

DRAFT
**MERCHANT SHIPPING (TRAINING, CERTIFICATION AND WATCHKEEPING
FOR FISHING VESSEL PERSONNEL) RULES, 2026**

Ministry of Port, Shipping and Waterways

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the _____, 2026

G.S.R. ___(E) "In exercise of the powers conferred under clause (b) of Section 265(1), 265(3), 266(1), 266(3), 268(3), Section 280(1) and clauses (d), (e), (h), (m) of Section 280(2) under Part XIII of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 (24 of 2025), and in supersession of the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mates of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1987 and the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Engineers and Engine Drivers of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1973, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such supersession, the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:

CHAPTER I

General provisions

1. Short title and commencement. –

- (1) These rules may be called the Merchant Shipping (Training, Certification And Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel) Rules, 2026
- (2) These rules shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Application. –

- (1) These rules apply to -
 - (a) any candidate who is a citizen of India;
 - (b) overseas citizen of India (OCI); and

- (c) any other candidate who is not a citizen of India and is permitted by the Chief Examiner concerned to be examined, assessed and certified under these rules.

3. Objective. – The objective of these rules is to give full and complete effect of implementation to the provisions of International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 as amended and relevant to national requirements.

4. Definitions. –

(1) In these rules unless the context otherwise requires, -

- i. **“Act”** means the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 (24 of 2025) ;
- ii. **“Approved”** means approved by the Director General or the Chief Examiner concerned as the case may be;
- iii. **“Approved sea-going service”** means service on board a fishing vessel relevant to the issue or revalidation of a certificate or other qualification as approved by the Chief Examiner concerned as prescribed in the Approved training, examination and assessment programme;
- iv. **“Approved training course”** means a course approved by the Director General conducted in a training institute for the purpose of issuance of certificate of competency, certificate of proficiency, endorsement, upgradation and revalidation;
- v. **“Approved training, examination and assessment programme”** means the programme of training and assessment of seafarers as approved by the Director General specifying the complete scheme of training and standards including examination and assessments for the purpose of issuance of certificates or endorsements under these rules;
- vi. **“Approved training institute”** means a training institute recognized and approved by the Director General for conducting courses or training programmes as prescribed under these rules.

- vii. **“Assessment Centre”** means a centre designated by the Director General responsible for assessment of candidates and maintaining records for the purposes of assessment;
- viii. **“Assistant Engineer Officer”** means a person under training to become a certificated engineer officer and includes a “Trainee marine engineer” or “Engine cadet” or “Junior engineer”;
- ix. **“Certificate of competency”** means a certificate issued and endorsed for skippers, officers and GMDSS radio operators in accordance with the provisions of chapter II of these rules and entitling the lawful holder thereof to serve in the capacity and perform the functions involved at the level of responsibility specified therein;
- x. **“Certificate of proficiency”** means a certificate, other than a certificate of competency issued to fishing vessel personnel, stating that the relevant requirements of training, competencies or seagoing service in the Convention have been met;
- xi. **“Chief Engineer Officer”** means the senior engineer officer responsible for the propulsion, operation and maintenance of mechanical, electrical and allied installations of the vessel;
- xii. **“Chief Examiner”** means the Nautical Adviser to the Government of India for Skipper and Deck Department personnel or the Chief Surveyor to the Government of India for Engine Department personnel as the case may be;
- xiii. **“Company”** means the owner of the vessel or any other organization or person such as the manager or the bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the vessel from the owner and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed on the company by these rules;
- xiv. **“Engineer officer”** means an officer qualified in accordance with chapter II of these rules;

- xv. **“Examiner”** means Principal Officer Nautical, Deputy Nautical Adviser, Nautical Surveyor or Principal Officer Engineering, Deputy Chief Surveyor, Engineer and Ship Surveyor, Radio Surveyor as the case may be, appointed under section 48(1) of the Act;
- xvi. **“Fishing training vessel”** means a dedicated training vessel, designed for catching and storing fish, which provides a training opportunity for demonstration and assessment of the competences required by the provisions of chapter II of these rules;
- xvii. **“Fishing vessel personnel”** means every person employed or engaged in any capacity or carrying out an occupation on board any fishing vessel, including persons working on board who are paid on the basis of a share of the catch but excluding pilots, naval personnel, other persons in the permanent service of a government, shore-based persons carrying out work aboard a fishing vessel and fisheries observers;
- xviii. **“Form”** means a form appended to these rules;
- xix. **“Function”** means a group of tasks, duties and responsibilities, as specified in the STCW-F Code, necessary for fishing vessel operation, safety of life at sea or protection of the marine environment;
- xx. **“Global Maritime Distress & Safety Systems (GMDSS) radio operator”** means a person who is qualified in accordance with the provisions of these rules.
- xxi. **“Length (L)”** shall be taken as 96% of the total length on a waterline at 85% of the least moulded depth measured from the keel line, or as the length from the foreside of the stem to the axis of the rudder stock on that waterline, if that be greater. In vessels designed with rake of keel the waterline on which this length is measured shall be parallel to the designed waterline;
- xxii. **“Limited waters”** means those waters in the vicinity of a Party as defined by its Administration within which a degree of safety is considered to exist which enables the standards of qualification and

certification for all fishing vessel personnel to be set at a lower level than for service outside the defined limits. In determining the extent of limited waters, the Administration shall take into consideration the guidelines developed by the Organization;

