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Notice to: Shipowners, Operators, Officers, Flag State Inspectors and Recognised Organisations.

1. References

- a) [Barbados Merchant Shipping Act, 2024](#)
- b) [WHO International Health Regulations 2005 \(IHR 2025\)](#)
- c) [ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 \(MLC 2006\)](#)

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This Bulletin provides guidance on the requirements for Ship Sanitation Certificates under the IHR 2025 and their relevance to the MLC 2006. It also clarifies the competent authority responsible for their issuance.

3. Application

- 3.1 This Bulletin applies to all Barbadian vessels engaged in international voyages, including commercial and private yachts, regardless of gross tonnage or vessel type.
- 3.2 Vessels engaged exclusively on domestic voyages are exempt unless a Port Health Authority requires otherwise.

4. Regulatory Basis

- 4.1 Article 39 of the IHR 2025 requires that every vessel engaged in an international voyage shall hold a valid Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate (SSCEC) or Ship Sanitation Control Certificate (SSCC). These certificates remain valid for six months and may be extended by one month if inspection or control cannot be completed at the port of call.
- 4.2 The IHR 2025 does not limit applicability by gross tonnage or vessel type. The requirement applies equally to all vessels engaged in international voyages, including yachts, cargo ships, and passenger ships.

5. Issuing Authority

- 5.1 The BMSR does not issue, endorse, or renew these certificates.
- 5.2 The BMSR recognises SSCECs and SSCCs issued by the Barbados Ministry of Health and Wellness or any WHO-authorised Port Health Authority, as per [the IHR List of Authorised Ports](#), as valid evidence of compliance under the IHR 2025 and supporting documentation for compliance with MLC 2006 Standard A4.3.2.a.

6. Certificates Validity

- 6.1 SSCECs and SSCCs are issued with a maximum validity of 6 months, from the date of issue.
- 6.2 Extensions of 1 month only may be granted at the discretion of a competent Port Health Authority, if the inspection cannot be carried out at the port where the certificate expires and no evidence of public health risk is found.

7. Compliance Verification

- 7.1 The Master and Company of every Barbadian vessel shall ensure that:
- .1 A valid SSCEC or SSCC is maintained on board and available for inspection;
 - .2 The certificate is renewed before expiry at a WHO-authorised port (Sec. 5.2 above);
 - .3 The vessel's sanitation and hygiene standards are kept to a level that meets the international public health requirements.
- 7.2 Failure to maintain a valid certificate may result in Port Health or Port State Control action at the port of call.

8. Yachts Compliance Verification

- 8.1 Large private yachts and commercial yachts visiting major ports are routinely inspected under the IHR 2025 by Port Health Authorities.
- 8.2 Small private yachts calling at marinas or private berths may have inspections deferred or waived at the discretion of local Port Health, particularly if they are low-risk.
- 8.3 Some States (e.g. France, Italy, Malta, Spain, and Greece) require all international arrivals — including private yachts — to hold a valid SSCEC or SSCC.
- 8.4 Others (e.g. the UK or US) may not actively request an SSCEC or SSCC for small private craft unless there is a public health concern (e.g. illness onboard, evidence of vermin, waste issues, etc.).
- 8.5 While the legal requirement exists universally, enforcement at the port level is discretionary and based on risk assessment. Therefore, managers and owners shall check directly with the relevant Port Health Authorities of the port of call.

9. Connection with the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC, 2006)

- 9.1 Although Ship Sanitation Certificates are issued under the IHR 2025, they serve as supporting evidence of compliance with MLC 2006 Standard A4.3.2.a requires shipowners to take account of relevant international instruments dealing with occupational safety and health protection in general and with specific risks and maintain safe and hygienic working and living conditions on board.
- 9.2 A valid SSCEC or SSCC confirms that a competent public health authority has independently verified these conditions. During flag inspection, MLC inspections or ISM audits, BMSR and the Recognised Organisations (ROs) may request to sight the validity of the SSCEC or SSCC, and its absence or expiry may be considered a deficiency.

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1.0	First Issue

