

# Recognition of non-New Zealand STCW certificates

**This guideline is for seafarers seeking recognition  
of a non-New Zealand STCW certificate**

**SeaCert**

# Recognition of non-New Zealand STCW certificates

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# 1. Overview

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## 1.1 Recognition of non-New Zealand STCW certificates

This guideline is for seafarers seeking recognition of a non-New Zealand (foreign) STCW (International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping) certificate.

Seafarers wishing to use foreign STCW certificates to work on New Zealand-flagged ships must have those certificates recognised by MNZ as equivalent to a New Zealand STCW certificate and be issued with a document attesting (confirming) recognition. This includes tanker certificates and tanker endorsements, and GMDSS radio operator certificates.

The requirement for recognition applies to both officers and ratings.

See *2.2 New Zealand STCW certificates and endorsements* for a list of New Zealand STCW certificates. For more details about New Zealand STCW certificates, refer to the Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) website:

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

This guideline also covers renewal (revalidation) of New Zealand STCW recognitions.

### Requirements for recognition

Whether we can recognise your STCW certificate will depend on the type of certificate you hold and where it was issued.

- For **masters, officers and/or GMDSS radio operators**, only STCW certificates of competency (and tanker endorsements or tanker certificates of proficiency) issued by countries with which New Zealand has an agreement under regulation 1/10 of the STCW Convention can be recognised.
- For **ratings**, New Zealand may recognise STCW certificates from any country that is party to and has demonstrated compliance with the STCW Convention (referred to as the 'White List').

See *2.1 Issuing countries* to find out if your STCW certificate can be recognised.

If your STCW certificate does not meet the requirements, it may be assessed for recognition as an equivalent New Zealand non-STCW certificate (see the separate guideline for recognitions of foreign non-STCW certificates). Alternatively, you may apply to a training provider to have your certificate considered for prior learning towards a New Zealand certificate.

## 1. Overview (continued)

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### Other recognitions

Arrangements applying to Australian STCW certificates under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Act (TTMRA) streamline the recognition process. See the information about recognition of Australian seafarer certificates on MNZ's website:

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

If you hold a foreign STCW certificate and wish to work on a New Zealand fishing vessel, refer to the guideline for foreign seafarers on New Zealand fishing vessels.

#### **Disclaimer:**

These guidelines provide 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. These guidelines refer to provisions in the Maritime Rules Part 32, Seafarer Certification. The Director of Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) will grant a recognition only when satisfied that all requirements have been met. In this guideline, any references to 'we' or Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) relating to a decision impacting on 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)**

## 2. Requirements

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To have an STCW certificate recognised, you must provide the following information:

- copies of the certificates and/or endorsements you wish to have recognised
- copies of any ancillary certificates required for the primary certificate
- proof of your age and identity
- evidence of sea service completed in the last five years
- evidence of being medically fit, including meeting the eyesight standards.

You must also:

- be of good character and a fit and proper person
- complete an oral examination by an examiner approved by the Director of MNZ.

You do not need evidence of residency status or a New Zealand work permit to obtain a recognition, but you cannot use a recognition to work on a New Zealand ship in New Zealand waters unless you are eligible to work in New Zealand.

If your employer or an agent is handling the application for recognition on your behalf, you need to complete and sign an *authority to act as an agent form* so that we can communicate with them directly about your application.

Refer to 5. *Forms* for all of the forms that you will need to complete your application.

### 2.1 Issuing countries

If you hold a master, officer or GMDSS radio operator certificate, the issuing country must be one of those listed below.

- Australia
- Belgium
- Canada
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Hong Kong
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Kiribati
- Malta
- Malaysia
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Pakistan
- Panama
- Poland
- Republic of Korea
- Romania
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- Uruguay

If you hold a rating certificate, the issuing country must be on the 'White List' of countries that have demonstrated compliance with the STCW Convention. Refer to "STCW parties" under Our Work/Human Elements/Training and Certification on the IMO website: [imo.org](http://imo.org)

Your certificate must be current and valid when you apply for recognition. As part of the recognition process, MNZ will contact the administration that issued your certificate, to verify this.

