



भारत सरकार / Government of India
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय
Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
समुद्रीय प्रशासन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई
Directorate General of Maritime Administration, Mumbai.

F. No. 23-UNI/8/2022-CREW - DGS (C. No.16722)

Date:15.07.2026

DGMA CIRCULAR 38 of 2026

Subject: Revised immigration provisions relating to Shore Leave Pass (SLP) and Crew Change (Sign-on / Sign-off) of seafarers, pursuant to the Ministry of Home Affairs Circular No. 663 dated 03 July 2026 – reg.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), vide Circular No. 663 [F.No. 25022/37/2025-F.I (Part.I)] dated 03 July 2026, has notified amendments to Chapter 23 (Seamen and Aircrew) of the Visa Manual, 2019, with a view to streamline and simplify the immigration procedures at seaport Immigration Posts. The said amendments, inter alia, revise the provisions governing the grant of Shore Leave Pass (SLP) and the Sign-on / Sign-off (Crew Change) of seafarers.

2. In the interest of seafarer welfare and to ensure uniform, facilitative and prompt implementation, the Directorate General of Maritime Administration (DGMA) hereby issues this circular bringing to the notice of all concerned stakeholders regarding the revised provisions on Shore Leave Pass and Crew Change, which take effect immediately, as set out below.

A. Revised provisions regarding Shore Leave Pass (SLP)

(Para 23.2(3) of Visa Manual, 2019)

- (i) Shore Leave Passes shall be issued to a foreign seaman with a daily time restriction from 0600 hrs. to 2345 hrs., subject to a maximum of seven days or till the validity of the visa or till the departure of the vessel, whichever is earlier.
- (ii) SLP exceeding seven days shall be granted only after proper justification and on charging a fee equivalent to that of the Temporary Landing Permit (TLP).
- (iii) Subject to the daily time restriction above, SLP shall be issued under the following categories:
 - (a) **Indian / Foreign Flag – Indian crew – Foreign Run Vessels:** SLP for a maximum validity of 30 days or till the sailing of the vessel, whichever is earlier.

- (b) **Foreign crew – Foreign Flag – Coastal Run Vessels:** SLP for the period of validity of the visa of the foreigner or up to 30 days or till the sailing of the vessel, whichever is earlier. The foreign seaman shall be in possession of an OCI card or B-1 / E-1 / X-1 Visa with the endorsement on the visa to join the ship. SLP for foreign crew who wish to access shore at non-Immigration Posts shall be granted only with the approval of the jurisdictional FRRO.
- (c) **Indian / Foreign Flag – Foreign crew – Foreign Run Vessels:** SLP for a maximum validity of 7 days or till the sailing of the vessel, whichever is earlier. No SLP shall be issued by non-Immigration Posts for foreigners of Foreign Run Vessels.
- (iv) **Emergency SLP:** SLP may be granted to a seaman of a vessel outside port limits during an emergency with the consent of the FRRO / FRO concerned. The shipping agent / port authority shall intimate the immigration authority concerned regarding the emergency, including medical evacuation. The crew may be allowed to proceed to the hospital, and the agent shall submit the necessary documents at the earliest to the Immigration department to process the SLP. In the case of Pakistan nationals, SLP shall be extended only under Police escort.
- (Following clause is added after clause (v) in the renumbered sub-para 23.2(8))
- (v) **Supernumeraries:** For grant of SLP to supernumeraries: -
- (a) Indian supernumeraries (Foreign Run): the provisions applicable to Indian crew shall apply.
- (b) Foreign supernumeraries (with valid visa): the provisions applicable to foreign crew shall apply. However, such foreign supernumeraries shall be granted arrival clearance at Immigration Posts before accessing the shore at non-Immigration Posts. The passport along with a valid Indian visa shall be the prescribed document, and CDC shall not be insisted upon.

B. Revised provisions regarding Crew Change (Sign-on / Sign-off)

(Para 23.2(5) of Visa Manual, 2019)

- (i) Crew Change, i.e. the Sign-on / Sign-off facility, may be allowed from / to vessels calling within port limits (including vessels in outer anchorage, Port Lighterage Area and Single Buoy/ Point Mooring within port limit), in the following circumstances:
- (a) **Crew change from / to vessels berthing within port limits:** allowed for both Indian and Foreign Flag Vessels, for Indians and foreigners. It may be allowed after a written request from the shipping agent / Master of the vessel. An undertaking shall be obtained from the shipping agency for the safe and secure repatriation of the crew.
- (b) **Crew change from / to vessels anchored out of port limits under exigencies**

including medical emergency: no sign-on / sign-off is permitted outside port limits. However, in exigencies such as medical emergency (including those for treatment under Ayush systems / Indian systems of medicine), crew change may be permitted from out of port limits after obtaining prior permission from the FRRO / FRO concerned. In the case of Pakistan nationals, sign-off may be extended only under Police escort.

(Para 23.2(6) which is renumbered of Visa Manual, 2019)

(ii) Sign-on / Sign-off procedure for vessels converted to coastal run and Indian Flag coastal run vessels:

(a) Vessels registered abroad (Foreign Flag Vessels) which get converted to coastal vessels after arriving at an Indian port and undergo coastal run for undertaking coastal trade, if the vessel continues to return as coastal run for a longer duration (i.e. more than 30 days), then the sign-on procedures of coastal vessels shall be performed, as these crew members later on sign off at an Indian port without visiting a foreign port.

(b) Foreigners on such coastal run vessels shall undergo immigration clearance, and the “Coastal Sign-On / Sign-Off” stamp shall be affixed on the General Declaration (GD) submitted by the Master and agent of the vessel, and not on the passport. Such foreign crew shall be in possession of an OCI card or B-1 / E-1 / X-1 Visa with the endorsement on the visa to join the ship.

3. All other provisions of Chapter 23 of the Visa Manual, 2019 remain unchanged and continue to be in effect.

4. All RPSL holders, shipping companies, ship managers, Masters, shipping agents and seafarers are hereby informed about the amended provisions. This may be widely circulated amongst all concerned for smooth facilitation of seafarers at Indian ports.

5. Any difficulties experienced in relation to Shore Leave Pass or crew sign-on/sign-off may be brought to the notice of the jurisdictional FRRO, with a copy marked to the Directorate.

6. This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



Captain Bipin Kumar
Deputy Director General (Crew)

Copy forwarded for information and necessary action to:

1. The Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration, New Delhi – with a request to circulate to all FRROs / FROs for compliance.
2. All FRROs / FROs at Indian seaports – for facilitation of seafarers.

3. The Nautical Adviser to the Government of India, DG(S), Mumbai.
4. DDG (Crew) and DDG (Nautical), DG(S), Mumbai – for coordination and implementation.
5. The Joint Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, New Delhi.
6. All recognized maritime bodies (INSA, MASSA, FOSMA, NUSI, MUI) – for wide circulation.