- xxiii. **“Month”** means a calendar month which is thirty days, made up of periods of less than one month;
- xxiv. **“Moulded depth”** is the vertical distance measured from the keel line to the top of the working deck beam at side;
- xxv. **“Officer”** means a member of the crew, other than the skipper, designated as such by national law or regulations or, in the absence of such designation, by collective agreement or custom;
- xxvi. **“Officer in charge of a navigational watch”** means an officer qualified in accordance with the provisions of these rules.
- xxvii. **“Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)”** means a person who is registered as an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder under Section 7A of the Citizenship Act, 1955. For the purposes of these rules, an Overseas Citizen of India shall, unless otherwise expressly provided, be deemed to be equivalent to an Indian citizen in matters of eligibility for certification, service on Indian-flagged ships, and other rights and obligations under these rules.
- xxviii. **“Owner”** means the owner of the fishing vessel or any other organization or person, such as the manager, agent, operator, company, authorized representative or bareboat charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for the operation of the vessel from the owner and who, on assuming such responsibility, has agreed to take over the duties and responsibilities imposed on fishing vessel owners in accordance with the Convention, regardless of whether any other organization or person fulfils certain of the duties or responsibilities on behalf of the fishing vessel owner;
- xxix. **“Party”** means a State for which the STCW- F Convention has entered into force;

- xxx. **“Propulsion power”** means the total maximum continuous rated output power, in kilowatts, of all the vessel’s main propulsion machinery which appears on the vessel’s certificate of registry or other official document.
- xxxi. **Radio operator** means a person holding an appropriate certificate issued or recognized under the provisions of the Radio Regulations;
- xxxii. **Radio Regulations** means the Radio Regulations complementing the Constitution and Convention of the International Telecommunication Union which is in force at any given time;
- xxxiii. **“Regulations”** means regulations contained in the annex to the STCW- F Convention;
- xxxiv. **“Seagoing service”** means service on board a vessel relevant to the issue or revalidation of a certificate or other qualification;
- xxxv. **“Second engineer officer”** means the engineer officer next in rank to the chief engineer officer and upon whom the responsibility for the mechanical propulsion and the operation and maintenance of the mechanical and electrical installations of the vessel will fall in the event of the incapacity of the chief engineer officer;
- xxxvi. **“Skipper”** means the person having command of a fishing vessel;
- xxxvii. **“STCW F Convention”** means the Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995; as amended.
- xxxviii. **“STCW F Code”** means the Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel Code, as adopted by resolution MSC.562(108), as may be amended from time to time;
- xxxix. **“Unlimited waters”** mean waters beyond limited waters;
- xl. **“Year”** means a calendar year;
- xli. **“1978 STCW Convention”** means the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978;

- xlii. **“1993 Torremolinos Protocol”** means the Torremolinos Protocol of 1993 relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977;
 - xliii. **“2012 Cape Town Agreement”** means the Cape Town Agreement of 2012 on the Implementation of the Provisions of the 1993 Torremolinos Protocol relating to the Torremolinos International Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977;
- (2) Words and phrases used in these rules and not defined but defined in the Act shall have the meanings respectively assigned to them.

5. Certificates and endorsements. –

- (1) Certificates of competency for fishing vessel personnel shall only be issued by the Chief Examiner concerned on behalf of the Government of India, if the requirements for service, age, medical fitness, training, qualification and examinations are met in accordance with these rules.
- (2) A certificate of competency issued in compliance with sub-rule 1 shall be endorsed and issued in the format as prescribed in the form appended to these rules.
- (3) Certificates and endorsements shall be issued in the official languages.
- (4) In respect of radio operators, the Chief Examiner may:
 - (a) include the additional knowledge required by regulation II/6 of the STCW-F Convention in the examination for the issue of a certificate complying with the Radio Regulations; or
 - (b) issue a separate certificate indicating that the holder has the additional knowledge required by regulation II/6 of the STCW-F Convention.
- (5) The Chief Examiner concerned may recognize a certificate issued by or under the authority of another Party in compliance with regulation I/7 of the STCW – F Convention and shall issue an endorsement attesting the recognition of that certificate in the form as appended to these rules.

- (6) The endorsement shall expire as soon as the certificate endorsed expires or is withdrawn, suspended or cancelled by the Party which issued it and, in any case, not more than five years after the date of issue.
- (7) Appropriate certificates of competency issued under the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention for the holder to serve as a chief engineer officer, an engineer officer or GMDSS radio operator shall be deemed to be a corresponding certificate for the purposes of sub-rule (1) with regard to fishing vessels.
- (8) Medical certificates issued in accordance with the provisions of regulation I/9 of the 1978 STCW Convention shall be accepted as valid for the personnel of fishing vessels.

6. Control procedures. –

- (1) Control exercised by a duly authorized officer under article 8 of the STCW F convention shall be limited to the following:
 - (a) verification that all fishing vessel personnel serving on board who are required to be certificated by this Convention are so certificated or hold the required dispensation. Such certificates shall be accepted unless there are clear grounds for believing that a certificate has been fraudulently obtained or that the holder of a certificate is not the person to whom that certificate was originally issued; and
 - (b) assessment of the ability of the fishing vessel personnel to maintain watchkeeping standards as required by the Convention if there are clear grounds for believing that such standards are not being maintained, because the following have occurred:
 - i. the vessel has been involved in a collision, grounding or stranding; or
 - ii. there has been a discharge of substances from the vessel when under way, at anchor or at berth which is illegal under international conventions; or

