

# **Renewal of New Zealand STCW-F certificates (including STCW-F-aligned certificates)**

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# Renewal of New Zealand STCW-F certificates (including STCW-F-aligned certificates)

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This document is uncontrolled if printed. Please refer to the Maritime New Zealand website for the latest version.

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### Disclaimer

This guidance provides information and explanations about the requirements set out in the maritime rules, but are not a substitute for the rules themselves, which are the law. This guidance refers to provisions in Maritime Rules Part 32, Seafarer Certification. The Director of Maritime New Zealand will grant a certificate only when satisfied that all requirements have been met.

In this guidance, any references to 'we' or Maritime New Zealand relating to a decision about the issue or renewal of any seafarer certificate are references to the Director or a person acting under the Director's delegated authority.

[maritimenz.govt.nz/rules](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/rules)

# 1. Overview

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## **Renewal of New Zealand STCW-F certificates (including STCW-F-aligned certificates)**

This guidance is for seafarers wanting to renew (revalidate) a New Zealand STCW-F certificate of competency (or a New Zealand certificate of competency that aligns with STCW-F: the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel).

This guidance applies to the following New Zealand STCW-F certificates:

- Skipper Fishing Vessel - Limited
- Skipper Fishing Vessel – Unlimited
- Mate Fishing Vessel - Limited
- Mate Fishing Vessel – Unlimited.

This guidance applies to the following New Zealand STCW-F-aligned certificates:

- Marine Engineer Class 4 (STCW-F-aligned)
- Marine Engineer Class 5 (STCW-F-aligned)
- Marine Engineer Class 5 motor and steam (STCW-F-aligned).

Your New Zealand STCW-F certificate (including national STCW-F-aligned certificate) can be renewed for up to five years.

This guidance covers training, sea service and other requirements for your renewal, how to apply and pay for your renewal, and where to find more information.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 2. Requirements

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To renew your New Zealand STCW-F certificate (or STCW-F-aligned certificate) you need to prove that you meet all of the requirements. We recommend you check that you can meet the medical fitness and eyesight standards (including for colour vision), and that you understand the fit and proper person requirements.

In summary, you need to:

- prove you meet the minimum sea service requirements for the certificate
- have a relevant STCW-F (or STCW-F-aligned) certificate of competency
- prove that you are a fit and proper person
- be medically fit and have good eyesight.

Each of these requirements and how to prove that you meet them is explained below.

The Director must also be satisfied that you continue to meet the overall training and competency standards for the certificate, taking into account your sea service and any bridging, refresher or updating training you have done.

### 2.1 Sea service

To renew a New Zealand STCW-F certificate (or STCW-F-aligned certificate), you must demonstrate continued professional competency by providing evidence of your approved sea service, performing functions appropriate to the certificate you hold.

#### Sea service requirements

Your sea service must have been served on a relevant vessel, as set out in the table below.

| Type of certificate                      | Required sea service   |
|--|--|
| STCW-F deck certificates.                | At least 12 months' approved sea service within the previous five years. |
| STCW-F-aligned engineering certificates. | At least 12 months' approved sea service within the previous five years. |

#### Renewal of MEC 4 or MEC 5 Certificates

MEC 4, MEC 5 or MEC 5 motor and steam certificates can be renewed by meeting the requirements for a national certificate, or the requirements for an STCW-F-aligned certificate. STCW-F-aligned certificates provide greater privileges, and also require more sea service for renewal.

Sea service requirements for renewal of STCW-F-aligned MEC 4, MEC 5 and MEC 5 motor and steam certificates are 12 months in the previous five years. This complies with the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F).

MEC 4, MEC 5 and MEC 5 motor and steam certificate holders who do not meet the STCW-F requirement but meet the sea service requirement for renewal of a national certificate (six months in the previous five years or 45 days in the three months before application)<sup>1</sup> will still be able to renew their certificate.

In this case, the certificate will be renewed with a condition that it cannot be used to exercise STCW-F-level privileges. These privileges apply to ships of 750kW or more propulsion power which are operating beyond the inshore fishing limit. Please take this into account when gaining your sea service.

