

## **MCI Circular 319**

**To:** All Owners, Operators, Managers, and Masters of Vessels Registered in the Cook Islands

**Subject:** IMSAS Audit – Potential Impact on Seafarer, Survey and Certification Services

**Date:** 20 August 2025

### **1. Purpose of this Circular**

This Circular is to advise all Cook Islands-registered vessels that the Cook Islands Ministry of Transport, together with associated maritime agencies – including Maritime Cook Islands in its capacity as the Flag State Administration and Ship Registry – will undergo an IMO Member State Audit Scheme (IMSAS) audit from 29 September to 6 October 2025.

### **2. About the IMSAS Audit**

The IMSAS audit is an International Maritime Organization (IMO) programme that assesses how effectively a Member State is implementing and enforcing its obligations under mandatory IMO instruments, including conventions such as SOLAS, MARPOL, STCW, CLOREG, Tonnage and Load Line.

#### **The audit involves:**

- Reviewing national laws, regulations, and administrative procedures.
- Evaluating how the Administration implements, monitors, and enforces international maritime obligations.
- Identifying areas for improvement to ensure full compliance and alignment with international standards.

For the Flag State Administration, this means demonstrating our processes, records, and systems to independent auditors, as well as responding to questions and providing supporting evidence during the audit period.

### **3. Potential Service Delays**

In preparation for and during the audit, Maritime Cook Islands' Seafarer Department and Regulatory Technical and Operations Department teams will need to dedicate significant time and resources to audit-related activities. As a result:

- **From 1 September to 15 October 2025**, there may be delays in processing Seafarer, Survey and Certification requests.

- The teams will continue to prioritise urgent cases; however, routine service times may be longer than usual.

#### **4. Recommended Actions for Vessel Operators**

To minimise any potential impact on your operations, we strongly recommend:

- Submitting service requests as early as possible within the affected period.
- Ensuring that documentation is complete and accurate at the time of submission.
- Allowing extra lead time for responses to enquiries and processing of certificates.

#### **5. Commitment to Service**

Maritime Cook Islands remains committed to meeting your service needs and will make every effort to minimise disruption. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation during this important compliance process, which ultimately benefits the safety, security, and environmental performance of the Cook Islands fleet.