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Extension of STCW Certificates for Fijian Seafarers

Since COVID-19 became a global pandemic, this has been a cause of great concern for our Fijian seafarers, severely affecting the conduct of trainings, revalidation of certificates and crew change.

The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) after noting the International Maritime Organisation Circular letter No.4204/Add.5/Rev.1 dated 02 April 2020 encouraging Maritime Administrations and Port State Control authorities to take a pragmatic and practical approach regarding the extension of the validity of seafarer's certificates and endorsements, in accordance with the STCW Convention, 1978 as

amended.

Therefore, MSAF is further extending the duration of the following Maritime Documents:

- Standards of Training Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) certificates;
- STCW Short Courses; and
- Medical Certificates

All Fiji STCW certificates, inclusive of relevant endorsements expired within the period stated on Marine Notice 14/2021, Marine Notice 26/2021 and Marine Notice 34/2021 will be further extended to 10 August, 2022.

With the current extension now in place, all licensed manning agencies and shipping companies

have been requested to ensure that it's crew are compliant with the above-mentioned STCW requirements, and will have to submit to MSAF the list of their crew members whose validity of STCW certificates have been extended.

All Fijian seafarers are encouraged to revalidate their Certificates of Competency (COC) and Certificates of Proficiencies (COP) after completing their online/face to face courses, as applicable to their certificate at the earliest opportunity in accordance with the standard requirements for revalidation.

The 5 year validity date shall be taken from the original expiration date of the previous certificate.

STCW audit completed

The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji successfully completed a virtual Standard of Training Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) audit, making it the very first STCW audit for the country.

The STCW audit is a compulsory audit which is undertaken by all International Maritime Organisation (IMO) member states, ensuring that all seafaring certifications linked to STCW are in line with the IMO requirements and standards.

The Audit is Fiji's effort to reflect on our commitment to the STCW convention and this is evident in the domestication of the Maritime STCW Convention regulations 2014 and the administrative system to ensure that the standards are met effectively.

The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) plays a pivotal role in ensuring that STCW stan-

dards are implemented within the administrative body to the approved institutions, our seafarers and the maritime industry at large.

In opening the virtual audit, MSAF's Executive Board Chairman, Mr David Kolitagane said Fiji has a total of 5,302 seafarers who are required under the STCW convention and its applicable amendment to have an international standard of certification and training to meet the IMO requirement.

The STCW audit was conducted by the Ship Classification Society - Nippon Kaiji Kyokai (ClassNK). The organisation's primary objective is to ensure all third party certification that is ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 and ISO 39001 are certified as well as of international standards.

MSAF and its training institute, Fiji Maritime Academy were part of the audit.

Mr Kolitagane said Fiji upholds its position to undertake compulsory member state audit as it ensures that administrative member states comply with all regulations outlined in the STCW conventions.

"In recent years, audits of this nature have allowed Fiji to also correct and develop enhanced strategies to ensure compliance to the mandatory IMO instruments to which Fiji is a party to. As a result of these, administrative processes are re-aligned and improved, ensuring our duties are fulfilled toward the global maritime sector," Mr Kolitagane said.

The audit captured the essence of Fiji's duty to undertake and give effect to the provisions of the STCW and its applicable amendments and the ongoing commitment to take necessary steps to promulgate all recent STCW amendments into local laws.



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Kolitagane

His Excellency the President Visits Msaf HQ

The visit by the Head of State, His Excellency Ratu Wiliamse Katonivere to MSAF headquarters in February reaffirmed MSAF's commitment in advocating on the need to prioritise safety at all times.

His Excellency shared a personal and very emotional experience with the MSAF staff, after losing his older brother out at sea during a fishing trip. This had prompted His Excellency who is also the paramount chief of the Macuata Province to strongly advocate on safety at sea.

"My brother's incident was unfortunate and there are other cases similar to his. It's sad

but things have changed and we have very few incidents out at sea now."

His Excellency further stated that, "One of the most important things that I am advocating for is safety at sea. With the country expanding in the trade market and the only way to ship these items is through sea, its only right for me to advocate on safety."

The Fijian Government ratified the Safety of Life At Sea Convention (SOLAS) on July 18, 1985, to this date Fiji is one of the 162 countries in the world that has ratified the SOLAS convention, ensuring that safety is always key when traveling out sea.





Twelve personnel from the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) are now certified Maritime Auditors after successfully completing the five days virtual Maritime Auditors course on three key areas.

The Maritime Auditors Course was facilitated by MSAF in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) through the funding allocation from the International Maritime Organisation.

The five days training was conducted by Dr Jeffrey Hawkins from the Asia Pacific Maritime Institute.

At the completion of the training, the 12 personnel have gained

insight and knowledge on the fundamentals of good auditing practice and how to conduct maritime audit either as part of an audit, team or sole auditor.

