

DRAFT

MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the _____ 2026

G.S.R ____ (E) _ *In exercise of the powers conferred by Sections 264(1), 273(1), 273(2), Section 280(1) and clauses (b), (j), (k), and (m) of Section 280(2) under Part XIII of the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 (24 of 2025), the Central Government hereby makes the following rules, namely:*

CHAPTER I
Preliminary

1. Short title, commencement and application

(1) These rules may be called **Merchant Shipping (Vessel of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules, 2026**

(2) They shall come into force on the date notified by the Central Government in the official Gazette.

(3) These provisions shall apply to all Indian vessels having a net tonnage of less than fifteen tons and engaged solely in the coasting trade of India within a limit not exceeding twenty nautical miles from the baseline, excluding vessels employed exclusively in the carriage of passengers between ports or places in India. They shall further apply to vessels engaged in ship-to-shore operations at Indian ports beyond the inland water limits of such ports, as well as vessels operating between Indian ports where the sea passage does not exceed twenty nautical miles from the baseline and which, at all times, operate within the territorial waters of India.

(4) Matters relating to registration, survey and certification, tonnage measurement, radio communication equipment and safety of navigation shall, to the extent applicable, be regulated in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Registration of Vessels) Rules, 2026-, the Merchant Shipping (Tonnage Measurement) Rules, 2026, the Merchant Shipping (Radio Communication) Rules, 2026, and the Merchant Shipping (Safety of Navigation) Rules, 2026.

2. Definition

(1) In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires-

(a) "Act" means the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 (24 of 2025)

(b) "Administration" means the Central Government.

(c) "Deepest sub division load line" mean Sub division load line corresponds to the summer draught to be assigned to the vessel.

(d) "Sub division length of the vessel (Ls)" means the greatest projected moulded length of that part of the vessel at or below deck or decks limiting the vertical extent of flooding with the vessel at deepest subdivision load line

(c) "Recognized Organization" means an organization authorised by the Central Government under section 9 of the Act, and assessed to be in compliance with Part 2 of the Code for Recognized Organizations, as adopted by the Organization through Resolution MEPC.237(65), and as subsequently amended by the Organization.

(d) "Safety Convention" means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended.

(e) "Subdivision load line" means Water line used to determine the sub division of the vessel.

(e) "Vessel less than fifteen tons" means a vessel certified and constructed to operate in both inland waterways and coasting trade of India, as notified by the Central Government.

(2) Words and expressions used in these rules and not defined but defined in the Act shall have the same meaning as assigned to them in the Act.

CHAPTER II Safe Manning

3. Manning Requirements

(1) Every vessel in this part shall be manned by a complement of four persons, consisting of the following-

- (a) one Master, holding an Inland Master First Class 3 or Sarang certificate;
- (b) one Engineer, holding an Inland Engineer Driver Class II certificate, where the propulsion power of the vessel is less than 425 kW;
- (c) one General Purpose Rating (Deck side); and
- (d) one General Purpose rating (Engine side).

(2) Provided that, for vessels engaged on short-duration voyages of less than one hour, the number of General Purpose Ratings may be reduced, subject to the approval of the Designated Authority.

CHAPTER III Accommodation

4. General Requirements

(1) Accommodation spaces shall be arranged and constructed to provide adequate protection against heat, cold, dampness, noise, fumes, and vibration, and shall be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

(2) Accommodation spaces shall be provided with safe means of access and shall be kept free from obstructions at all times.

5. Lighting

(1) Every enclosed accommodation space shall be provided with adequate natural lighting wherever practicable.

(2) Where natural lighting is impracticable, suitable electric lighting shall be provided and maintained in good working condition.

(3) Lighting shall be adequate for safe movement, reading, and performance of basic tasks.

6. Ventilation

(1) All enclosed accommodation spaces shall be efficiently ventilated, either naturally or mechanically, to maintain air of acceptable purity and comfort.

(2) Where mechanical ventilation is provided, such equipment shall be appropriate to the vessel's size and power availability.

(3) Ventilation openings shall be fitted and arranged to prevent the entry of water.

7. Sanitary Facilities

(1) Every vessel shall provide at least one toilet (WC) for use by crew or persons carried on board.

(2) Where practicable, a washbasin with fresh water shall be provided in the vicinity of the toilet.

(3) Where the vessel is engaged on overnight or extended voyages, a simple shower or water tap for body washing shall be provided, where feasible.

