

MCI Circular 347 / 2026

To: Vessel Owners, MLC Shipowners, Managers, Masters, Officers, Deputy Registrars, Surveyors, Recognised organizations, and Other Interested Parties

Subject: Request for Exemption from Seafarer Wage Payment via Bank Transfer

Date: 17th August 2026

Attachment: [Exemption form](#)

This circular revokes and replaces MCI Circular 313/2025

Summary

In accordance with MLC Convention Regulation 2.2 and Flag National Legislation - Maritime MLC Rule 2023, Title 2.2, as well as Cook Islands DMLC Part I version 6, the following applies:

- I. Payments of wages must be made via bank transfer and should be available for inspection at all times.
- II. Any exemption from payment via bank transfer must be officially requested and approved by the Flag Administration, following consultation with the Tripartite Committee.

Failure to comply with these MLC requirements on crew wages may result in detainable deficiencies during Port State Control (PSC) inspections.

In **exceptional circumstances** this Flag Administration may grant exemptions to the requirement for bank transfer payments.

All requests for exemption must be submitted to the Flag Administration as per the procedure outlined below. Each request will be reviewed and **approved on a case-by-case basis**.

Procedure for Exemption Requests

The Cook Islands requires all vessels to submit **via the online link** <https://maritimecookislands.com/exemption-extension-equivalent-dispensation-application-form/> for each seafarer who is to be paid via cash to master instead of bank transfer.

If the conditions remain unchanged, the exemption request must be updated after every crew change **for any seafarer paid in this manner.**

The exemption request, **submitted using the form available in the link, must include** the following details:

1. Vessel name and IMO number
2. MLC Shipowner name
3. Seafarer's Full Name
4. Seafarer's Nationality
5. Seafarer's Date and Place of Birth
6. Seafarer's Rank
7. Start Date of the Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA)
8. Seafarer's Embarkation Date
9. Port of Embarkation
10. Justification for the Exemption Request

Each request will be evaluated by the MO&C Division. If approved, **an official exemption statement will be issued by this Flag Administration and sent to the vessel.**

Vessels must retain these statements on board for three years for inspection purposes.

Failure to comply with this directive might result in additional MLC inspections at the owner's expenses and ultimately to the suspension of the MLC certification.

Should you require further information or assistance on the matter, please contact the MCI Marine Operation & Compliance Department at mlc@maritimecookislands.com