The training also enabled the

auditors to keep track of international maritime conventions and related IMO conventions (SOLAS, MARPOL) and how it will assist in practising good auditing measures which will greatly improve

safety outcomes. The audit will also enable the Authority to verify its system's effectiveness by carrying out regular audits of its management system, as it is through audit that the management can see areas of improvements and how problems can resolved effectively and efficiently.

The training has also equipped the trainers with skills which will greatly enhance the monitoring and implementation of port security, quality management and safety management systems which will greatly benefit ship owners, ship agents and other stakeholders.

Maritime Auditors Training



TRIBUTE

Captain Ratu Ilaitia Ratumainaceva Tuicakau



The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji in January, this year, paid our final respects to one of our key employee, Captain Ratu Ilaitia Ratumainaceva Tuicakau.

Captain Ilaitia joined the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji in March, 2016 as a Port State Control Officer, with more than 25 years of service as a foreign going seafarer.

A hard worker and courageous shipman Captain Tu Lai (as he was commonly known) was soon promoted to the position of Senior Surveyor Deck in April of 2020 and later took on another role of Senior Port State Control Officer/Surveyor in the same year.

We wish the late Captain Tu Lai fair winds and following seas. Rest easy Captain, you stand properly relieved we have the watch. May his soul rest in God's embrace.

Safety is paramount

The Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji has continued to conduct Boat Master License and Restricted Master Engineer Class 6 (BML/RME 6) training at various localities across the country.

More than 500 Fijians have now attained their BML/RME6 licenses after completing the two weeks course for the third quarter of 2021/2022.

Our training teams, consisting of four officers from the Qualifications and Licensing Department, have continued to travel to communities requesting for the training on the two licenses.

The training is focused on learning about safety out at sea and the engine component of vessels less than 15meters. BML holders can operate a boat within sheltered waters (from the reef to mainland) and RME 6 license holders can operate a boat from 15 nautical miles from the reef to mainland



CHECKLIST

Boats less than 15 metres

- Do you hold a current license?
- Have you checked the latest weather forecast?
- Has the vessel and safety equipment been checked?
- Is there enough fuel for the trip (and reserve)?
- Are there adequate spare safety equipment and tools on board?
- Is there sufficient food, water, and a first aid kit?
- Have you informed someone of your departure and estimated return times?
- Are you familiar with the area you are going, or have you sought local knowledge?

MSAF is the sole regulatory authority in Fiji that monitors and ensures all vessels registered in Fiji comply with all International Maritime Organisation instruments the Fijian Government had rectified.

Vision

The vision of the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji is ensuring a safe, secure and clean seas for all

Mission

The mission of the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji is enhancing maritime safety and protecting the maritime environment.

Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji [MSAF], in collaboration with the Fiji College of General Practitioners [FCGP] had accepted the applications of the Medical General Practitioners (GPs) and Optometrists in three divisions (Central, West and North) to conduct medical examinations as well as eye sight tests for seafarers as per the requirements under the Maritime (STCW Convention) Regulation 2014 and its subsequent Regulations.

With the recent advertisement of the list of

New General Practitioners & Optometrists List

GPs and Optometrists, seafarers are no longer required to collect medical forms from any MSAF office, as these approved list of GPs and Optometrists have been supplied with the forms. The doctor will send a copy

to MSAF for seafarer's file after examination. For qualifications above the Boat Master Licenses level, examination by a MSAF approved doctor is required.

For Boat Master Licenses and Restricted Master Engineer Class 6, these examinations can be conducted by any registered medical practitioner at any medical centre around Fiji.

The approved list can be viewed on our website <https://www.msaf.com.fj/medical-practitioners/#SUVAo7>.



A Government delegation consisting of representatives from various Government Ministries and Statutory bodies visited Raviravi Village on the Island of Beqa where they presented on key projects and also compiled issues that needed to be addressed on the island.

The delegation was led by Divisional Commissioner Central Mr Josefa Navuku, whereby the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji's Awareness Officer Duru-

Safety at sea is the key

solo Turuva was part of the Awareness and Talanoa session.

The visitation by the Government team is part of the Government's development outreach efforts and discussions were aligned to development needs.

While presenting on

behalf of the MSAF, Mr Turuva spoke on the need to practice safety at sea at all times.

With Beqa Islanders having to travel on boat as their means of transportation to and from the Island, Mr Turuva reiterated MSAF's stand on educating passengers and boat masters alike on their roles and responsibilities in ensuring their safety while traveling on a boat.



RESPONSIBILITIES OF A PASSENGER

- The boat operator has a license
- The boat is surveyed
- Only the right number of passengers are on board
- The weather is favourable for voyage
- The decision to travel or not to travel rests with you.
- life jackets are available

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