(4) Sanitary spaces shall be sufficiently ventilated and shall not open directly into any food preparation area.

8. Fresh Water and Drinking Water

(1) Every vessel shall carry an adequate supply of potable water for drinking and basic hygiene, appropriate to the number of persons on board and the intended voyage duration.

(2) Water may be carried in fixed tanks or portable containers, provided they are clean and dedicated for potable water use.

(3) Fresh-water containers shall be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals.

9. Food Storage and Handling

(1) Where voyages exceed six hours, the vessel shall provide suitable arrangements for the safe storage of food and beverages.

(2) Cooking or heating appliances, where fitted, shall be securely installed and adequately protected against fire hazards.

(3) No open-flame stoves shall be used unless specifically approved by the Designated Authority.

10. Protection Against Mosquitoes and Vermin

(1) Accommodation spaces shall be provided with effective protection against the entry of mosquitoes.

(2) Where practicable, side scuttles, doors, hatches, and ventilation openings shall be fitted with rustproof wire screens or equivalent arrangements.

(3) Reasonable measures shall be taken to prevent the entry and infestation of rats and vermin.

11. Medical Supplies

(1) Every vessel shall carry a basic first-aid kit suitable for the number of persons on board, maintained in good order and readily accessible.

(2) The contents of the first-aid kit shall comply with the scale approved by the Designated Authority.

12. Guard Rails and Fall Protection

(1) Every vessel shall be fitted with bulwarks, guard rails, lifelines, or equivalent means of fall protection on decks and areas accessible to crew.

(2) The height, strength, and arrangement of such protection shall be commensurate with the size and design of the vessel and shall be approved by the Designated Authority.

(3) Where bulwarks are fitted, suitable freeing ports or scuppers shall be provided and kept clear.

13. Accommodation Layout and Space

(1) Accommodation shall be arranged to avoid overcrowding and to allow safe movement.

(2) Any seating or resting area shall provide reasonable clear space for the intended number of persons.

(3) Permanent fixtures such as tables, lockers, fuel tanks, machinery, and life-saving appliances shall not obstruct access or escape routes.

14. Prohibited Installations

(1) Fuel tanks, fuel piping, hydraulic lines, or other sources of hazard shall not pass through accommodation spaces unless adequately protected and approved by the Designated Authority.

(2) Accommodation shall not be located in areas exposed to excessive heat, machinery noise, toxic gases, or cargo hazards.

15. Painting

(1) The interior sides and ceilings of the crew accommodation shall be covered with enamel paint or other suitable material of an approved quality.

(2) All paints, varnish, polish and other finishes in the crew accommodation shall be capable of being easily kept clean and shall be maintained in good condition.

16. Sleeping rooms

(1) Unless the circumstances are such that no members of the crew are required to sleep on board, sleeping rooms shall be provided for the crew in accordance with the following provisions:

(2) The maximum number of persons accommodated in sleeping rooms shall be as follows:

Master and Chief Engineer – 1 person per room

Other Officers – 2 persons per room

17. Beds

Every sleeping room in the crew accommodation of a vessel under this rule shall be fitted with bed for each person accommodated in the room.

18. Galley and provisions/cold store rooms

(1) There shall be provided a galley for the preparation of food for the crew.

(2) One or more storerooms shall be provided for the storage of dry provisions for the crew. Such rooms shall be fitted with sufficient shelves, cupboards and bins having regard to the maximum period likely to elapse between successive replenishments of stores and to the maximum number of persons for whom food is to be served.

19. Construction of bulkheads and paneling

(1) All bulkheads enclosing or within any part of the crew accommodation shall be properly constructed of steel or other suitable material. If the bulkheads are exposed to the weather they shall be of watertight construction, and means of closure shall be provided for all openings in such bulkheads so as to enable them to be made weather tight.

(2) If the partitions/bulkheads within the accommodation spaces are not constructed of steel then the paneling/ceiling used in the accommodation shall be made of non-combustible material of an approved quality.

(3) Any bulkhead which separates any part of the crew accommodation (other than a recreation deck space) from a space used as --

- (a) An oil fuel bunker;
 - (b) A cargo or machinery space;
 - (c) A lamp room or paint room;
 - (d) A store room not forming part of the crew accommodation (other than a dry provision store room);
- A chain locker; or

A cofferdam; shall be gastight, and shall be watertight where necessary to protect the crew accommodation.