A recognition is issued for the valid period of your current foreign certificate, or for a maximum of five years. If your certificate is due for renewal within the next six months, you should renew it before applying for recognition.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

### 2.2 New Zealand STCW certificates and endorsements

The table below lists New Zealand STCW certificates and endorsements. Use this list to work out which New Zealand certificate/endorsement corresponds with your certificate.

**Note:** Non-New Zealand near-coastal STCW certificates will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, as they will not necessarily be equivalent to the corresponding New Zealand near-coastal certificate. (Refer to Rule 32.13(5) for the definition of near-coastal area.)

STCW certificate	STCW regulation	COP/COG	Position	Maritime Rules Part 32	
				Requirements	Privileges
Deck Watch Rating	II/4	CoP	Rating	32.80	32.81
Able Seafarer Deck	II/5	CoP	Rating	32.82	32.83
Engine Room Watch Rating	III/4	CoP	Rating	32.84	32.85
Able Seafarer Engine	III/5	CoP	Rating	32.86	32.87
Integrated Rating	II/5, III/5	CoP	Rating	32.88	32.89
Electro-technical Rating	III/7	CoP	Rating	32.90	32.91
Watchkeeper Deck on ships <500GT in near-coastal area	II/3.3	CoC	Officer	32.92	32.93
Master on ships <500GT in near coastal area	II/3.5	CoC	Master	32.94	32.95
Master on ships <500GT	II/2	CoC	Master	32.96	32.97
Watchkeeper Deck	II/1	CoC	Officer	32.98	32.99
Chief Mate on ships <3000GT	II/2.3	CoC	Officer	32.100	32.101
Master on ships <3000GT	II/2.3	CoC	Master	32.102	32.103
Chief Mate	II/2	CoC	Officer	32.104	32.105
Master	II/2	CoC	Master	32.106	32.107
Chief Mate Yacht	II/2	CoC	Officer	32.108	32.109
Master Yacht <500GT	II/2	CoC	Master	32.110	32.111

## 2. Requirements (continued)

STCW certificate	STCW regulation	COP/COG	Position	Maritime Rules Part 32	
				Requirements	Privileges
Master Yacht	II/2	CoC	Master	32.112	32.113
GMDSS Radio Operator	IV/2	CoC	Officer	32.114	32.115
Radio Officer	IV/2	CoC	Officer	32.116	32.117
Electro-technical Officer	III/6	CoC	Officer	32.118	32.119
Marine Engineer Class 3	III/1	CoC	Officer	32.120	32.121
Marine Engineer Class 2 on ships <3000kW	III/3	CoC	Officer	32.122	32.123
Marine Engineer Class 2	III/2	CoC	Officer	32.124	32.125
Marine Engineer Class 2 endorsed Chief Engineer	III/3	CoC	Officer	32.126	32.127
Marine Engineer Class 1	III/2	CoC	Officer	32.128	32.129

STCW certificate	STCW regulation	Maritime Rules Part 32	
		Requirements	Privileges
Basic tanker endorsement for oil/chemical tankers, or liquefied gas tankers	V/1-1-2 (oil and chemical tankers) V/1-2-2 (liquefied gas tankers)	32.130	32.131
Advanced tanker endorsement for oil, chemical or liquefied gas tankers	V/1-1-4 (oil tankers) V/1-1-6 (chemical tankers) V/1-2-4 (liquefied gas tankers)	32.132	32.133

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.3 Sea service

#### Sea service requirements

You must provide evidence of having completed relevant sea service within the last five years. You may have completed this sea service to obtain the original certificate, to renew it or to demonstrate current competence.

For further information about how we calculate your sea service, see the sea service guidelines on MNZ's website:

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

#### Requirements to prove your sea service

For **all applicants**, the documents you provide for each vessel must contain:

- the employer's name and contact details
- the name, tonnage details and type of vessel (for example, passenger, non-passenger, fishing)
- the type of cargo carried and area of operation
- the engine type and output power (for engineering certificates only)
- the dates you were employed and the sea time you completed
- your duties.

