

CRITICAL TECHNICAL SERVICE DELAYS AFFECTING OPERATIONS

ALL SAMS PERSONNEL, PORT AUTHORITIES, SHIP OWNERS, SHIP MANAGERS, SEAFARERS, PORT STATE CONTROL AND OTHER INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

ISSUE DATE	18 May 2021	EXPIRY DATE	31 August 2021 or unless withdrawn	REFERENCE	SM6/5/2/1/MIN
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Marine Information Notice's and /or Marine Notice's affected

<i>Cancelled or superseded:</i>	None	<i>Read in conjunction with:</i>	Not Applicable
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SUMMARY

To advise industry of significant Technical delays in the issuing of Seafarer Certificates of Competence, and to provide way forward while SAMS experience's Technical difficulties in the issuing of Certificates.

- SAMS was exposed to a computer virus in April 2021, necessitating SAMS to implement precautionary measures by disconnecting its network servers to prevent the virus from infecting all systems. SAMS's ICT department is conducting a full health assessment on all servers, operating software and hardware.
- At this point, no personal data was compromised, and SAMS is continuing to investigate the incident in collaboration with law enforcement agencies.
- Vessel Survey services were not interrupted, however the Seafarer Certification Software System (SIOMS 2.0) was affected by the database restore which caused some unexpected technical difficulties. SAMS is working towards resolving this technical failure as soon as possible.
- Seafarers should expect delays in the issuing of any seafarer verifications, documentation and certificates of competence while the system is being repaired. Once the system is fully operational, seafarers continue to experience delays with all certification related services for approximately 4-6 weeks while SAMS implements extra-ordinary measures to clear the backlog and implement measures to improve services.
- SAMS will process seafarer certificates of competence in order of highest priority to ensure that no seafarer is negatively affected by any delays in terms of employment.
- The following services are also impacted and are only available Monday to Friday, 0800-1600 (GMT +2):
 - The automatic verification of certificates as provided for in Marine Notice, 39 of 2016, is currently not available. Certificate verification requests should be submitted to verifications@samsa.org.za
 - The automatic extension of certificates as provided for in Marine Notice 10 of 2021, is currently not available. Certificate extension requests should be submitted to extensions@samsa.org.za
- In the event of certification related issues, seafarers currently serving on foreign going vessels should provide full details of the assistance needed and should submit a request to seafarers@samsa.org.za
- In the event of any seafarer welfare challenges resulting from this delay, seafarers can contact: welfare@samsa.org.za
- Seafarers intending to revalidate their certificates may continue to apply to do so at their local SAMS office.
- Seafarers may continue to apply for Level 3 assessments (orals) leading to a higher qualification.
- Any interim certificates for Small Vessel Skippers Certificates of Competence that have expired in the last 3 months or any Small Vessel Certificate of Competence expiring within the next 4 weeks, may be extended up and until 31 August 2021 while SAMS's certification unit clears the backlog.
- SAMS apologizes for this temporary inconvenience and assures all stakeholders that the technical issues are being addressed with utmost urgency.

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