- iii. the vessel has been manoeuvred in an erratic or unsafe manner, whereby routing measures adopted by the Organization, or safe navigation practices and procedures, have not been followed; or
 - iv. the vessel is otherwise being operated in such a manner as to pose a danger to persons, property or the environment.
 - (2) In the event that deficiencies are found under sub-rule (1), the officer carrying out the control shall forthwith inform, in writing, the skipper of the vessel and the authority designated by the Director General so that appropriate action may be taken. Such notification shall specify the details of the deficiencies found and the grounds on which the Party determines that these deficiencies pose a danger to persons, property or the environment.
 - (3) Deficiencies which may be deemed to pose a danger to persons, property or the environment include the following:
 - (a) failure of persons, required to hold a certificate, to have an appropriate certificate or dispensation;
 - (b) failure of navigational or engineering watch arrangements to conform to the requirements specified for the vessel by the Director General;
 - (c) absence in a watch of a person qualified to operate equipment essential to safe navigation, safety radio communications or the prevention of pollution; or
 - (d) inability to provide rested persons for the first watch at the commencement of a voyage, and for subsequent relieving watches.
7. **Communication of information.** – In addition to the information required to be communicated by article 4 of the STCW F Code, the Director General shall provide to the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, such other information as may be required to give the STCW F Convention full and complete effect.

8. Administration of certification arrangements. –

- (1) The Director General or such nominated authority as may be notified, shall establish and maintain a means of ensuring that programmes incorporating such instruction and practical training as is necessary to achieve the competency standards are regularly monitored to ensure their effectiveness.
- (2) The authority designated in sub-rule (1) undertakes, to the extent practicable, to maintain a register or registers of all certificates and endorsements specified in regulations I/3 and II/1 to II/6 which are issued, have expired, or have been revalidated, reported lost, suspended or cancelled, and of dispensations issued, and provide information on the status of such certificates, endorsements and dispensations when so requested by another Party.

9. Recognition of certificates. –

- (1) The Chief Examiner concerned shall ensure, in order to recognize, by endorsement in accordance with regulation I/3 of the STCW F Convention, a certificate issued by or under the authority of another Party, that the requirements for standards of competence, as well as the issue and endorsement of certificates by that Party, are fully complied with.
- (2) Certificates issued by or under the authority of a non-Party shall not be recognized.
- (3) Notwithstanding the requirement of paragraph 5 of regulation I/3 of the STCW F Convention, the Chief Examiner concerned may, if the circumstances require, subject to the provisions of sub-rule (1) of this rule, allow a person to serve for a period not exceeding three months on board a vessel entitled to fly Indian flag while holding an appropriate and valid certificate issued and endorsed as required by another Party for use onboard that party's vessel which has not yet been endorsed so as to render it appropriate for service on board vessels entitled to fly the Indian flag, provided that necessary documented proof is made available that

application for an endorsement has been submitted to the Chief Examiner concerned.

10. Transitional provisions

- (1) Until 31st December 2027, the respective Chief Examiners may continue to issue, recognise and endorse certificates in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mates of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1987 and Merchant Shipping (Examination of Engineers and Engine Drivers of Fishing Vessels) Rules ,1973, as applicable, in respect of those fishing vessel personnels who commenced approved seagoing service, an approved education and training programme or an approved training course before 31st December 2025.
- (2) Until 31st December 2027, the Chief Examiners may continue to renew and revalidate certificates and endorsements in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mates of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1987 and Merchant Shipping (Examination of Engineers and Engine Drivers of Fishing Vessels) Rules ,1973, as applicable.
- (3) The conversion of certificates issued under the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mates of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1987 and Merchant Shipping (Examination of Engineers and Engine Drivers of Fishing Vessels) Rules,1973, into certificates of competency in accordance with the standards of the STCW-F Convention shall be as prescribed by the Chief Examiner.

11. Dispensation

- (1) The Chief Examiner concerned under circumstances of exceptional necessity is of the opinion that nothing cause danger to persons, property or the environment, may issue a dispensation permitting a specified seafarer to serve in a specified ship for a specified period not exceeding six months in a capacity, other than that of the radio officer or

radiotelephone operator, except as provided by the relevant Radio Regulations, for which he does not hold the appropriate certificate:

Provided that the person to whom the dispensation is issued shall be adequately qualified to fill the vacant post in a safe manner, to the satisfaction of the Chief Examiner concerned but such dispensation shall not be granted to serve as a Skipper or a Chief Engineer Officer except in circumstances of force majeure and as far as possible for a shortest period.

- (2) Any dispensation for a post shall be granted only to a person properly certificated to fill the post immediately below. Where certification of the post below is not required by the STCW Convention and under these rules, a dispensation may be issued by the Chief Examiner concerned to fishing vessel personnel whose qualification and experience are in the opinion of the Chief Examiner concerned to be equivalent to the requirements for the post to be filled:

Provided that if such fishing vessel personnel holds no appropriate certificate, he shall be required to pass a test prescribed by the Chief Examiner concerned and the Chief Examiner concerned shall ensure that the post in question shall be filled by the holder of an appropriate certificate of competency as soon as possible

- (3) The Chief Examiners shall, as soon as possible after 1 January each year, send a report to the Secretary-General giving information of the total number of dispensations in respect of each capacity for which a certificate is required, including nil returns.

12. Equivalentents

- (1) The Director General may retain or adopt other educational and training arrangements, including those involving seagoing service and shipboard organization especially adapted to technical developments and to special types of vessels, provided that the level of seagoing service, knowledge and efficiency as regards navigational and technical handling of vessels ensures a degree of safety at sea and has a preventive effect as regards

pollution at least equivalent to the requirements of the STCW F Convention.

- (2) Details of such arrangements shall be communicated to the Secretary General.

13. Use of simulators

- (1) The performance standards and other provisions set forth in section A-I/11 of the STCW -F Convention and such other requirements as are prescribed in part A of the STCW-F Code for any certificate concerned shall be complied with in respect of:
 - (a) all simulator-based training;
 - (b) any assessment of competency required by part A of the STCW-F Code which is carried out by means of a simulator; and
 - (c) any demonstration, by means of a simulator, of continued proficiency required by part A of the STCW-F Code.