For recognition of a **master's, officer's or GMDSS** certificate, only a summary containing the above information is required (such as an employer's statement). If we are uncertain whether the service is appropriate for the privileges of the equivalent New Zealand certificate, then we may request more detail.

All **ratings** must provide at least one of the following documents for each period of sea service they have completed in the last five years:

- certificate of seagoing service
- discharge book (or certificates)
- completed seafarer's record book.

If it is not included in the documents above, all applicants must also provide a statement (on company letterhead) from the ship's master, chief engineer or your employer. It must state the start and end dates of your service, and your duties while in service.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.4 Ancillary certificates

You must provide copies of any ancillary certificates that are required for the STCW certificate you wish to have recognised.

MNZ will assess ancillary certificates issued by training providers in other countries on a case-by-case basis, to determine whether they fully meet the requirements of the STCW convention.

For MNZ to recognise your primary certificate, your ancillary certificates must:

- be current (not expired) when provided for recognition of your primary certificate
- conform to STCW regulations and have the appropriate STCW regulation number on them

### 2.5 GMDSS radio operator certificates

STCW GMDSS radio operator certificates are issued either as an endorsement of a primary STCW certificate or as a stand-alone STCW certificate of competency. Recognitions of non-New Zealand GMDSS radio operator certificates of competency or endorsements can only be issued where there is an agreement with the issuing country (see 2.1 *Issuing countries*).

MNZ may recognise GMDSS radio operator certificates in their own right (without recognition of a primary certificate) or as a combined recognition of a primary certificate and a GMDSS endorsement or certificate.

A certificate of medical fitness is required. Applicants may also be required to sit an oral examination to demonstrate that they are technically competent and sufficiently proficient in English to competently perform the functions as required by STCW.

### 2.6 Tanker endorsements and tanker certificates of proficiency

STCW certificates for tanker training are issued either as an endorsement of a primary STCW certificate or as a stand-alone STCW certificate of proficiency. Certificates are issued at basic and advanced level.

MNZ may recognise tanker certificates in their own right (without recognition of a primary certificate), or as a combined recognition of a primary certificate and a tanker endorsement.

For masters and officers, recognitions of tanker certificates or endorsements at both basic and advanced level can only be issued where there is an agreement with the issuing country (see 2.1 *Issuing countries*). For ratings, recognitions can be issued for tanker certificates at basic and advanced level from any 'White List' country.

There is no requirement for a certificate of medical fitness or for an oral examination unless you are applying to have your primary certificate recognised at the same time.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.7 Oral examination

You must pass an oral examination conducted by an MNZ-approved nautical or engineering examiner. This is not a full oral examination as required for the issue of a New Zealand certificate. The scope of the exam will depend on particular circumstances, but will generally have the following requirements:

#### Knowledge of New Zealand maritime legislation

Knowledge of New Zealand legislation will be tested to the level of the certificate being recognised. The level of knowledge will be the same as what is required for the issue of the equivalent New Zealand STCW master, officer, GMDSS radio operator or rating certificate.

#### Technical competence

You may also be examined on your technical competence at the level of your certificate.

#### English proficiency

While examinations will be conducted in English, they will not specifically test English proficiency. However, STCW certificates require a certain level of understanding and ability to communicate in English. You must demonstrate that you meet that standard.

### 2.8 Temporary permission to sail

Completing the full recognition process can take some time, as documentation has to be checked and verified by MNZ and oral examinations arranged. Under the STCW convention, MNZ can give you temporary permission to sail for up to three months while your recognition application is processed and to allow you to sit the oral examinations.

Note: This only applies to certificates issued by countries with which New Zealand has an agreement (see 2.1 *Issuing countries*), rather than to all 'White List' countries.

Temporary permission may be given for any STCW certificate, including tanker certificates of proficiency or endorsements. However, temporary permission will only be given for a GMDSS radio operator certificate as a stand-alone document if you already have a valid certificate of competency or recognition that permits you to sail.