(4) Any inside paneling in the crew accommodation shall be constructed of a suitable material with a surface, which can be easily kept clean.

(5) Neither bulkheads nor inside paneling shall be constructed with tongued and grooved boarding or in a manner or with material likely to harbor vermin.

20. Overhead decks and flooring

(1) Every overhead deck exposed to the weather shall be constructed of steel or other metal.

(2) Every deck which forms the floor in the crew accommodation shall be properly constructed and shall have a surface which provides a good foothold and is capable of being easily kept clean.

(3) The floor covering shall be impervious to water and, if the deck is situated on the top of oil tank, impervious to oil.

16. Longitudinal strength

(1) Scantlings of hull members contributing to longitudinal strength are to comply with the requirements given in this Chapter.

(2) For vessels with small block coefficient, high speed and large flare (in particular where $L > 120$ [m] and speed $V > 17$ knots), the section modulus in the fore body is to be specially considered based on the distribution of still water and vertical wave bending moments.

(3) For vessels with narrow beams the combined effects of vertical and horizontal bending of hull girder may have to be specially considered.

(4) For vessels with large deck openings the combined effects of hull girder bending and torsion related possible local bending and shear stresses would have to be considered. Calculations and plans substantiating that the above are within acceptable limits are to be submitted to RO for approval.

(5) Ships of unusual type, design or proportions ($L/B \geq 5$, $B/D \geq 2.5$), will be specially considered.

17. Section modulus

The section modulus 'Z' at deck or at bottom shall not to be less than:

At any transverse section, the hull section modulus Z, about the transverse neutral axis based on the total bending moment (Hogging or Sagging) is not to be less than:

$$Z = \left(\frac{M_s + M_w}{\sigma} \right) \times 10^3 \quad [\text{cm}^3]$$

L

Where,

σ_L = permissible bending stress

= 175/k [N/mm²] within 0.4L amidships

= 125/k [N/mm²] within 0.1L from A.P. and F.P.

Between the specified regions, σ_L is to be obtained by linear interpolation.

k = material factor

= 1.0 for steel of normal strength of $\sigma_Y = 235$ N/mm²

= 0.78 for higher tensile strength steel of $\sigma_Y = 315$ N/mm²

= 0.72 for higher tensile strength steel of $\sigma_Y = 355$ N/mm²

σ_Y = minimum yield stress of the steel under consideration.

M_s = Maximum Still Water Bending Moment [kN-m] at the section under consideration, in all envisaged loading conditions.

M_w = Wave bending moment [kN-m] at the section under consideration.

$M_w = K_{wm} \times M_{wo}$

Where $K_{wm} = 1.0$ between 0.40L and 0.65L from A.P.

= 0.0 at A.P. and F.P.

Between the specified locations, K_{wm} is to be obtained by linear interpolation.

The Wave Bending Moment M_{wo} , at amidships is to be taken as

$M_{wo} = (-) 0.11 C_w L^2 B (C_b + 0.7) 0.75$ [kN-m] – for sagging condition

= (+) 0.19 $C_w L^2 B C_b 0.75$ [kN-m] – for hogging

condition $C_w = 0.0856L$ for $L \leq 90$ [m]

= 10.75 - [(300-L)/100]^{3/2} for $90 < L \leq 150$ [m]

18. Minimum Hull Section Modulus

(1) At Midship, the hull section modulus Z about the transverse neutral axis is

also not to be less than:

$$Z = C_1 L^2 B (C_b + 0.7) 0.875$$

[cm³] Where, $C_1 = (4 + 0.0412 L)$

(2) Scantlings of all continuous longitudinal members of hull girder based on the section modulus requirement as above are generally to be maintained within 0.4L amidships. In the region outside 0.4L amidships, the scantlings are to be gradually tapered to the local requirements at ends.

19. Moment of inertia requirement

The moment of inertia in of the hull section about the transverse neutral axis, at midship, is not to be less than:

$$I_n = 3 C_1 L^3 B (C_b + 0.7) 0.875 \text{ [cm}^4\text{].}$$

20. Shear Strength

(1) The shear stress ' ' in ship sides and longitudinal bulkheads based on the total shear force (Q_s+Q_w) is not to exceed 110/k [N/mm²].