14. Medical standards

- (1) The standards of medical fitness for seafarers and the issue of medical certificates shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Merchant Shipping (Medical Examination) Rules 2026 and taking into account guidelines adopted by the International Maritime Organization.
- (2) Medical certificates shall remain valid for a period of two years; provided that if the seafarer is under the age of 18, the maximum period of validity shall be one year.
- (3) If the period of validity of a medical certificate expires in the course of a voyage, then the medical certificate shall continue in force until the next port of call where a medical practitioner recognized by the Director General is available, however the period shall not exceed three months.
- (4) In urgent cases the Director General may permit a seafarer to work without a valid medical certificate until the next port of call where a recognized medical practitioner referred to in sub-rule (3) recognized by the Chief Examiner concerned is available, provided that: (a) the period of

such permission does not exceed three months; and (b) the seafarer concerned is in possession of an expired medical certificate of recent date.

CHAPTER II

Certification of skippers, officers in charge of a navigational watch, engineer officers and radio operators

15. Minimum requirements for certification of skippers on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters

- (1) Every skipper on a fishing vessel of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for certification shall:
 - (a) meet the requirements for certification as an officer in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters, and have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months as an officer in charge of a navigational watch or skipper on fishing vessels of not less than 12 metres in length. However, the Chief Examiner may allow the substitution of a period not exceeding six months of approved seagoing service as an officer in charge of a navigational watch on seagoing ships covered by the 1978 STCW Convention; and
 - (b) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/1 of the STCW-F Code.
- (3) A candidate who holds a valid certificate of competency issued in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention need not be reassessed in those standards of competence listed in section A-II/1 of the STCW-F Code that were required at a higher or equivalent level for the issuance of the corresponding 1978 STCW Convention certificate.

16. Minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters

- (1) Every officer in charge of a navigational watch on a fishing vessel of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for certification shall:
 - (a) be not less than 18 years of age;
 - (b) have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months on fishing vessels or fishing training vessels of not less than 12 metres in length as part of an approved training programme which includes onboard training that meets the requirements of section A-II/2 of the STCW-F Code and is documented in an approved training record book; or
 - (c) two years in the deck department on fishing vessels of not less than 12 metres in length. However, the Chief Examiner may allow the substitution of the seagoing service by a period of special training not exceeding one year, provided that the period of the special training programme shall be at least equivalent in value to the period of the required seagoing service it substitutes or by a period of approved seagoing service evidenced by an approved record book covered by the 1978 STCW Convention;
 - (d) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/2 of the STCW-F Code; and
 - (e) meet the applicable requirements of regulation II/6 of the STCW-F Convention, as appropriate for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the Radio Regulations.
- (3) A candidate who holds a valid certificate of competency issued in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention need not be reassessed in those standards of competence listed in section A-II/2 of the STCW-F Code that were required at a higher or equivalent level for the issuance of the corresponding 1978 STCW Convention certificate.

17. Minimum requirements for certification of skippers on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters

- (1) Every skipper on a fishing vessel of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters shall, unless they hold certificates issued in compliance with regulation II/1 of the STCW-F Convention, hold a certificate of competency issued in compliance with at least the provisions of this regulation.
- (2) Every candidate for certification shall:
 - (a) meet the requirements for certification as an officer in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited or unlimited waters, and have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months as an officer in charge of a navigational watch or skipper on fishing vessels of not less than 12 metres in length. However, the Chief Examiner may allow the substitution of a period not exceeding six months of approved seagoing service as an officer in charge of a navigational watch on seagoing ships covered by the 1978 STCW Convention; and
 - (b) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/3 of the STCW-F Code.
 - (c) The Chief Examiner, bearing in mind the effect on the safety of all vessels and structures which may be operating in the same limited waters, should consider the limited waters it has defined in accordance with the definition given in regulation I/1 of the STCW-F Code and determine any additional material that should be included in the standard of competence.
 - (d) A candidate who holds a valid certificate of competency issued in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention need not be reassessed in those standards of competence listed in section A-II/3 of the STCW-F Code that were required at a higher or equivalent level for the issuance of the corresponding 1978 STCW Convention certificate.

18. Minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters

- (1) Every officer in charge of a navigational watch on a fishing vessel of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters shall either hold a certificate issued in compliance with regulation II/2 or hold a certificate of competency issued in compliance with at least the provisions of this regulation.
- (2) Every candidate for certification shall:
 - (a) be not less than 18 years of age;
 - (b) have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months on fishing vessels or fishing training vessels of not less than 12 metres in length as part of an approved training programme which includes onboard training that meets the requirements of section A-II/4 of the STCW-F Code and is documented in an approved training record book; or
 - (c) two years in the deck department on fishing vessels of not less than 12 metres in length. However, the Chief Examiner may allow the substitution of the seagoing service by a period of special training not exceeding one year, provided that the period of the special training programme shall be at least equivalent in value to the period of the required seagoing service it substitutes or by a period of approved seagoing service evidenced by an approved record book covered by the 1978 STCW Convention;
 - (d) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/4 of the STCW-F Code; and
 - (e) meet the appropriate requirements for performing designated radio duties in accordance with the Radio Regulations.
- (3) A candidate who holds a valid certificate of competency issued in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention need not be reassessed in those standards of competence listed in section A-II/4 of the STCW-F Code, which were required at a higher or equivalent level for the issuance of the corresponding 1978 STCW Convention certificate.

19. Minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineers in a periodically unmanned engine-room (Fishing Vessel Watchkeeping Engineer) fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more

- (1) Every officer in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineer officer in a periodically unmanned engine-room serving on a seagoing fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for certification shall:
 - (a) be not less than 18 years of age on the date of issue of certificate;
 - (b) have completed 12 months of combined workshop skills training and approved seagoing service of which not less than six months must be served on board fishing vessels or fishing training vessels as part of an approved training programme which includes onboard training that meets the requirements of section A-II/5-2 of the STCW-F Code and is documented in an approved training record book; or
 - (c) have completed 12 months of combined workshop skills training and approved seagoing service of which not less than six months must be served on ships or training ships being operated in accordance with the 1978 STCW Convention as part of an approved training programme which includes onboard training that meets the requirements of section A-II/5-2 of the STCW-F Code and is documented in an approved training record book; or
 - (d) have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months in the engine- room. However, the Chief Examiner may allow, as deemed necessary, the substitution of up to six months of the seagoing service by a period of special training such as workshop skills training, provided that the special training programme is equivalent in value to the period of the required seagoing service it substitutes; and

- (e) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/5-2 of the STCW-F Code.
 - (3) The Chief Examiner may vary the requirements for standard of competence and seagoing service for officers of fishing vessels engaged in voyages in limited waters bearing in mind the power of the propulsion machinery and the effect on the safety of all fishing vessels which may be operating in the same waters.
- 20. Minimum requirements for certification of Second Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3000 kW propulsion power (Fishing Vessel Second Engineer Officer limited to 3000 kW).—**
- (1) Every Second Engineer Officer on a sea-going fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3,000 kW propulsion power shall hold a certificate of competency.
 - (2) Every candidate for the certification shall,—
 - (a) hold a certificate of competency as Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more and;
 - (b) for certification as Second Engineer Officer, have not less than 12 months of approved seagoing service as Assistant Engineer Officer or Engineer Officer; and
 - (c) have completed approved education and training and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/5-1-2 of the STCW-F Code.
- 21. Minimum requirements for certification of Chief Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3000 kW propulsion power (Fishing Vessel Chief Engineer Officer limited to 3000 kW).—**

- (1) Every Chief Engineer Officer on a sea-going fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3,000 kW propulsion power shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for the certification shall,—
 - (a) hold a certificate of competency as Fishing Vessel Second Engineer Officer on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3,000 kW propulsion power and;
 - (b) for certification as chief engineer officer, have not less than 24 months of approved seagoing service of which not less than 12 months shall be served while qualified to serve as second engineer officer; and
 - (c) have completed approved education and training and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/5-1-2 of the STCW-F Code.
- (3) Every engineer officer who is qualified to serve as second engineer officer on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 3,000 kW propulsion or more, may serve as chief engineer officer on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of less than 3,000 kW propulsion power, provided the certificate is so endorsed.

22. Minimum requirements for certification of Second Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 3000 kW propulsion power or more (Fishing Vessel Second Engineer Officer).—

- (1) Every Second Engineer Officer on a sea-going fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 3,000 kW propulsion power or more shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for the certification shall—
 - (a) hold a certificate of competency as Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more and have approved sea going service in that capacity;

- (b) for certification as Second Engineer Officer, have not less than 12 months as qualified engineer officer; and
- (c) have completed approved education and training and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/5-1-1 of the STCW-F Code.

23. Minimum requirements for certification of Chief Engineer Officer on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 3000 kW propulsion power or more (Fishing Vessel Chief Engineer Officer).—

- (1) Every Chief Engineer Officer on a sea-going fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 3,000 kW propulsion power or more shall hold a certificate of competency.
- (2) Every candidate for the certification shall —
 - (a) hold a certificate of competency as fishing vessel Second Engineer Officer on fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 3000 kW propulsion power or more;
 - (b) have approved sea going service of not less than 36 months which shall be reduced to 24 months, provided that 12 months of such seagoing service has been served as second engineer officer; and
- (3) have completed approved education and training and meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/5-1-1 of the STCW-F Code.

24. Mandatory minimum requirements for certification of GMDSS radio operators on board fishing vessels

Explanatory note

Mandatory provisions relating to radio watchkeeping are set forth in the Radio Regulations and in the 2012 Cape Town Agreement. Provisions for radio maintenance are set forth in the 2012 Cape Town Agreement. The referred provisions are mandatory in the Radio Regulations and will be mandatory in the 2012 Cape Town Agreement when it enters into force.

Application

- (1) Except as provided in paragraph 2, the provisions of this regulation shall apply to radio operators on fishing vessels operating within the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) as prescribed by the international conventions.
- (2) Radio operators on fishing vessels that are not required to comply with the provisions of the GMDSS are not required to meet the provisions of this regulation, but are nevertheless required to comply with the Radio Regulations. The Chief Examiner shall ensure that the appropriate certificates as prescribed by the Radio Regulations are issued or recognized in respect of such radio operators.

25. Mandatory minimum requirements for certification of GMDSS radio operators

- (1) Every person in charge of, or performing, radiocommunication duties on a fishing vessel operating within the GMDSS shall hold an appropriate General Operator's certificate, or the Restricted Operator's Certificate, as applicable, issued or recognized by the Merchant Shipping (Radio Communications) Rules, 2026 under the Radio Regulations.
- (2) Every candidate for certification of competency under this rule shall, —
 - (a) be not less than eighteen years of age on the date of application;
 - (b) attend an approved Global Maritime Distress and Safety System General Operator's Course or Restricted Operator's Course, as applicable, and meet the standard of competence as specified in section A-II/6 of the STCW-F Code; and
 - (c) meet the standard of competence specified in section A-II/6 of the STCW-F Code.
- (3) On completion of the approved Global Maritime Distress and Safety System General Operator's Course or Restricted Operator's Course, as applicable, and demonstration of the required knowledge, understanding and proficiency that is set out in section A-II/6 of the STCW-F Code in addition to the relevant recommendations given in section B-II of the

STCW-F Code be issued with a certificate of competency and necessary endorsement shall be made on the same as required by the STCW- F Convention.