Temporary permission will be given only if:

- you have a definite offer of employment and need to sail as soon as possible
- you have submitted a complete application for recognition to MNZ
- either the oral examination or the fit and proper person checks cannot be completed within a reasonable time.

You must provide a completed application (see 3.4 *Checklist*) including the *employer declaration* form.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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MNZ will not issue temporary permission until it has confirmed the validity of your certificates with the country that issued them, or if you do not meet the requirements. MNZ will usually not issue permission until fit and proper person checks are completed, although it may accept the employer's declaration in place of this if there are significant delays.

The permission is issued as a letter, which you must carry along with your certificate at all times when you sail. You may be asked to produce the letter by an MNZ maritime officer.

The following conditions apply to a temporary permission:

- It is given for three calendar months and **will not be extended**.
- You must not sail if it has expired, and both you and your employer may face penalties if you do.
- If you fail your oral examination while sailing with a temporary permission, you will not be able to continue to sail. You must re-sit the examination and you cannot sail again until you have passed and been issued with a recognition.
- If you are sailing with a temporary permission and any information is received that suggests you should not be granted a recognition (such as not meeting the fit and proper person requirements or not being competent for the requirements of your certificate), then permission may be withdrawn.

### 2.9 Renewal of recognitions

A New Zealand recognition can only be renewed after your primary certificate or endorsement has been renewed by the country that issued it.

To renew your recognition, you must provide a completed application that includes:

- copies of the renewed certificates and/or endorsements you wish to have recognised
- a certificate of medical fitness
- a completed *fit and proper person form*

You also need to surrender the original recognition, unless it has expired.

You do not need to provide ancillary certificates or records of sea service. An oral examination is not required.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.10 Fit and proper person

We need to confirm that you are of good character. To help us do this, there are several documents we need from you, which are outlined below.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Be of good character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A completed <i>fit and proper person form</i>, which you must have signed and dated no more than three months before you apply</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>

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Refer to 5. *Forms* for all of the forms that you will need to complete your application.

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.11 Medical examination and eyesight tests

You need to prove that your medical fitness and eyesight meet the relevant STCW standards by holding a current certificate of medical fitness (including eyesight tests) that complies with STCW regulation I/9.

STCW medical certificates issued by another country's approved medical practitioners may be acceptable, but are assessed on a case-by-case basis. If there is doubt about your medical fitness or uncertainty whether the standard or conduct of the medical examination meet STCW requirements, you may be required to have an examination by an MNZ-approved medical practitioner and/or optometrist.

A certificate of medical fitness is also required for recognition of GMDSS radio operator certificates. However, it is not required for recognition of a tanker endorsement or tanker certificate of proficiency, if these are being recognised independently of another certificate.

For more information about the medical and eyesight requirements for this certificate, refer to the guidelines for SeaCert certificates on MNZ's website:

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

## 2. Requirements (continued)

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### 2.12 Age and identity

In order to confirm your identity, you will need to provide a certified copy of your passport.

Requirement	Document(s) you must provide
Prove your age and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your completed application form</li><li>• Your passport (make sure it has not expired)</li><li>• Two passport-sized photographs (or ask the photographer to provide an electronic copy, which you can then forward to MNZ if you are emailing us your application)</li></ul>

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Refer to 5. *Forms* for all of the forms that you will need to complete your application.

## 3. When and how to apply

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Apply when you have collected together all of the documents required for your application. As we need to check the information you provide, it can take us some time to process your application, so send it in as soon as possible (and at least one month before you need your recognition).

Make sure you include all of the documents we have asked for.

If you need temporary permission to sail, please indicate this on the application form and ensure that you provide the extra information required.

Refer to *3.4 Checklist* to make sure you have everything you need for your application. (If you have made a mistake or left out something we have asked for, your application is likely to be delayed.)

### 3.1 Copies of supporting documents

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

The only exception is supporting documents for the *fit and proper person form* (your passport or driver's licence and birth certificate) – these need to be certified copies.

