



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

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**Subject - Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Sign-on/Sign-off
and Shore Leave Pass (SLP) for Crew/ Supernumerary of Indian-Flag
Coastal Run Vessels -reg.**

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The SOP outlined below provides clear and concise instructions for all Port Authorities to follow and to address the difficulties faced by Indian seafarers under *the* existing immigration procedures for sign-on/sign-off and the issuance of Shore Leave Passes (SLP) during coastal operations.

1. **Background:**

The Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour) Rules, 2016, Rule 11, paragraph (1)(b) aligns with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006, stating that *"seafarers shall be granted shore leave for an adequate period to safeguard their health and well-being, consistent with the operational requirements of their position"*

The Maritime Labour convention (MLC), 2006 states that *"every effort should be made by those responsible in port and on board a ship to facilitate shore leave for seafarers as soon as possible after a ship's arrival in port"*

Seafarers shall be deemed to be **key workers**, for the purposes of facilitation of safe and unhindered movement for embarking or disembarking a vessel, shore leave, and when necessary, for shore-based medical treatment as per sub-section 3 of the section 56 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025.

Seafarers were previously required to physically report to immigration offices for issuance and extension of Shore Leave Pass (SLP) during coastal runs. This process created operational difficulties and impeded seafarers from effectively performing their duties onboard. MHA has approved discontinuation of these requirements within port limits.

Considering the above mandate, the following Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) shall be adopted by all ports to mandatorily facilitate shore leave for all seafarers without undue delay at Indian ports.

2. **Purpose:**

This SOP is issued to implement the directive of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) OM No. 25016/19/2024-Imm dated 20.11.2025 regarding the discontinuation of coastal sign-on/sign-off and Shore Leave Pass (SLP) procedures for Crew and Supernumerary of Indian-flagged coastal vessels, dredgers/barges, harbour crafts & tugs and research vessels when within port limits.

3. **Scope:** This SOP applies to:

- a. All Commercial Ports in India.
- b. Indian-flagged coastal vessels, dredgers/barges, harbour crafts & tugs, and research vessels when within port limits.
- c. Crew and Supernumerary personnel of such vessels.
- d. All Mercantile Marine Departments (MMD)
- e. All Shipping Offices
- f. Bureau of Immigration (BOI)
- g. Indian customs

4. Responsibilities:

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Port Authorities	- Maintain records/data of Crew/Supernumerary of Indian-flagged coastal vessels - Regulate shore access of Crew/Supernumerary within port limits- Facilitate inspections by Bureau of Immigration as needed at no cost to the vessel, seaman or owners.
Bureau of Immigration (BOI)	- Conduct periodic surprise inspections without causing any delay to the vessel or cargo operations - Obtain crew lists from vessels operating within port limits- Ensure compliance with immigration norms as applicable under the MHA Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) OM No. 25016/19/2024-Imm dated 20.11.2025.
Vessel Operators/Ship Masters/Agents	- Provide accurate crew lists to Port Authorities and Bureau of Immigration (BOI) as applicable via email - Ensure compliance with shore access procedures as per MHA Notification Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) OM No. 25016/19/2024-Imm dated 20.11.2025.
All MMDs	-Requirement of documents for the sign-on and sign-off of Crew/Supernumerary as per Minimum Safe Manning Document (MSMD). Requirements
Indian Customs	The role of Indian Customs Authorities in relation to Indian seafarers is primarily governed under the Customs Act, 1962 and aligned with international maritime practices. Their role is regulatory, facilitative, and security-oriented at ports, airports, and coastal entry/exit points. Further, Indian seafarers on board Indian coastal vessels including vessels operating in harbours are not required immigration clearance. Accordingly, Customs authorities permit Sign On/Sign Off without insisting on additional permission and clearances on board vessels covered by this SOP.

5. Procedure:

5.1 Crew Records:

Port Authorities shall maintain an up-to-date record of all crew and supernumeraries on board Indian-flagged coastal vessels, dredgers, barges, harbour crafts & tugs and research vessels, including record of all sign-on and sign-off activities carried out during the port stay, either physically or electronically.

5.2 Shore leave permission (SLP) and sign on and Sign off:

- a. Shore leave for Crew/Supernumerary shall be managed by the respective Port Authority.
- b. Physical presence at immigration offices for SLP issuance or extension is no longer required within port limits.
- c. Shore leave passes shall be valid during the stay of the vessel in the port.
- d. The Shore leave procedures and Seafarers sign on and sign off is provided in Annex – 1.

5.3 Inspections and Compliance:

- a. BOI shall conduct periodic surprise inspections of vessels and shore facilities in accordance with the MHA Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) OM No. 25016/19/2024-Imm dated 20.11.2025, and all ports must be able to provide records of seafarers' entry and exit, supported by entry and exit passes, as available.
- b. Crew lists and relevant documentation shall be made available by Master /Company or Port Authorities upon request by BOI officials.