26. Revalidation of certificates for skippers and officers

- (1) Every skipper and officer holding a certificate issued or recognized under this chapter of the STCW F Convention who is serving at sea or intends to return to sea after a period ashore shall, in order to continue to qualify for seagoing service, be required, at intervals not exceeding five years, to:
 - (a) meet the standards of medical fitness prescribed in rule 14; and
 - (b) establish continued professional competence in accordance with section A-II/7 of the STCW-F Code.
- (2) For the purpose of upgradation of certificates of competency issued under STCW F Convention, the act and the rules made there under;
 - (a) the Chief Examiner concerned shall determine the need for requiring the holders of certificate issued before the 1 st January, 2031 to undergo appropriate refresher and updating training or assessment and formulate the structure of refresher and updating courses as provided under section A-II/7 of STCW F Code.
 - (b) every fishing vessel personnel who holds a certificate may apply for revalidation and upgrading and such candidate shall,-
 - (i) meet the standards of medical fitness as prescribed in these rules;
 - (ii) complete an approved refresher and updating course;
 - (c) be subject to assessment of service or training or both by an assessment centre; and
 - (d) be issued with a certificate or endorsement regarding complying with the requirements of the STCW F Convention
- (3) For the purpose of updating the knowledge of skippers and officers, Chief Examiner concerned shall ensure that the texts of recent changes in national and international regulations concerning the safety of life at sea,

and the protection of the marine environment are made available to fishing vessels entitled to fly Indian flag.

27. Revalidation of certificates for GMDSS radio operators

- (1) Every GMDSS radio operator holding a certificate issued or recognized under this chapter of the Convention who is serving at sea or intends to return to sea after a period ashore shall, in order to continue to qualify for seagoing service, be required, at intervals not exceeding five years, to:
 - (a) meet the standards of medical fitness prescribed in regulation I/12; and
 - (b) establish continued professional competence in accordance with section A-II/8 of the STCW-F Code.
- (2) The Chief Examiner shall compare the standards of competence which it required of candidates for certificates issued before 1 January 2031 with those specified for the appropriate certificate in part A of the STCW-F Code, and shall determine the need for requiring the holders of such certificates to undergo appropriate refresher and updating training or assessment.
- (3) The Chief Examiner, in consultation with those concerned, formulate or promote the formulation of a structure of refresher and updating courses as provided for in section A-II/8 of the STCW-F Code.
- (4) For the purpose of updating the knowledge of GMDSS radio operators, each Administration shall ensure that the texts of recent changes in national and international regulations concerning radiocommunications and relevant to the safety of life at sea are made available to fishing vessels entitled to fly its flag.

CHAPTER III

Basic training and onboard safety familiarization for all fishing vessel personnel

28. Minimum requirements for basic training and onboard safety familiarization for all fishing vessel personnel

- (1) Fishing vessel personnel shall, before being assigned to any shipboard duties:
 - (a) receive approved onboard safety familiarization training; and
 - (b) meet the appropriate standard of competence, in accordance with section A-III/1 of the STCW-F Code.
- (2) Where basic training is not included in the qualification for the certificate to be issued, a certificate of proficiency shall be issued, indicating that the holder has successfully completed the course in basic training.
- (3) A candidate who holds a valid certificate of proficiency issued in accordance with the provisions of the 1978 STCW Convention need not be reassessed in those standards of competence listed in tables A-III/1-1, A-III/1-2, A-III/1-3 and A-III/1-4 of the STCW-F Code that were required at a higher or equivalent level for the issuance of the corresponding 1978 STCW Convention certificate.

CHAPTER IV

Watchkeeping

- 29. Fitness for duty.** – The watch system shall be such that the efficiency of watchkeeping personnel is not impaired by fatigue. Duties shall be so organized that the first watch at the commencement of a voyage and the subsequent relieving watches are sufficiently rested and otherwise fit for duty.
- 30. Basic watchkeeping principles to be observed on board fishing vessels**
- (1) The owners and operators of fishing vessels, skippers, chief engineer officers and all watchkeeping personnel shall comply with the requirements, principles and guidance in the STCW F code and shall ensure that a safe continuous watch or watches appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions are maintained at all times.
 - (2) The skipper of every fishing vessel shall ensure that watchkeeping arrangements are adequate for maintaining a safe watch or watches, taking into account the prevailing circumstances and conditions and that, under the skipper's general direction:
 - (a) officers in charge of the navigational watch are responsible for navigating the fishing vessel safely during their periods of duty, when they shall be physically present on the navigating bridge or in a directly associated location such as the chartroom or bridge control room at all times;
 - (b) radio operators are responsible for maintaining a continuous radio watch on appropriate frequencies during their periods of duty;
 - (c) officers in charge of an engineering watch, as defined in the STCW-F Code, under the direction of the chief engineer officer, shall be immediately available and on call to attend the machinery spaces and, when required, shall be physically present in the machinery space during their periods of responsibility; and
 - (d) an appropriate and effective watch or watches are maintained for the purpose of safety at all times.

- (3) The basic watchkeeping principles, including but not limited to those set out in the STCW-F Code, shall be taken into account on all fishing vessels. However, the Director General may exclude very small fishing vessels operating in limited waters from fully observing the basic principles.