(2) The vertical wave shear force Q_w at any section along the length of the vessel is to be taken as:

$$Q_w = 0.3 K_{wq} C_w L B (C_b + 0.7) 0.75 \text{ [kN]}$$

(3) Where, the distribution of K_{wq} for +ve and -ve shear forces, is to be obtained as per Table below. Between the specified locations K_{wq} is to be obtained by linear interpolation.

Table		
Location from A.P.	Positive Shear Force K _{wq} (+)	Negative Shear Force K _{wq} (-)
A.P.	0.0	0.0
0.2L to 0.3L	$\frac{1.589 C_b}{(C_b + 0.7)}$	-0.92
0.4L to 0.6L	0.70	-0.70
0.7L to 0.85L	1.0	$\frac{-1.727 C_b}{(C_b + 0.7)}$

F.P.	0.0	0.0
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21. Still water Bending Moment and Still water shear Force

(1) Still water bending moments, M_s [kN-m], and still water shear forces, Q_s [kN], are to be calculated at each section along the vessel length for loading conditions as specified below.

(2) For these calculations, downward loads are assumed to be taken as positive values, and are to be integrated in the forward direction from the aft end of L.

22. Loading Conditions to be considered for the Stability data.

The following conditions shall be considered;

- (a) Homogeneous loading conditions at maximum draught
- (b) Ballast conditions
- (c) Special loading conditions e.g. container or light load conditions at less than maximum draught, heavy cargo, empty holds or non-homogeneous cargo conditions, deck cargo conditions etc., where applicable
- (d) Docking condition afloat
- (e) Loading and unloading transitory conditions, where applicable

23. Openings in longitudinal strength members

(1) The keel plate is normally not to have any openings.

(2) In the bilge plate, within $0.6L$ amidships, openings are to be avoided as far as practicable. Any necessary openings in the bilge plate are to be kept well clear of the bilge keel.

(3) Openings in the strength deck within $0.6L$ amidships (within the cargo hold region for vessels with large hatch openings) are as far as practicable to be located inside the line of large hatch openings. Necessary openings outside this line are to be kept well clear of the vessel's side and hatch corners.

(4) Openings in lower decks are to be kept well clear of the main hatch corners and other areas of high stresses.

(5) Openings in the side shell, longitudinal bulkheads and longitudinal girders are not to be located within twice the opening breadth below the strength deck.

(6) Small openings are generally to be kept well clear of other openings in the longitudinal strength members. The transverse distance between any two adjacent non-reinforced openings is not to be less than four times the breadth of the larger opening.

(7) Openings exceeding 2.5 m in length or 1.2 [m] in breadth and scallops, where scallop welding is applied, are to be deducted from the sectional areas used in the section modulus calculation.

(8) All openings are to be adequately framed; attention is to be paid to structural continuity, and abrupt changes of shape, section or plate thickness are to be avoided. Arrangements in way of corners and openings are to be such as to minimize the creation of stress concentrations.

24. Loadline and Freeboard

(1) The Load Line shall be assigned in accordance to Merchant Shipping (Load Line) Rules, 1979 as amended, except that:

(a) Vessels Second Schedule Part II Rule 4 (2) (8) (Correction for hatch covers) shall not be applicable.

(b) Vessels shall have a minimum bow height, which shall not be less than the aggregate of the tabular freeboard and the standard sheer at the forward perpendicular applicable to the vessel, in lieu of complying with the requirements of Second Schedule Part II Rule 14 (2) of Merchant Shipping (Load Line) Rules.

(c) Vessels not provided with hatch covers, shall carry only such cargoes, which are suitable and safe for carriage in open hatch vessels without impairing the safety of the vessel and the crew and without any adverse impact on the vessel, or cargo.

(d) Where such vessels are not provided with hatch covers the minimum height of the hatchway coaming above load water line shall be as follows:

(2) Vessels where hatch covers are not fitted the minimum distance of top of hatch coaming above the assigned water line (h) shall be calculated by the following formula.

$$h = A \quad \text{For } \frac{X}{L} < 0.8$$

$$h = A + B\alpha^2 + C\alpha, \quad \text{For } 0.8 \leq \frac{X}{L} \leq 1.0$$

Where

$$A = 1.2 + 0.0065L$$

$$B = \frac{3L}{1000}(L - 100)$$

$$C = \frac{L}{250}(90 - L)$$

$$\alpha = \frac{X}{L} - 0.8$$

L = Length of the vessel

X = Distance from AP to the section under consideration

25. Intact Stability

(1) Subject to the provisions of paragraphs 4.6.2, 4.7.4.1 and 4.7.4.2, vessels shall comply with the intact stability requirements for cargo ships specified in the Intact Stability Code 2008 (2008 IS Code), adopted by the International Maritime Organization by MSC Res. 267(85) as amended / M.S. (Load Line) Rules.

