

MCI Circular 320

To: Vessel Owners, Managers, Masters, Officers, Approved Maritime Training Institutions, Agents and all other interested parties

Subject: Update to [MCI Circular 316/2025](#): Important Notice – Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), India Circular No. 31 of 2025

Date: 04 September 2025

Summary:

This circular is issued as an **update** to Maritime Cook Islands (MCI) Circular 316/2025, dated 23 July 2025.

MCI draws your attention to Addendum – I to DGS (NT/ENG) Circular No. 31 of 2025, issued by the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS), India (attached below).

The Addendum introduces stricter verification measures for Indian nationals holding Certificates of Competency (CoC) or Certificates of Proficiency (CoP) issued by foreign maritime administrations not recognised under a bilateral agreement with India (refer to Annexure A of DGS Circular 31 of 2025).

Key Points for Indian nationals holding foreign CoCs not recognized by India:

1. Verification Process:
 - Indian seafarers must undergo a verification process facilitated through their DGS approved Recruitment and Placement Service License (RPSL) agency.
 - The process includes submission of:
 - CoC/CoP,
 - STCW modular courses relevant to the CoC/CoP,
 - Competency course relevant to the CoC,
 - Sea service records,
 - Sea service documentation.
 - The documents and records are required to be submitted with a notarized affidavit, sworn by the seafarer, attesting the authenticity of the submitted documents.
2. Timeline & Procedure:
 - RPSL agencies must submit a separate case file for each seafarer within 30 days of the Addendum's issuance (i.e. by 4 September 2025).

- DGS will verify the certificates through a committee and notify the outcome to the seafarer and the RPSL agency.

3. Important Clarification:

- This is not a blanket ban on Indian nationals holding foreign certificates.
- The intent of the circular is purely regulatory and preventive, aimed at identifying and acting against fraudulent practices.

Action Required:

Masters, owners, operators, agents, approved maritime training institutions, and other interested parties are advised to take note of the requirements outlined above and ensure that Indian nationals are compliant with the DGS Addendum. Where applicable, the necessary verification processes should be initiated promptly through the appropriate RPSL agencies. Approved Maritime Training Institutions issuing Cook Islands CoCs/CoPs to Indian nationals should ensure that affected candidates are made aware of these requirements.

Maritime Cook Islands is monitoring the situation and is engaging with the Directorate General of Shipping to seek further clarification, with the aim of minimising any potential impact on our seafarers and vessel operations. Further updates or guidance will be issued in due course.

For any questions or further clarification regarding the contents of this circular, please contact the Seafarer Training & Certification Department at seafarers@maritimecookislands.com



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

Addendum - I to DGS (NT/ENG) Circular No. 31 of 2025

File No. 25-13012/3/2024-NT - DGS		Date: 05.08.2025
Authorized by: Chief Examiner of Engineers, and Chief Examiner of Master & Mates.	Subject: Mandatory compliance measures to prevent engagement of Seafarers without appropriate training and demonstrable competence prior issuance of certificates – Instructions to Ship Owner, Ship Managers, RPSL Agencies, Seafarers and Stakeholders – reg.	
<p>Pursuant to the DGS (NT/ENG) Circular No. 31 of 2025, which was issued with the sole intent to prevent fraud and unlawful practices related to the issuance of seafarer certificates and endorsements, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) has received representation from various seafarer unions, expressing their concern and the need to have a validation process for seafarer with genuine certificates. At the same time, all the industry associations and the seafarers’ unions expressed support for the cleanup efforts of the DGS and stressed that action should be taken against the persons holding fraudulent certificates.</p> <p>2. Subsequently, the Directorate had issued formal notices by email on 21.07.2025 to all registered Recruitment and Placement Service License (RPSL) holding agencies, directing them to submit a comprehensive list with details of seafarers employed by them who are in possession of certificates issued by authorities that are not listed within the said DGS Circular latest by 31st July 2025. Based on the said notice, the RPSL agencies have forwarded the list of seafarers to the DGS for initiating the further process of verification.</p> <p>3. Furthermore, as planned and informed to the stakeholders as way ahead, in order to undertake the verification of the seafarer certificates and assess the authenticity of the Certificates of Competency (CoC) and Certificate of Proficiency (COP) issued to them by foreign administration that are not listed within the DGS Circular No. 31 of 2025, the</p>		

Directorate General of Shipping hereby request the affected seafarers to submit their complete training and certification records through the DGS approved RPSL company engaging these seafarers.