Nationally limited MEC 4, MEC 5 or MEC 5 motor and steam certificates require 12 months sea service in the previous five years, to renew as an STCW-F aligned certificate.

## Proving your sea service

You are responsible for making sure your sea service is documented and verified by your ship's master or company.

To support your sea service, you must provide at least one of the following documents for each vessel you have served on:

- *certificate of sea service or record of employment* (available on Maritime NZ's website)
- completed seafarer's record book
- discharge certificate or discharge book (ensuring that any section on watchkeeping is appropriately signed off)
- a letter from your employer.

The documents you provide as evidence of sea service must contain all of the following details for each vessel you have served on:

- your employer's name and contact details
- the name, tonnage and type of vessel (for example, cargo vessel, tanker, bulk carrier)
- the vessel's length overall
- the type of cargo carried and area of operation
- the dates you were employed and the sea time completed between those dates
- your duties, including watchkeeping where relevant to your certificate.

Any statutory declarations you have made are generally *not* acceptable as proof of your sea service. However, the Director will consider these in exceptional circumstances.

## Calculating sea service for voyages of 24 hours or more

Relevant qualifying sea service is expected to be on voyages of 24 hours or more, calculated as follows:

- from the sign-on date of starting work on the ship to the sign-off date of discharge (both dates are inclusive)
- by counting each whole calendar month during this period as one month
- for multiple voyages, by adding together extra days that do not fall within a calendar month, with each addition of 30 days to be calculated as one month.

Extended time in port is generally not counted as sea service, and nor is time on leave.

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<sup>1</sup> See the [Renewal of National Certificate guidance](#) for more information.

### Note

Voyage means a voyage between a port or place of departure and a ship's final port or place of arrival. It includes any period of 24 hours (or more) where you are signed on or employed on the vessel and you remain on board.

**For example:** If your service record shows your sign-on date as 3 March and sign-off date as 14 April, your sea service would be calculated as one month (3 March to 2 April) and 12 days (from 3 to 14 April inclusive).

## Calculating sea service for voyages of less than 24 hours

This sea service applies only to certificates where service in excess of 12 months may be on voyages of less than 24 hours, provided all of the conditions of sea service are met. Sea service on these voyages (for example, day work) is calculated by counting the number of months made up of days, as follows:

- counting each period of eight (or more) hours worked in each 24-hour period as one day's service
- counting periods of more than eight hours at a rate of more than one day (may be expressed in decimal points) at the Director's discretion, if the Director is satisfied there are suitable policies and processes in place to manage fatigue
- counting each additional 20 days (or more) in a 30-day period as one month's sea service. (A month is calculated as 160 or more hours worked over 20 or more days in a 30-day period.)

Where insufficient hours are accrued in a period of 30 days, additional hours or days may be accrued as described above until 20 days have been reached. This can then be counted as one month's sea service.

You cannot claim for more days of sea service than you actually served. You also cannot claim for time spent on leave or extended periods in port.

For more information about calculating your sea service, refer to the Maritime NZ website.

[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)

## 2.2 Alternatives to sea service

If insufficient sea service has been gained during the five-year period, it may be possible to renew a New Zealand STCW-F certificate (or a STCW-F-aligned certificate) by passing an approved test or successfully completing an approved course that is appropriate for skippers and officers serving aboard fishing vessels (especially for seafarers returning to sea service on fishing vessels).

### Equivalent renewal experience

The Director may renew an STCW-F-aligned certificate if the holder has completed at least 2.5 years of non-seagoing experience in the previous five years, in a position considered by the Director to be equivalent to seagoing service. These positions may include:

- lecturers at approved fishing training providers
- marine/technical managers at companies operating STCW-F-sized fishing vessels (of 24 metres overall length or more).

## Documenting sea service or equivalent experience

To renew your certificate, you must provide evidence of recent sea service or equivalent experience. In most cases relevant sea service will be sufficient, but the Director may consider that other types of experience satisfy in full or part the requirements for relevant experience equivalent to sea service.