(2) Existing vessels shall, as far as practical and reasonable in the opinion of the Administration, comply with the requirements of this section.

(3) Considering to the nature of operation during fair weather, the vessel shall, as a minimum, comply with the following criteria:

- (a) The initial metacentric height (GM₀) shall not be less than 0.3 meters.
- (b) The righting lever (GZ) shall be at least 0.20 meters
- (c) The area under the righting lever (GZ) curve shall not be less than 0.090 meter-radians up to an angle of flooding ϕ or 40° , whichever is less.

(4) The angle of flooding ϕ is the angle at which lower edge of any openings in the hull superstructures or deckhouses, being openings, which cannot be closed, watertight and which are likely to cause progressive flooding are immersed.

26. Inclining test

(1) Every vessel shall undergo an inclining test upon its completion and the actual displacement and position of the center of gravity shall be determined for the lightship condition.

(2) Where alterations are made to a vessel affecting its lightship condition and the position of the centre of gravity, the vessel shall, where the Administration

considers this necessary, be re-inclined and the stability information amended.

(3) The Administration may allow the inclining test of a vessel to be dispensed with provided basic stability data is available from the inclining test of a sister vessel and it is shown to the satisfaction of the Administration that reliable stability information for that vessel can be obtained from such basic data.

27. Stability information

(1) Approved Stability information shall be supplied to all vessels to enable the master to assess with ease and certainty the stability of the vessel under various operating conditions. Such information shall include specific advice to the master warning him of those operating conditions, which could adversely affect either stability or the trim of the vessel. In particular, the information recommended in the relevant IMO Instruments referred above shall be included as appropriate. A copy of the stability information shall be submitted to the Administration or recognised organization for approval.

(2) The approved stability information shall be kept on board, readily accessible at all times and inspected at the periodical surveys of the vessel to ensure that it has been approved.

(3) Where alternations are made to a vessel affecting its stability, revised stability calculations shall be prepared and submitted to the recognised organisation or to the Administration for approval. Where the Administration or recognised organisation decides that the stability information must be revised, the new information shall be supplied to the master and the superseded information removed from the vessel.

28. Constructional fire safety measures

(1) The hull, superstructure, structural bulkheads, decks and deckhouses of under this notification shall be constructed of steel or other equivalent material. Material other than steel, in case used, shall be insulated to the same fire retardant properties as steel. In case alternate arrangements are proposed, the same shall be submitted to the Administration for approval, along with details and calculation substantiating the equivalence of the material used.

(2) The bulkheads and decks separating the engine room from the accommodation spaces and the wheelhouse and accommodation spaces shall be constructed of steel suitably insulated by fire retardant covering as per IRS / IS standards.

(3) Interior stairways below the weather deck shall be of steel or other material having acceptable fire resisting properties.

CHAPTER V
Life-saving appliances and arrangements

29. Survival craft

Every vessel shall carry at least one inflatable life raft, fitted with equipments in Schedule , having an aggregate capacity sufficient to accommodate all persons the vessel is certified to carry.

Provided that, where an inflatable liferaft so carried is not capable of being launched from either side of the vessel, the vessel shall carry one such liferaft on each side.

30. Life jackets

(1) Lifejackets of an approved type shall be provided for every person on board the vessel.

(2) In addition, extra lifejackets shall be carried for persons on watch or duty, and for use at remotely located survival craft stations, and such lifejackets shall be kept in unlocked and clearly marked dry stowage locations.

The minimum number of additional lifejackets to be carried shall be as follows-

- (a) where the vessel is certified to carry more than 16 persons, the number of additional lifejackets shall be not less than 25 per cent of the total number of persons the vessel is certified to carry;
- (b) where the vessel is certified to carry 16 persons or less, the number of additional lifejackets shall be not less than four.
- (3) Each lifejacket shall be fitted with-
 - (a) a whistle firmly secured by a cord;
 - (b) a light; and
 - (c) retro-reflective material

31. Lifebuoys

(1) Every vessel shall carry lifebuoys in a number not less than that determined as follows-

- (a) where the length of the vessel is under 50 meters, not less than six lifebuoys;
- (b) where the length of the vessel is 50 meters and under 100 meters, not less than eight lifebuoys;
- (c) where the length of the vessel is 100 meters and under 150 meters, not less than ten lifebuoys.