CHAPTER V

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

31. Action against candidates found guilty of misconduct.—

- (1) Candidates are prohibited from furnishing any particulars that are false or suppress any material information in filling in the application in Form xx. Candidates are also prohibited from correcting or altering or otherwise tampering with any entry in a document or its attested or certified copy submitted by them nor should they submit a tampered or fabricated document. If there is any inaccuracy or any discrepancy between two or more such documents or their attested or certified copies, an explanation regarding this discrepancy should be submitted.
- (2) A candidate who is or has been declared by the Chief Examiner concerned to be guilty of—
 - (a) obtaining support of his or her candidature by any means; or
 - (b) impersonating; or
 - (c) procuring impersonation by any person; or
 - (d) submitting fabricated documents or documents which have been tampered with; or
 - (e) making statements which are incorrect or false or suppressing material information; or
 - (f) resorting to any other irregular or improper means in connection with his or her candidature for the examination; or
 - (g) using unfair means during the examination; or
 - (h) writing irrelevant matter including obscene language or pornographic matter in the script; or
 - (i) misbehaving in any other manner in the examination hall; or
 - (j) harassing or doing bodily harm to the staff employed or persons authorised by the examiner concerned for the conduct of their examination; or
 - (k) attempting to commit or, as the case may be, abetting the commission of all or any of the acts specified in the foregoing

clauses, may be subject to punitive measures as provided under sub-rule (3).

- (3) Candidate who is or has been declared guilty under sub-rule (2) of this rule may be, –
 - (a) disqualified by the Chief Examiner concerned from examination for which he or she is a candidate; or
 - (b) debarred either permanently or for a specified period, —
 - (i) by the Chief Examiner concerned from any examination or assessment held by him;
 - (ii) by the Central Government, from any employment under it; and
 - (c) if he or she is already in any service to disciplinary action under the relevant rules of such service.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything contained in this rule, a candidate who is declared guilty by the Chief Examiner concerned may also be liable for criminal prosecution under the Act.

32. Appeal against orders relating to examination misconduct. –

- (1) Any fishing-vessel personnel aggrieved by an order passed under these rules declaring him or her guilty of misconduct, or imposing any penalty including disqualification, cancellation of examination, withholding of results or debarment from examinations, may prefer an appeal to the Appellate Authority as notified by the Director-General, within thirty days from the date of receipt of such order.
- (2) The Appellate Authority may admit an appeal after the expiry of the prescribed period if the appellant satisfies the authority that he or she had sufficient cause for not filing the appeal within such period.
- (3) Every appeal shall be accompanied by a copy of the order appealed against and any supporting documents relied upon.
- (4) The Appellate Authority shall, before disposing of an appeal, provide the appellant a reasonable opportunity of being heard.
- (5) The Appellate Authority shall, as far as practicable, dispose of the appeal within three months from the date of its filing.

- (6) The Appellate Authority may confirm, modify or set aside the order appealed against.

33. Cancellation or Suspension of Certificate of Competency or Proficiency

- (1) Any Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency granted by the Central Government, or by any officer duly authorized by it in this behalf under section 266 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025(24 of 2025), to any fishing-vessel personnel may be cancelled or suspended for such period as may be specified by the Chief Examiner, on any of the following grounds –
 - (a) incompetence or negligence in the discharge of duties which may lead, or has led, to personal injury, loss of life, damage to a fishing vessel, environmental harm, or any casualty;
 - (b) commission of any act of misconduct, intoxication while on duty, insubordination, or behaviour endangering the safety of the vessel, crew, or fishing operations;
 - (c) failure to comply with requirements relating to watchkeeping, navigation, fishing-gear operations or safe machinery handling;
 - (d) furnishing false documentation or fraudulent evidence for obtaining a certificate.
- (2) No certificate shall be cancelled or suspended except after an inquiry conducted by the Competent Authority or an officer authorised by it, during which the certificate holder shall be given reasonable opportunity to present evidence and be heard.
- (3) No order of cancellation or suspension shall be made unless a show-cause notice has been issued to the person concerned, indicating the grounds on which action is proposed and allowing reasonable time for representation.
- (4) The Competent Authority may, after inquiry, pass an order—
 - (a) cancelling the certificate;
 - (b) suspending it for a specified period;
 - (c) issuing a warning; or

- (d) dismissing the proceedings.

34. Power to exempt and dispensation. —

- (1) Where the Director-General is satisfied that the application of the full requirements of the provisions of the STCW F Convention and these rules are unreasonable or impracticable in a particular case, he may, to such exceptions and conditions as he may consider necessary, by order in writing, exempt any fishing-vessel personnel or any fishing vessel from compliance with such requirements.
- (2) The Chief Examiner concerned under circumstances of exceptional necessity is of the opinion that nothing cause danger to persons, property or the environment, may issue a dispensation permitting specified fishing-vessel personnel to serve on a specified fishing vessel, for a period not exceeding six months, in a capacity other than that of the radio officer or radiotelephone operator, except as provided by the relevant Radio Regulations, for which he does not hold the appropriate certificate:

Provided that the person to whom the dispensation is issued shall be adequately qualified to fill the vacant post in a safe manner, to the satisfaction of the Chief Examiner concerned but such dispensation shall not be granted to Skipper or Chief Engineer Officer except in circumstances of force majeure and only for the shortest possible period.

- (3) Any dispensation for a post shall be granted only to a person properly certificated to fill the post immediately below it. Where certification of the post below is not required by the STCW F Convention and under these rules, a dispensation may be issued by the Chief Examiner concerned to a fishing vessel personnel whose qualification and experience are in the opinion of the Chief Examiner to be equivalent to the requirements for the post to be filled:

Provided that if such person holds no appropriate certificate, he or she shall be required to pass a test prescribed by the Chief Examiner concerned and the Chief Examiner concerned shall ensure that the post

in question shall be filled by the holder of an appropriate certificate of competency as soon as possible.

