

Isle of Man Ship Registry Technical Advisory Notice



Reintroduction of Seafarer's Discharge Books

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1. Reintroduction of Seafarer's Discharge Books

In April 2019, the Isle of Man Ship Registry ceased the issuance of Seafarer's Discharge Books, introducing instead a simplified and more cost-effective alternative (the Record of Sea Service) designed to fulfil the requirements set out in Standard A2.1 of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

Since that time, the Ship Registry has received considerable feedback from seafarers indicating that the absence of Discharge Books has caused practical difficulties. In many jurisdictions, local authorities continue to request a Seafarer's Discharge Book as proof of seafarer status, and alternative documentation such as a Seafarer's Employment Agreement is not always accepted.

While it remains the case that a Seafarer's Discharge Book is *not* an identity document and should not be used for immigration control or similar purposes, the Ship Registry acknowledges the concerns raised. Accordingly, with immediate effect, the Ship Registry will recommence the issuance of Seafarer's Discharge Books.

The Record of Sea Service will continue to be available in both loose-leaf and booklet formats, offering seafarers the flexibility to choose the document that best meets their needs.

2. Application Process

To apply for a Seafarer's Discharge Book:

1. Download and complete [the application form](#), ensuring all required information is provided.
2. Prepare the necessary supporting documentation as outlined in the form.
3. Submit your completed application and documents either:
 - By email to: seafarers@gov.im, or
 - By post to:
*Isle of Man Ship Registry
1st Floor, St George's Court
Upper Church Street
Douglas, Isle of Man, IM2 1EX
British Isles*

Applications will be processed within 10 working days of receipt, provided all required information and documentation are complete and accurate.

3. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Is it mandatory for Isle of Man seafarers to hold a Seafarer's Discharge Book?

A: No. It is only mandatory for MLC shipowners to provide a record of sea service. This can be issued in a Seafarer's Discharge Book, a Record of Sea Service, or another acceptable format.



Q: What is the difference between a Seafarer's Discharge Book and a Record of Sea Service?

A: Both documents serve to record a seafarer's time at sea. However, key differences include:

- The Record of Sea Service includes only the minimum information required under MLC and is completed by the seafarer.
- The Seafarer's Discharge Book is a more detailed document that may also include information such as certificates of competence, and tax or pension details. It is issued, signed, and stamped by the Ship Registry.

Due to these differences, the Record of Sea Service is available at a reduced fee. Current pricing is available on the Isle of Man Ship Registry website.

Q: Who is eligible to apply for a Seafarer's Discharge Book?

A: Any individual who qualifies as a seafarer under the MLC and is working on an Isle of Man-registered vessel may apply. Discharge Books will not be issued to individuals who do not meet the MLC definition of a seafarer.

Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