(2) At least one half of the lifebuoys required under (1) shall be fitted with self-igniting lights.

(3) At least one lifebuoy on each side of the vessel shall be fitted with buoyant lifeline of not less than 30 meters in length.

32. Distress signals

(1) Every vessel shall be provided with the following distress signals-

- (a) not less six rocket parachute signals;
- (b) not less than four red hand flares; and
- (c) not less than one orange smoke float signal.

(2) All such distress signals shall be stowed on or near the place from which the vessel is normally navigated.

(3) Distress signal shall be kept in a location where they are readily accessible, and the stowage position shall be clearly indicated.

33. Emergency instructions

(1) Clear emergency instructions, including a Muster List, shall be prepared and displayed prominently throughout the vessel, including on the navigation bridge, in machinery spaces, and in accommodation spaces.

(2) Posters or signs depicting the operating procedures for survival craft and their launching arrangements shall be placed in the vicinity of the survival craft and shall be clearly visible under emergency lighting conditions.

CHAPTER VI

Fire protection, fire detection and extinction

34. General Requirements

(1) Every vessel of less than fifteen tons shall be provided with fire-fighting appliances in accordance with this Chapter, appropriate to its size, construction, machinery, and intended service

(2) All fire-fighting appliances shall be of approved type, maintained in efficient working condition, and kept readily accessible for immediate use.

35. Portable Fire Extinguishers

(1) Every vessel shall carry portable fire extinguishers of approved type and capacity appropriate for the class of fire likely to occur onboard

(2) As a minimum-

- (a) one 5-kilogram dry chemical powder (DCP) extinguisher shall be provided in the wheelhouse or steering position;
- (b) one 9-litre mechanical foam extinguisher or equivalent shall be provided in proximity to the machinery space; and

(c) additional extinguishers shall be provided where cooking arrangements, fuel installations, or enclosed spaces exist.

(3) Carbon dioxide (CO₂) portable extinguishers shall not be placed in accommodation spaces.

36. Fire Buckets

(1) Every vessel shall carry at least one fire bucket for every ten metres of vessel length or part thereof.

(2) Fire buckets shall be of metal construction, painted red, permanently marked "FIRE," and fitted with a lanyard.

37. Sand Box

(1) A sand box containing clean, dry sand together with a scoop shall be provided in the vicinity of the machinery space.

(2) Vessels of less than ten metres in length may carry a reduced-capacity sand container as approved by the Designated Authority.

38. Fire Axe

Every vessel shall be provided with at least one fire axe located in an accessible and clearly marked position.

39. Fire Pumps

(1) Every decked vessel shall be provided with at least one fire pump suitable for supplying water to the fire-fighting system.

(2) The fire pump may be a portable engine-driven pump; or a general-service or bilge pump arranged to serve as a fire pump; provided that it is capable of delivering a continuous water jet to any part of the vessel.

(3) Where a fire pump is fitted, it shall be capable of a minimum output of not less than three cubic metres per hour, or such capacity as the Designated Authority may approve based on vessel size and arrangement.

40. Fire Main and Hydrants

(1) Vessels not fitted with a fire main are exempt from the requirement to carry fire hydrants and hoses.

(2) Where a fire main is installed voluntarily or by design, at least one hydrant with compatible hose and nozzle shall be provided.

(3) Where required, fire hoses shall—

(a) be of suitable length for the vessel;

(b) be fitted with a dual-purpose nozzle capable of spray and jet; and

(c) comply with standards approved by the Designated Authority.

41. Prohibited Arrangements

(1) Fire-fighting appliances shall not be obstructed or used for any purpose other than fire-fighting

(2) Fuel piping, lubricating oil lines, or hydraulic systems shall not be routed in proximity to accommodation or storage of fire-fighting appliances unless adequately protected.

42. Inspection, Maintenance, and Records

(1) All fire-fighting appliances shall be inspected at intervals not exceeding one month to ensure readiness for use.

(2) Annual servicing of extinguishers and pumps shall be carried out by authorised service providers.

(3) A simple record of inspection and servicing shall be maintained onboard and produced to the surveyor upon request.

