



# The Bahamas Maritime Authority

## BMA INFORMATION BULLETIN No. 66

### BAHAMAS INITIAL AND ANNUAL INSPECTIONS

#### Instructions & Guidance for Shipowners, Managers, Masters, Bahamas Recognised Organisations and Bahamas Approved Inspectors

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#### 1. Inspection Requirements

- 1.1. Section 172 of the Bahamas Merchant Shipping Act requires that all Bahamian registered ships, except pleasure craft, are to be satisfactorily inspected on an annual basis by a Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA) approved nautical inspector.
- 1.2. Certain vessels may require a more frequent inspection programme at the discretion of the BMA Technical department.

#### 2. Anniversary Date

- 2.1. All existing ships that are registered with The Bahamas have an anniversary date set.
- 2.2. Any vessel that is accepted into provisional registry will have its anniversary date set as three months after the date of provisional registration.

#### 3. Initial Inspection

- 3.1. The first annual inspection, termed the "initial inspection" shall be undertaken within the period of provisional registry.
- 3.2. No ship will be accepted into permanent registry until the initial inspection report has been satisfactorily reviewed, after which "technical approval" for permanent registration will be recommended to the Registrar.

#### 4. Annual Inspections

- 4.1. The annual inspection is to be undertaken at a suitable port, within a period that extends from three months before the designated “anniversary date” until three months after it.
- 4.2. The anniversary date will generally remain fixed for the duration of time that the ship remains registered with The Bahamas.
- 4.3. There is no provision within the Merchant Shipping Act to extend the period in which the inspection is to be made. However, in exceptional circumstances the BMA may instruct the inspector not to record a deficiency for a late inspection where the Company has advised the BMA in advance that the inspection is unable to be conducted within the required period.

#### 5. Arranging the Inspection

- 5.1. The “Company”<sup>\*</sup> is responsible for arranging the initial and annual inspections.
- 5.2. In general, the Company should make arrangements for inspection directly with the Bahamas approved nautical inspector who is nearest to the port at which the ship is lying.
- 5.3. Inspectors have designated areas of operation. They may not inspect a vessel outside that area of operation without prior agreement from the BMA and the inspection company that normally carries out the inspection services on behalf of the BMA in the proposed area.
- 5.4. Contact details for the network of BMA approved nautical inspectors is available on the BMA website at the following address:

<http://www.bahamasmaritime.com/inspectors-select.php>

#### 6. Deficiencies

- 6.1. Any deficiencies noted by the approved nautical inspector must be rectified by the Company without undue delay. The London Technical department of the BMA must be informed by email when the deficiencies have been rectified.
- 6.2. If, at the completion of the inspection, more serious deficiencies are outstanding that affect the structural integrity or safe operation of the vessel or pose a threat to the environment, the inspector will consider the vessel to be unsatisfactory. He will report the situation direct to the London Technical department and an appropriate course of action will then be agreed before the ship will be permitted to sail.

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*\* The “Company” means the owner or any other organisation or person, such as the manager, or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed responsibility for the operation of the ship.*

## **7. Bahamas Certificate of Inspection**

- 7.1. On completion of a satisfactory inspection a certificate of inspection (COI) will be issued. Every applicable Bahamian registered ship shall display a valid COI at a prominent location either on the navigation bridge or within the ship's accommodation.
- 7.2. In the event of an unsatisfactory inspection a COI will not be issued. The vessel will require a re-inspection after deficiencies have been rectified.

## **8. Failure to Arrange an Inspection or Display a Valid COI**

- 8.1. The failure to either arrange for an initial or annual inspection within the prescribed time range or to display a valid Bahamas COI is a deficiency. For a ship to which the ISM Code applies, failure to be in date with respect to the Bahamian annual inspections will be deemed a non-conformity of both the Company and the ship's Safety Management System.

## **9. Ships "Out of Service", in "Lay Up" or on "Bareboat Charter"**

- 9.1. If an owner intends to take a Bahamian ship out of service, put it into "lay up" or bareboat charter it to a foreign registry for any period exceeding six months, the Registration and Technical departments of the BMA must be advised. Such advice is to include:
- The date that the ship is to be taken out of service or bareboated
  - The anticipated time period that the ship is expected to be out of service or bareboated.
  - A reason or reasons for taking ship out of service.
- 9.2. The requirement to maintain annual inspections during this period may be suspended. In this case, the annual inspections will be resumed and a new anniversary date set by undertaking an "initial inspection" within one month of the vessel re-entering service or returning to the Bahamian Register.
- 9.3. The new anniversary date will be set by the Technical department of the BMA.

## 10. Inspection Reporting Requirements

- 10.1. All initial and annual inspection reports, as well as pre-registration and special inspection reports, are to be sent by the approved nautical inspector to the dedicated email address [inspectionreports@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:inspectionreports@bahamasmaritime.com). This address is to be used for submission of reports by inspectors only. All other correspondence is to be sent to the usual Technical department email address, [tech@bahamasmaritime.com](mailto:tech@bahamasmaritime.com).
- 10.2. The subject line of the email should include the ship's name and IMO number and indicate whether the report is for an INITIAL, ANNUAL, SPECIAL or PRE-REGISTRATION inspection.
- 10.3. On receipt of the report an automatic acknowledgement will be sent to confirm receipt of the report by the BMA.

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