



REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure  
Directorate General for Maritime Affairs

Ref No: 21956  
Ankara, 30..March 2020

H.E. Mr. Kitack LIM  
Secretary General  
International Maritime Organization

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Operational measures concerning certification related to Novel Corona Virus (Covid-19), taken by the Republic of Turkey is hereby submitted to the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a guidance to assist shipowners, operators, seafarers and recognized organizations that may be experiencing difficulty in conducting ship operations due to Covid-19 outbreak.

Restricted access to shipyards and ports for auditors and surveyors, quarantine implementations, travel restrictions, etc., needs to be considered as a force majeure situation. The measures will only be valid during Covid-19 situation. The items which relate to all Turkish seafarers and all Turkish flagged ships, under the registry of recognized organizations that have been authorized by the Republic of Turkey provide assistance for Covid-19 related delays in conducting statutory surveys, audits and crew changes, etc. to maintain validity of the certificates and documents, Besides, the document determines the conditions which enable recognized organizations to extend certificates and survey period on behalf of the Republic of Turkey.

The Organization is requested to circulate these measures to the attention of the IMO Contracting Governments.

Yours Sincerely,

Ahmet Selçuk SERT  
Director General



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**COVID-19 - Extension of Certificates of Vessel, Certificates of Seafarers and  
Instructions for Recognized Organizations**

**1. Purpose**

1.1. This document instructs Recognized Organizations on the extension of statutory inspections and issuance/endorsement of statutory certificates, surveys and audits periods, and seafarers certification due to COVID-19 outbreak.

**2. Application**

2.1. This document applies to all Turkish flagged ships, under registry of recognized organizations that have been authorized by Republic of Turkey, and all Turkish seafarers.

**3. References**

3.1. Agreements between the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and recognized organizations concerning authorization covers, carrying out surveys, and issuing, endorsing and renewing certificates, in accordance with the “Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC)” 2017 set out in the annex of the Resolution A.1120(30) as may be amended for Turkish flagged ships.

3.2. IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.1

IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.2

IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.3

IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.4

IMO Circular Letter No. 4204/Add.5

**4. Background**

4.1. Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19), Turkish Maritime Administration (TMA) has received inquiries from shipowners and Recognized Organizations (RO) regarding postponement of inspections and survey date and extending the validity of statutory certificates due to difficulties caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. This includes an extension of statutory certificates or postponement of bottom inspections as a result of unavailable dry-dock facilities as well as timely completion of ISM internal audits and ISM/MLC/ISPS periodical, annual intermediate and renewal



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verifications. Inquiries regarding Certificates of Competency, Certificates of Proficiency and Minimum Safe Manning Documents are received as well.

4.2. Travelling, both nationally and internationally, has become increasingly more difficult due to imposed travel bans. Combined travel restrictions implemented by governments and companies cause difficulties for providing surveyors and auditors as well as continued training of seafarers, revalidation of certificates of competencies, medical certificates, etc., when needed. Furthermore, numerous shipyards cannot accommodate vessels, even for booked and planned inspections and surveys which require dry-dock.

4.3. Based on the above conditions, the TMA considers the COVID-19 outbreak to be a force majeure situation.

4.4. For the TMA, the main focus is that Turkish flagged ships shall maintain their operations despite possible expired certificates caused by the current and probable COVID-19 situation.

## **5. Instructions**

The TMA has decided that certificates and survey and audit period may be granted up to 3-month extension according to nature of certificates and surveys. TMA has circulated instructions to its recognized organizations with detailed explanations.

5.1. The TMA has authorized its recognized organizations to extend certificates and period of survey and audits as well as conducting their audits by using remote method and issue electronic certificates on behalf of Republic of Turkey during Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2. The extension will also apply to certificates issued by service providers including, but not limited to issued re-certifying life-saving equipment, fire-fighting equipment.

5.3. While all reasonable efforts should be taken to ensure that statutory certificates are kept valid, ROs are hereby authorized to grant extension as described in paragraph 5.1 above.

5.4. The TMA has granted extension of 3 months from the expiry date of the Seaman's Books, Certificates of Competencies (COC), GMDSS Radio Operator Certificates (ROC/GOC/REO), STCW Certificates and Medical Fitness Certificates expiring before 24 June 2020 without any further application or approval.

5.5. RO's shall inform the TMA of when and to which vessels are granted extension under paragraph 5.1