The following table sets out the types of experience that may be considered and the documents you would need to provide with your renewal application. Acceptable forms of assessment, examination or (refresher) training will be notified on Maritime NZ's website or by training providers as these are determined.

| Type of experience  | Document you must provide  |
|---|--|
| Completing sea service in the role to be renewed (check the certificate requirements).  | Evidence of sea service containing information and of a type acceptable to the Director, as indicated in the relevant certificate guidance (eg certificate, testimonial or discharge book).  |
| Completing and passing relevant bridging, refresher or updating training acceptable to (as specified by) the Director.  | Documentation from a training provider indicating the name of the person trained, specific training standard provided, the date and a statement that the person demonstrated competency at the required level.   |
| Passing an assessment of a type specified by the Director.  | Documentation from an approved assessor indicating the name of the person examined, the specific nature of the assessment, the date and a statement that the person demonstrated competency at the required level.   |
| Passing an examination that uses a framework set by the Director.   | Documentation from an approved examiner indicating the name of the person examined, the specific nature of the examination, the date and a statement that the person demonstrated competency at the required level.  |
| Spending at least 30 months in the preceding five years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>employed in a relevant shore-based role, or</li> <li>engaged in performing relevant functions.</li> </ul>                                 | Letter from an employer stating the position, functions and duties, period of employment (or performing the relevant functions) and how the employment (or performance of functions) is considered relevant to the certificate being renewed.                                    |
| Performing on-board functions appropriate to the certificate for at least three months immediately before application:<br><br>in a supernumerary capacity<br><br>or a lower officer rank than the certificate to be renewed is valid for. | Company letter confirming completion of on-board training and experience as a supernumerary.<br><br>Or evidence of not less than three months of sea service containing information and of a type acceptable to the Director, as indicated in the relevant certificate guidance. |
| Note: If the certificate has expired, you must obtain a dispensation to sail before proceeding to sea, unless you hold another valid certificate.   |  |

### Notes

Examples of acceptable documentation are a signed and dated letter, certificate or assessment record containing the required information.

Training providers, examiners or assessors are those approved either under the New Zealand Education Act or by the Director of Maritime New Zealand, or acceptable to the Director.

## 2.3 Ancillary and other certificates

There is no requirement for seafarers to renew basic or advanced training for ancillary certificates. However, we encourage you to maintain the currency of any first aid or medical aid/care certificate in accordance with the requirements of the issuing organisation, and to consider maintaining any STCW ancillary proficiency training.

## 2.4 Fit and proper person

We need to confirm that you are a fit and proper person. To help us do this, we need the following documents from you.

| Requirement                 | Document(s) you must provide   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Be a fit and proper person. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A completed <i>fit and proper person form</i>, which must have been signed and dated no more than three months before we receive your application</li><li>• A police clearance report for any country or countries outside New Zealand that you have lived in for 12 months or longer in the past five years (covering the entire period you lived in that country or countries)</li></ul> |

## 2.5 Medical examination and eyesight tests

You need to prove that your medical fitness and eyesight meet the required standard. Forms for the medical examination and eyesight tests are available on the Maritime NZ website.

| Requirements for STCW-F | Document(s) you must provide   |
|-------------------------|--|
| Be medically fit.       | <p>A certificate of medical fitness for seafarers that is valid at the time we renew your certificate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is a special medical certificate that complies with STCW regulation I/9. You must get this from an approved medical practitioner or from a medical practitioner approved for issuing seafarer medicals in another country that is party to STCW.</li><li>• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid (usually less than two years old) when your certificate is renewed.</li><li>• Your doctor will need to see your eyesight test results as part of their assessment of your medical fitness. You should have your eyesight test completed before you attend your medical examination.</li></ul> |
| Have good eyesight.     | <p>Eye test results from a registered optometrist, on the official form* showing you have met the required standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• visual acuity (which includes a letter eyesight test). Your letter eyesight test results must be less than 12 months old at the time we renew your certificate</li></ul>   |

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- colour vision (initially assessed using the Ishihara test). The test results must be less than six years old at the time your certificate is renewed.