- (4) The Director General shall, as soon as possible after 1st of January of every year, send a report to the Secretary-General giving information of the total number of dispensations in respect of each capacity for which a certificate is required.

35. Supervision by the Director General—

- (1) The Director-General shall ensure that all training and assessment of fishing-vessel personnel for the purpose of certification under these rules is—
 - (a) structured in accordance with written programmes, including the methods of delivery, procedures, and course material necessary to achieve the standards of competence prescribed in Chapter II of the STCW-F Code; and
 - (b) conducted, monitored, evaluated and supported by persons who are qualified and approved in accordance with the requirements of the STCW-F Code and these rules.

36. Replacement of lost or damaged certificates.

- (1) Any fishing-vessel personnel whose Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency has been lost or damaged may apply for a duplicate certificate to the Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Department.
- (2) Every such application shall be made in *Form* ___ and shall be accompanied by the fee specified in the Schedule:

s no fee shall be charged where the loss of the certificate is due to destruction by fire on board the fishing vessel or total loss of the fishing vessel.
- (3) On receipt of an application under sub-rule (1), the Principal Officer shall refer the same to the Chief Examiner concerned, who shall, after making such inquiry as may be necessary, authorise the issue of a duplicate

certificate through the issuing authority as soon as practicable but in any case, not later than the expiry of a period of six months.

37. Review of results of examination.

- (1) A candidate who has been declared failed in any examination under these rules may apply in *Form* ___ to the Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Department for review of the results within thirty days from the date of declaration of the results.
- (2) Every such application shall be accompanied by the fee specified in the Schedule.
- (3) The Principal Officer shall forward the application to the Chief Examiner concerned, who shall assign an Examiner, other than the Examiner who conducted or evaluated the original examination, to carry out the review.
- (4) The reviewed results, shall be final, and no appeal shall be admitted against such review.

38. Fees.

- (1) Every candidate shall pay fees in accordance with the scale of fees specified in the Schedule on each occasion he applies for examination or enquiries, as the case may be, as to his eligibility for examination or exemption or both.
- (2) The remuneration or the fees payable to examiners and assessors for conducting examinations or assessments, under these rules shall be as prescribed by the Director General through notification, in accordance with applicable Financial Rules of the Government of India.
- (3) Fees paid under these rules shall not be refunded.

39. Repeal & Savings

- (1) The Merchant Shipping (Examination of Engineers and Engine Drivers of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1973 and the Merchant Shipping (Examination of Skippers and Mates of Fishing Vessels) Rules, 1987 are hereby repealed.

- (a) All certificates issued under the repealed rules, shall continue to remain valid till the date of expiry and may be applied for revalidation under the provisions of these rules;
 - (b) All appointments made, acts done or omitted to be done under the repealed rules shall be deemed to have been made or done or omitted to be done under the corresponding provisions of these rules.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub- rule (1), the Director General shall specify the criteria, form and manner in which any certificates issued before the commencement of these rules have to be revalidated, issued, suspended or cancelled.

SCHEDULE I FEES

(SEE RULE 36)

Sr. No.	Certificate/Rank	Rule	Written Exam in Rs	Oral Exam in Rs
1	Skippers on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters	15		
	Navigation at management level			
	Catch handling and stowage at the management level			
	Controlling the operation of the vessel and care for persons on board at the management level			
2	Officers in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in unlimited waters	16		
	Navigation at the operational level			
	Catch handling and stowage at the operational level			
	Controlling at the operational level			
3	Skippers on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters	17		
	Navigation at management level			
	Catch handling and stowage at the management level			
	Controlling the operation of the vessel and care for persons on board at the management level			
4	Officers in charge of a navigational watch on fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating in limited waters	18		

	Navigation at the operational level			
	Catch handling and stowage at the operational level			
	Controlling at the operational level			
5	Officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or designated duty engineers in a periodically unmanned engine-room (Fishing Vessel Watchkeeping Engineer) fishing vessel powered by main propulsion machinery of 750 kW propulsion power or more	19		
	Marine Engineering at the operational level			
	Electrical, electronic and control engineering at the operational level			
	Maintenance and repair at the operational level			
	Controlling the operation of the vessel and care for persons on board at the operational level			
6	Second Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3000 kW propulsion power (Fishing Vessel Second Engineer Officer limited to 3000 kW)	20		
	Marine Engineering at the management level			
	Electrical, electronic and control engineering at the management level			
	Maintenance and repair at the management level			
	Controlling the operation of the vessel and care for persons on board at the management level			
7	Chief Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3000 kW	21		

	propulsion power (Fishing Vessel Chief Engineer Officer limited to 3000 kW)			
	Engineering management			
8	Second Engineer Officer on ships powered by main propulsion machinery of 3000 kW propulsion power or more (Fishing Vessel Second Engineer Officer)	22		
	Marine Engineering at the management level			
	Electrical, electronic and control engineering at the management level			
	Maintenance and repair at the management level			
	Controlling the operation of the vessel and care for persons on board at the management level			
9	Chief Engineer Officer on fishing vessels powered by main propulsion machinery of 3000 kW propulsion power or more (Fishing Vessel Chief Engineer Officer).—	23		
	Engineering Management			

Sr No.	Purpose	Rule	Fees in Rs
1	Issue of certified true copy of Certificate of Competency	34	
2	Review of results of Examinations for	35	
	a) Certificate at operation level of a fishing vessel		
	b) Certificate at management level of a fishing vessel		