We do not need to see any of the documents you have already sent to us for other applications – just make a note about these documents in your application. However, if any of these documents have expired or will expire before we issue your certificate, we need to see a copy of the new or renewed document.

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### 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 MNZ website for more information about how to pay your fees.

**[maritimenz.govt.nz/how-to-pay](https://maritimenz.govt.nz/how-to-pay)**

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. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### 3.3 Application process

This is the application process for recognition of a foreign STCW certificate. Complete each step before you move on to the next one.

##### 1 Do you meet all the requirements?

You need to check that you meet all of the requirements for this certificate.

Apply for pre-assessment of your sea service time if you are unsure about meeting the sea service requirements.

##### 2 Do you have the documents we need?

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*).

Remember we need copies, not the originals.

##### 3 Send us your application by courier or email

There are two options for you to send your application:

1. Send your application by email, attaching the scanned documents.  
The application form has information about the requirements for electronic copies.
2. Use a courier to send us your completed application forms and supporting documents.

The addresses are on the application form.

##### 4 Confirmation and/or request sent

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.

We must receive your payment before we can finalise your application.

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### 5 Assessment and oral examination

We will assess your application and make a decision about whether your certificate can be recognised and to what New Zealand equivalent.

If you meet the requirements, we will give you permission to sit the oral examination and provide you with details of Maritime NZ-approved examiners. Where applicable, we will also issue a letter granting temporary permission to sail.

You should contact an examiner to arrange an examination time. After the examination, the examiner will send your results directly to Maritime NZ.

If you fail the examination, you may apply to Maritime NZ to re-sit after 21 days. If you are sailing with temporary permission at that time, you cannot continue working on a ship until you have sat the examination again and passed, and been issued with a recognition.

#### 6 Payment of application fee

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 recognition unless payment has been received.

#### 7 Issue recognition

We will send you:

- your recognition, if your application has been successful, or
- a letter or email explaining why your application was unsuccessful.

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### 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 certified as required.

We need to see all of the documents listed below to confirm that you have met each requirement. The only exceptions to this are documents that you have already sent to us for other applications (just note this in your application). However, if a document has expired or will expire before we issue your certificate, we need to see a copy of the new or renewed document.

##### About you

- Application form*
- Passport*
- Two passport-sized photos or an electronic copy*
- Fit and proper person form*
- Police clearance report for other countries (if required)*
- Authority to act as an agent form (if required)*
- Certificate of medical fitness (including eyesight)*

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### Your prior training and sea service

- Evidence of recent sea service:  
For master, officer or GMDSS certificates – employer’s statement or other summary  
For rating certificates – certificate of seagoing service, discharge book (or certificates),  
completed seafarer’s record book or employer’s reference
- Copies of certificates to be recognised
- Copies of required ancillary certificates

#### For temporary permission to sail

- Employer declaration form*

#### Remember:

- Choose your payment method – credit card, bank deposit or online
- Ensure you have copies of your documents
- Send your application to us by courier or email
- Send your application to us as early as you can

### 3. When and how to apply (continued)

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#### 3.5 Where to send your application

To provide extra security, we recommend that you courier your application forms and documents to us.

**Courier your application to:**

Seafarer Certification  
Maritime New Zealand  
1 Grey Street  
Wellington 6011  
NEW ZEALAND

**Or**

**Email your application to:**

seafarers@maritimenz.govt.nz

## 4. Contact us for help

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If you need more information about the requirements for your 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).

We need your completed application before we can assess whether you meet the requirements for recognition of your certificate.

## 5. Forms

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To apply for a recognition, there are several forms that you must provide and some that you may provide, depending on your situation.

Everyone applying for a recognition must complete and send us all of the following forms:

- *Application form*
- *Fit and proper person form*

You may also need to complete and send us the following forms:

- *Employer declaration form*
- *Authority to act as an agent form.*

**Each of these forms is available on MNZ's website:**

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

**Note:** You must complete these forms correctly for your application to be valid. Carefully read any notes before you start.