CHAPTER IX Survey and certification

43. Construction and survey of vessel

Survey of vessels shall be conducted as the Merchant Shipping (Cargo Ship Construction and Survey) Rules, 2025

44. Certificates required to ply or proceed to sea

(1) No vessel to which these Rules apply shall ply or proceed to sea unless it carries on board a valid Indian Vessel Safety Certificate issued under these Rules.

(2) The Indian Vessel Safety Certificate shall be supplemented by a Record of Equipment and Ship Information, permanently attached to the certificate, and containing the particulars prescribed by the Administration.

(3) The certificate referred to in sub-rule (1) shall certify that the vessel-

(a) complies with the structural, mechanical, life-saving, fire-fighting, radiocommunication and navigational requirements of these Rules;

(b) is fit in all respects to proceed to sea without danger to human life, the vessel, or the environment; and

(c) has been assigned a freeboard, where applicable, in accordance with **Rule 24**.

(4) No Customs, Port Officer or Proper Officer shall grant port clearance to any vessel unless the Indian Vessel Safety Certificate and the Record of Equipment and Ship Information are produced and found valid.

45. Validity of Certificate While Vessel is at Sea

(1) Where the validity of the Indian Vessel Safety Certificate expires while the vessel is at sea, the certificate shall continue to remain valid until the vessel first arrives at an Indian port.

(2) Upon such arrival, the certificate shall cease to be valid unless-

(a) the renewal survey has been completed; and

(b) the certificate has been reissued or endorsed in accordance with Rule 49.

(3) Nothing in this rule shall authorize a vessel to depart again from the port unless a valid certificate has been issued or endorsed.

46. Temporary permission in exceptional circumstances

(1) Where the surveyor or recognized organization determines that certain deficiencies exist which do not endanger the vessel or persons on board, the vessel may be permitted to proceed to sea subject to-

(a) the owner or skipper providing a written undertaking to rectify the deficiencies within the period specified; and

(b) the surveyor recording such conditions on the Record of Equipment and Ship Information.

(2) Such temporary permission shall not exceed three months, unless extended by the Administration for reasons recorded in writing.

(3) No vessel shall be permitted to proceed to sea under temporary permission unless the surveyor is satisfied that the vessel is safe for the intended voyage.

47. Maintenance of Conditions After Survey

(1) After any survey has been completed, no alteration, addition or renewal shall be made to the structural arrangement, machinery, equipment or any other item covered by the survey without the prior approval of the Administration or a recognized organization acting on its behalf.

(2) whenever an accident occurs to the vessel, or a defect is discovered which affects the safety of the vessel, or the efficiency or completeness of its life-saving appliances, fire safety systems, radio installations, navigational equipment or other equipment required under the Rules, the Administration or a recognized organization acting on its behalf shall be notified without delay, and a survey shall be requested and carried out as soon as practicable

48. Suspension or invalidation of certificate

(1) An Indian Vessel Safety Certificate shall be deemed invalid where-

(a) the vessel or its equipment undergoes alteration after survey without approval under 47(1);

(b) damage, defect or deficiency affecting seaworthiness is not reported as required under Rule 47(2);

- (c) the vessel is found unfit to proceed to sea; or
- (d) the required surveys or inspections are not completed within the stipulated time.

(2) Where a certificate is invalidated under sub-rule (1), the vessel shall be detained until compliance is ensured.

49. Issuance of certificates

(1) An Indian Vessel Safety Certificate shall be issued following the completion of survey of a vessel under rule 43, where the vessel is found to comply with the requirements of those Rules.

(2) The certificate referred to in (1) shall be supplemented by a Record of Equipment and Ship Information, which shall

(a) be permanently attached to the certificate; and

(b) contain the particulars specified (3)

(3) The Record of Equipment and Ship Information shall include-

(a) a record of equipment and operational information demonstrating compliance with all relevant Annexes of these Rules applicable to Indian vessels; and

(b) such additional particulars as may be prescribed by the Administration.

(4) The certificate referred to in this rule shall be issued or endorsed by the Administration, or by a recognized organization acting on its behalf.

(5) The certificates issued under this rule shall be kept on board and shall be readily available for examination at all times.

(6) The certificate and the record of equipment and information shall be in the form specified in **Schedule I**.

50. Validity, Renewal and Extension of the Indian Vessel Safety Certificate

(1) An Indian Vessel Safety Certificate shall be issued for a period specified by the Administration, or by a recognized organization acting on its behalf, which shall not exceed five years.

