

DRAFT

DGS Circular No. XX of 2025

**Subject: Prevention of Forged Entries in Continuous Discharge Certificates (CDCs) by
RPSL Agents / Shipping Companies /Seafarers – Reg.**

Whereas, various instances have come to the attention of this Directorate, wherein fraudulent sea service entries have been found to have forged or fraudulently inserted into Continuous Discharge Certificates (CDCs), which falsely indicate that seafarers had served on vessels they never boarded;

Whereas, it has been found that unauthorized ship stamps are being used, and the same is being found to involve Recruitment and Placement Services (RPS) entities or persons or agents or non RPS company fraudulently misrepresenting as valid RPS license holders or non-compliant shipping entities. This matter was examined by the Directorate and noted followings;

Whereas the Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) is a vital legal document issued under the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958 and the CDC Rules. It serves as the official record of sea service for Indian seafarers. The integrity of the CDC is critical to the credibility of Indian maritime credentials, enforcement of safety standards, and compliance with international obligations, including the STCW Convention and the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006; and

Whereas, in accordance with the amended Section 436 of the Merchant Shipping Act, as updated through the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, the penalties for offences listed under Serial No. 35 include:

“If any person—

- (a) forges or fraudulently alters any certificate of discharge, work certificate, or CDC; or
- (b) fraudulently uses any such forged or unauthorized document—

Penalty: A fine of up to Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakhs), which may be imposed by the Principal Officer of the jurisdictional Mercantile Marine Department (MMD).”;

Therefore, by virtue of powers vested under Merchant Shipping (Continuous Discharge Certificate) Rules, 2017 and Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2016 read with Section 7 of Merchant Shipping Act 1958 (Act no. 44 of 1958), as amended; this Circular is issued to prevent misuse and / or fraudulent manipulation of the Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC); and accordingly, the following are issued for strict compliance by all stake holders involved to ensure that appropriate legal action is initiated wherever such violations are detected:

1. Accordingly, all RPSL agencies, shipping companies, and Masters of Indian-flagged vessels are hereby directed to:
 - a. Strictly refrain from making or facilitating any fraudulent or unauthorized entries in the CDCs of Indian seafarers.
 - b. Ensure that only the authorized Master or designated Company Representative enters and authenticates sea service records, based on actual onboard service.
 - c. Upload and preserve verifiable sea service data in the e-Governance system of DG Shipping.
 - d. Immediately report any suspected cases of forged CDC entries to the jurisdictional Principal Officer or the Crew Branch, DG Shipping.
2. Any RPSL agency or shipping company found to be involved in such fraudulent practices shall be liable for the following actions:
 - a. Suspension or cancellation of their RPSL license under Rule 12 of the MS (RPS) Rules, 2016.
 - b. Blacklisting and denial of manning approvals for a period of up to five years.
 - c. Penal action under Section 436 of the Merchant Shipping Act, as amended.
 - d. Notification to Flag States, P&I Clubs, and Port State Control (PSC) authorities, as applicable.
3. In view of the above, it is hereby directed that INSA, FOSMA, MASSA, ICSSA, CLIA, registered Trade Unions, RPSL Companies, DG Shipping-approved Maritime Training Institutes, and all other stakeholders, engaged in maritime trade; shall formulate and

implement all necessary internal procedures and safeguards to prevent the recurrence of fraudulent practices by certain companies and individuals.

4. These institutional guidelines and internal controls shall be intended to serve and protect Indian seafarers from falling victim to unscrupulous agents or entities engaged in malpractices related to seafarer recruitment and placement. Stakeholders are advised to sensitize their associated members and ensure compliance with the same in the interest of transparency, safety, and integrity of the Indian maritime workforce.
5. Additionally, all Seamen Employment Offices, Government Shipping Offices, and Mercantile Marine Departments (MMDs) are hereby directed to ensure strict compliance with the provisions of Section 436 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958, as amended by the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, in all relevant cases.
6. All field offices are hereby directed to exercise due diligence and take prompt measures to uphold the integrity of maritime certification processes.

This issues with the approval of the Director General of Shipping & ex-officio Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

Capt. PC Meena
Deputy Director General of Shipping