\* The official form is available on the Maritime NZ website. It is recommended that you take this form with you to your optometrist.

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| <b>Requirements for<br/>STCW-F-aligned</b> | <b>Document(s) you must provide</b>  |
|--|--|
| Be medically fit.                          | <p>A certificate of medical fitness for seafarers that is valid at the time we renew your certificate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is a special medical certificate that you must get from a registered medical practitioner.</li><li>• You may use an existing medical certificate if it will be valid (usually less than two years old) when your certificate is renewed.</li></ul> |



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For more information about the medical and eyesight requirements for your certificate, refer to the guidance on Maritime NZ's website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

## 3. When and how to apply

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Apply when you have completed all of the certificate requirements. Once we have received all of the information we need from you, it may take us up to 20 working days to process your application, so send it in as soon as possible (and at least one month before you need your certificate).

Make sure you include all of the documents we have asked for. Refer to 3.4 *Checklist* to make sure you have everything you need for your application.

### Note

If your application is incomplete, it will not be processed and we will return your application and other documents to you.

### 3.1 Copies of supporting documents

We only need copies of your supporting documents, not the original versions.

For the *fit and proper person form* you need to include sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified.

### 3.2 Fees

There is a fee for your application. Refer to the Maritime NZ website for information about fees.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/fees](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/fees)**

You will be invoiced once we have formally received your application. A reference number and instructions explaining how to pay will be sent with the invoice.

You can pay:

- online using a credit card or debit card, *or*
- by internet banking or bank deposit.

Refer to the Maritime NZ website for more information about how to pay your fees.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/howtopay)**

As well as the application fee, you may have other fees and expenses to pay. For example, you may need to pay for your eyesight tests, medical examination, training and ancillary courses.

### 3.3 Application process

This is the application process for renewal of a New Zealand STCW-F certificate (or STCW-F-aligned certificate). Complete each step before you move on to the next one.

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Do you meet all the requirements?</b><br>You need to check that you meet all of the requirements for this certificate.  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Do you have the documents we need?</b><br>You need to prove that you meet the requirements. Include all of the documents we have asked for with your application form. Use the checklist to help you (see 3.4. Checklist).<br><br>Remember we need copies, not the originals.   |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Send us your application by email or courier</b><br><br>There are two options for you to send your application:<br><br>1. Send your application by email (preferred), attaching the scanned documents.<br>The application form has information about the requirements for electronic copies.<br><br>2. Use a courier to send us your completed application forms and supporting documents.<br><br>The addresses are on the application form.  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Confirmation and/or request sent</b><br><br>We will send you an email or letter to confirm that we have received your application and advise you of any documents we need from you before we can assess your application.<br><br>We must receive your payment before we can finalise your application.  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Assessment and payment of application fee</b><br><br>Once you have sent us all the documents we need, we will assess your application and make a decision. This will usually take 20 working days (about a month) from the time we let you know that we have received your application.<br><br><b>We will send you an invoice with your reference number and information on how to pay the application fee once we begin the assessment. Please note we cannot release your certificate unless payment has been received.</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Issue certificate</b><br><br>We will send you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• your certificate, if your application has been successful, or</li><li>• a letter or email explaining why your application was unsuccessful.</li></ul>  |

### 3.4 Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that you have everything you need for your application.

Check that your documents are complete and have been signed, dated and sighted as required.

- Seafarer certificate application form*
- Fit and proper person form* - including sighted and signed copies of the ID documents specified
- Police clearance for other countries (if applicable)
- Copy of certificate of medical fitness for seafarers
- Evidence of sea service or equivalent

## 4. Contact us for help

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If you need more information about the requirements for your renewal application, visit the Seafarer Certification section of our website.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/seafarers)**

If you can't find the information you need, send us an email:

**[seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz)**

Tell us what you need help with and remember to include your contact details (email address and phone numbers).

Alternatively, you can phone us toll free on 0508 SEACERT (0508 732 237).