4. The documents required to be submitted should as a minimum, comprise of but not limited to, the following colour scanned copies of original certificates for the courses/training claimed to have been undertaken by the seafarer:

- a) COC/COP issued by the State parties which are not covered in the circular.
- b) STCW modular courses relevant to the COC/CoP
- c) Competency course relevant to the COC.
- d) Seagoing service records with copies of the Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) showing the relevant sea service preceding the issuance of the CoC/CoP.

Note: The size of attachment may be limited to 20MB.

5. The above documents and records are required to be submitted along with a notarized affidavit, duly sworn and signed by the seafarer, attesting the authenticity of the submitted documents. The seafarers shall forward the documents for verification through the DGS approved RPSL agency which engaged them for the last contract.

6. The RPSL is requested to submit a separate case file for each seafarer, along with the above-mentioned documents and records, to the Directorate General of Shipping within 30 days from the date of issuance of this addendum.

7. The Committee notified by the Directorate shall, upon receipt of the above documents, undertake verification of the seafarers' certificates and assess the authenticity of the certificates issued by the respective foreign administrations and training providers. The outcome of the assessment shall be communicated to the seafarer at the email ID registered in their seafarer profile, as well as to the concerned RPSL agency. If the documents are found to be genuine and meeting the requirements of the STCW Convention, then the seafarers shall be permitted to join vessels immediately. If not, the reports will be forwarded to the concerned Maritime Administration for cancellation of COC/CoC and the RPSL agency and the seafarer will be duly informed about the action being initiated.

8. The RPSL shall submit the above documents electronically to the following email ids only:

Seafarers of Marine Engineering stream	engg-stcw@gov.in
Seafarers of Nautical Stream	nt-stcw@gov.in

9. Further, it is reiterated that the Circular No. 31 of 2025 dated 18/07/2025 does not impose any blanket restriction or prohibition on seafarers from continuing their employment or sailing. The Circular merely mandates verification of certificates of the seafarers by the RPSL agency, holding qualifications from certain foreign administrations, in the interest of safeguarding maritime safety and regulatory compliance. It is to be noted that the seafarers are not being debarred or disqualified from sailing per se; they can continue to sail in their respective ranks based on the genuine COC/CoP, provided their documentation is found to be in order. The intent of the circular is purely regulatory and preventive, aimed at identifying and acting against fraudulent practices, without causing undue hardship to genuine seafarers.

This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



05.08.25

(Capt. Ravi Singh Sikarwar)
Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG(Tech.)

To

1. The Principal Officers, Mercantile Marine Department, Mumbai / Kolkata / Chennai / Kandla / Kochi.
2. All Surveyor – in – Charge, Mercantile Marine Department
3. The Indian National Ship-owners Association (INSA)
4. The Indian Coastal Conference Shipping Association (ICCSA)
5. Foreign Owners Representation and Ship-manages Association (FOSMA)
6. Maritime Association of Ship-owners Ship-manages and Agents (MASSA)
7. All Stakeholders / Shipping Companies through DGS Website.
8. Maritime Unions
9. Hindi Cell – with a request to translate this circular in Hindi and upload on DGS
10. Computer cell.

Copy to:

11. PS to DG(S)
12. Sr. PS to CS
13. Sr. PS to NA (i/c)
14. Sr. PS to CSS (i/c)