5.4 Record Keeping:

All Port Authorities must keep proper records either in electronic format or in physical format of shore access, crew movements, and inspections for audit and compliance purposes for last three years.

6. Implementation:

- a. This SOP is effective immediately upon issue.
- b. Port Authorities shall ensure strict adherence and disseminate the procedure to all relevant personnel and vessel operators.

7. References:

- a. MHA OM No. 25016/19/2024-Imm dated 20.11.2025. Copy of the same is enclosed.
- b. MLC Convention, 2006, SID Convention
- c. MS Act and MS (MLC) Rules

ANNEX – 1**I PROCEDURE FOR GRANTING SHORE LEAVE TO SEAFARERS/
SUPERNUMERARIES**

1. Masters /Ship Owner/Company/RPSL/agent shall submit IMO crew list of the vessel, including supernumerary, if any, as part of the pre-arrival information and documentation to the Port Authorities.
2. The port authorities shall give the copy of the above IMO crew list of the vessel at the security gate used by the crew for entry and exit with intimation to the Master of the vessel /Ship Owner/Company/RPSL/Agent.
3. Upon such intimation, the Master of the vessel shall prepare shore leave passes in accordance with Annex–3 and issue the same to the seafarers on board, taking into consideration the safety of the vessel and operational requirements at the port.
4. Security personnel at the port gate shall verify the identity of the seafarer/supernumerary against the Crew List provided by the port authority against a valid Government-issued ID held by the seafarer/supernumerary, such as Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC), Seafarer Identity Document (SID), Passport, or Aadhaar Card. Upon satisfactory verification of the ID of the seafarer/supernumerary, the security personnel at the gate shall permit the seafarer/supernumerary to exit the port after recording the necessary details in a designated register maintained at the port security gate, either in hard copy or electronic form.
5. Upon return from shore leave, the Port Security Personnel shall re-verify the identity of the seafarer/supernumerary by checking the Government-issued ID against the name in the Crew List. Entry shall be permitted only after recording the details in the designated register, maintained either in hard copy or electronic form.
6. “Before departure, the Master of the vessel / Ship Owner / Company / RPSL / Agent shall intimate the Port Authority that all seafarers have returned on board and that all shore leave passes have been duly collected and returned to the Master.”

**II PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED FOR SIGN OFF & SIGN ON OF
SEAFARERS/SUPERNUMERARIES**

1. The Owner/Company/RPSL/Agent of the vessel shall submit a request to the concerned Port Authority, providing minimum information as per Annex–2, including details of crew/supernumeraries planned for sign-on and sign-off, along with the current crew list of the vessel. The request may be submitted either in hard copy or through electronic means.
2. The Port Authority shall designate a responsible person, along with contact details, for submission of requests, accessible on a 24×7 basis including holidays. However, as far as practicable, all such requests should preferably be made during working hours by the Owner/Company/RPSL/Agent of the vessel.

3. The Port Authority shall grant permission for sign-off/sign-on to the Owner/Company/RPSL/Agent. A copy of such permission shall be provided to the Port Security department for necessary action, verification and record.
4. Based on the above request from the Owner/Company/RPSL/Agent, the Master of the vessel shall issue a letter to the port authority requesting sign off and sign on from the vessel with copies of passport /CDC/SID/Aadhar card, as applicable, of the crew/supernumerary planned for sign off/on.
5. Security personnel at the port gate shall verify the permission granted by the port authority and accordingly allow seafarers/supernumeraries to sign on or sign off after making an entry in the designated register maintained at the gate.
7. The baggage of seafarers shall be screened/checked by security personnel at the time of sign-on and sign-off to ensure that no prohibited or restricted items are carried by any seafarer or supernumerary. Personal equipment's / tools carried on board by seafarers for their onboard use shall be permitted, subject to prior declaration and due verification/stamping by Port Security.

ANNEX – 2**MINIMUM INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED FOR CREW SIGN OFF AND ON**

1. Name of the vessel
2. Name of the Crew / Supernumerary signing off and signing on-
3. Designation -
4. Date Of Birth -
5. Passport/SID/CDC/Adhar details, as applicable, with date of issue and validity
6. Date of sign off and sign on
7. Name of the vessel's Owners/company/RPSL/Agent, as applicable

ANNEX -3**Format of Shore Leave Pass for seafarers/supernumerary**
(On Letter head of the Company)

Vessel:	Port:	Photo with stamp of vessel
Name:		
DOB:	Rank:	
Passport/CDC/SID/Adhar No:		
Date of Issue:	Valid until:	
 Signature of seafarer: Pass No: _____ of _____		
Master's Signature/Stamp		