
Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA)
20/F, Wu Chung House
213 Queen's Road East
Wan Chai
Hong Kong

Tel. No.: (852) 2961 6608
Fax No.: (852) 3155 0914
E-mail: maritime@ofca.gov.hk

Application of Hong Kong Licences by post

For the application of Hong Kong licences by post, each completed application form (MD 680) should be submitted with the following documents :

(a) The certificate of competency held.

(b) Dangerous Cargo Endorsement - if the applicant applies for a dangerous cargo endorsement on the Hong Kong licence.

(c) GMDSS Radio Certificate if the applicant applies for a GMDSS Operator Endorsement on the Hong Kong licence.

(d) A valid medical fitness certificate issued by an approved medical practitioner.

(e) Passport.

(f) One passport size photograph (40 mm x 50 mm). The photograph should show the full face from head to shoulder without hat. The name of the applicant should be printed on the back of the photograph.

(g) Prescribed fee in Hong Kong Dollars for each application. All cheques, drafts, orders and remittance should be made payable to "The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" (or "The Government of the HKSAR") and crossed. Cash must not be sent by post. The fee for the issue of a Hong Kong licence is HK$400 to be paid when submitting application.

For the above items (a) to (e), a legible true copy certified by the employer instead of the original certificate would be acceptable. The passport copy should include date of issue, date of birth and nationality.

Acknowledgment of application

Ship owner/agent applying for Hong Kong licences on behalf of officers under their employment should complete the form of "Consolidated Application for the Issue of Hong Kong Licence(s)" (downloadable from "https://www.mardep.gov.hk/en/forms/pdf/md681.pdf ") and fax or email the same to the Seagoing Examination and Mercantile Marine Office on fax no. (852) 2541 6754 or email address ebs_crt@mardep.gov.hk together with the application form (MD 680) and legible copies of the documents stipulated in items (a) to (e) of the above paragraph. After passing the initial vetting of the above documents, the "Consolidated Application for the Issue of Hong Kong Licence(s)" will be endorsed by this Department as acknowledgement of the receipt of application in accordance with paragraph 5 of Regulation I/10 of the STCW Convention. The applicant may enter the CRA number to check the application status in "Seafarer Licence Application Status Enquiry" on MD website.

This acknowledgement, together with the applicant's original certificate of competency, will enable the holder to serve on board a Hong Kong registered ship in the specified or lower rank for a period not exceeding 3 months. Formal application together with certified true copies of the required documents should be submitted as soon as possible to ensure that the licences can be issued and received by the applicant within the stipulated 3-month period.

Procedures for on-line Application for the issue of Hong Kong Licence through the Marine Department Electronic Business System (eBS) :

1) All new eBS system users shall open an account in eBS in accordance with the following:

a) Please download the application form "Application for Registration of Account in eBS" at http://ebs.mardep.gov.hk/download/e2reg_en.pdf.

b) For shipping company selecting online payment, such as credit card (i.e. Master, Visa, and Unionpay), PPS (Payment by Phone Service), and etc., please select "Join neither the Autopay nor Deposit Account Scheme" in section E of the application form and submit the completed application form to the Marine Department.

c) For shipping company selecting Autopay Scheme with a bank in Hong Kong :

i) Please complete the "Direct Debit Authorization (DDA) Form" and submit it directly to the bank with which the bank account is to be used for autopay.

ii) The DDA form could be obtained from the bank or the HSBC web site http://www.hsbc.com.hk/1/2/hk/banking/download (please select "Direct Debit Authorisation"). A copy of the completed DDA form and the application form for registration of account in eBS should be submitted to the Marine Department.

(Applicants who already have an active autopay account with the Marine Department shall complete the "Direct Debit Authorization Form for Existing Autopay User" and submit it with the eBS application, submission of a new "DDA Form" to the bank is NOT required.)

d) For shipping company selecting Deposit Account Scheme, please submit the following documents:

i) completed "Application for Registration of Account in eBS" and select Deposit Account Scheme in section E of the application form; and

ii) a copy of the receipt regarding the telegraph transfer of an initial deposit of HKD20,000 to the stipulated bank account of the Hong Kong SAR Government.

(Applicants who already have an active deposit account with the Marine Department shall only complete the form "Application for Registration of Account in eBS" and submit it to the Marine Department.)

2) Existing eBS users who would like to join the on-line service for submission of application for Hong Kong licences are required to submit an application form namely "Application for modification of account in electronic business system" (form can be

downloaded at http://ebs.mardep.gov.hk/download/e2mod_en.pdf) to include this new eBS service into their accounts.

3) Registration result (with login information for successful application) will be sent to the email address designated by the applicant in the application form. Successful applicants may log on to the eBS at http://ebs.mardep.gov.hk/ and use the on-line services for licence application.

4) Seafarers applying for Hong Kong licences should complete the application form (MD 680) and send it with the supporting documents to the shipping company for further processing by eBS. A downloadable template has been provided in the eBS system to permit the batch processing of the applications. A simplified description of the licence application process is as follows:- after logging on to the eBS, select "Services" and then "payment method"; download the "template" and fill it in; upload the completed template and a copy of the supporting documents to the eBS system. The information on the application form is to be used for completing the downloaded template. Shipping company is not required to send the original copy of the application form (MD 680) or the supporting documents to the Marine Department but need to keep them in its office or its agent's office for at least 6 months for verification where necessary.

5) An e-mail will be dispatched to the shipping company after successful submission of an application. A reference number together with the application status will also be included. Users are able to check the status of their application by using the eBS reference number after logging on to the eBS at http://ebs.mardep.gov.hk/.

6) If a shipping company is notified that an application is rejected, the shipping company is required to submit a new application if the concerned seafarer is still interested to apply for a Hong Kong licence.

7) If the licence application is successful, eBS will send an email to the shipping company requesting confirmation of fee payment. The shipping company is required to confirm payment via eBS by clicking on the "Application Status" and selecting the button for confirming payment for the concerned application. Hong Kong licence will only be issued upon successful payment of the fee.

8) Both the demand note and the e-CRA are sent through the eBS to the companies. Shipping companies may log on to the eBS, click on the "Application Status", select the Application and download the e-CRA.

9) Hong Kong licences will be dispatched to the shipping company after payment has been confirmed.

Acknowledgment of application

A shipping company submitting applications via eBS can download a copy of the "Consolidated Application for the Issue of Hong Kong Licence(s)" after confirming payment for the Hong Kong licences application. This copy of "Consolidated Application for the Issue of Hong Kong Licence(s)" together with the applicant's original certificate of competency, will enable the certificate holder to serve on board a Hong Kong registered ship in the specified or lower rank for a period not exceeding 3 months.