(2) Where the renewal survey is completed within three months before the expiry date of the existing certificate, the new certificate shall be valid from the date of completion of the renewal survey to a date not exceeding five years from the date of expiry of the existing certificate.

(3) Where the renewal survey is completed after the expiry date of the existing certificate, the new certificate shall be valid from the date of completion of the renewal survey to a date not exceeding five years from the date of expiry of the existing certificate.

(4) Where the renewal survey is completed more than three months before or after the expiry date of the existing certificate, the new certificate shall be valid from the date of completion of the renewal survey to a date not exceeding five years from the date of completion of the renewal survey.

(5) Where a certificate is issued for a period of less than five years, the Administration, or a recognized organization acting on its behalf, may extend the validity of the certificate to a period not exceeding five years, provided that all surveys required when a certificate is issued for a period of five years have been carried out as appropriate.

(6) Where a renewal survey has been completed and a new certificate cannot be issued or placed on board the vessel before the expiry date of the existing certificate, the Administration, or a recognized organization acting on its behalf, shall endorse the existing certificate, which shall then be accepted as valid for a further period not exceeding five months from the expiry date.

(7) Where, at the time of expiry of certificate, the vessel is not in position to be surveyed, the administration, or a recognized organization acting on its behalf, may extend the validity of the certificate for not more than three months if satisfied that such extension is justified.

(8) A certificate issued under this rule shall cease to be valid:

(a) where the relevant surveys and inspections are not completed within the period specified under the rules; or

(b) where the certificate is not endorsed in accordance with the requirement of these rules; or

(c) where the vessel is withdrawn from the Indian registry.

CHAPTER X

Prevention of pollution

51. Pollution prevention measures

Matters pertaining to the prevention of pollution from vessels, including air emissions, ballast water management, oil pollution, garbage management, dumping of wastes, noxious liquid substances, sewage, harmful substances in packaged form, and anti-fouling systems, shall be regulated in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Oil from Ships) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Garbage from Ships) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter at Sea) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Control of Pollution by Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Sewage from Ships) Rules, 2026; the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Pollution by Harmful Substances Carried by Sea in Packaged Form) Rules, 2026; and the Merchant Shipping (Control of Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships) Rules, 2026, as the case may be.

CHAPTER XII

52. Insurance

(1) Every owner of a vessel to which this Part applies shall, at all times while the vessel is in operation, maintain a policy of insurance covering every person employed as a member of the crew against death or personal injury arising out of or in the course of employment, including during embarkation, disembarkation and the handling of fishing gear or catch-related activities.

(2) The policy of insurance under sub-rule (1) shall provide for payment of compensation of an amount not less than the minimum amount specified by the Central Government by rules in the Official Gazette, having regard to international standards wherever applicable

(3) The insurance shall, at a minimum, cover—

- (a) death of a crew member arising out of employment onboard;
- (b) permanent total or partial disability resulting from injury sustained in the course of employment;
- (c) medical care and treatment for occupational injury or illness until recovery or medical stabilization;
- (d) repatriation, including travel and subsistence expenses where discharge or treatment occurs away from the home port; and
- (e) payment or reimbursement of wages during the period of treatment or until declaration of fitness or disability, as applicable.

(4) The policy shall be issued by

- (a) an insurer registered with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, or
- (b) a mutual protection and indemnity association or club recognised by the Director-General for this purpose.

(5) The owner shall ensure that a Certificate of Insurance issued by the insurer is kept onboard the vessel and produced on demand to any proper officer or authority responsible for granting port clearance.

(6) No vessel shall proceed to sea unless a valid Certificate of Insurance under sub-rule (5) is in force.

(7) Where the Certificate of Insurance is found to be expired, invalid or not covering the crew, the vessel may be detained until compliance is ensured without prejudice to the penalty provided under Section 264(3) of the Act.

(8) The Director-General may issue guidelines specifying—

- (a) minimum scope and conditions of insurance;
- (b) model policy formats;
- (c) procedures for verification during inspection and survey; and

(d) additional coverage for vessels operating beyond the Contiguous Zone or on voyages exceeding fourteen days.

(9) Until the Central Government issues the rules under sub-rule (2), the minimum compensation payable under the policy shall be not less than the amount payable under the Employees' Compensation Act, 1923, together with medical care and repatriation benefits as required under this rule.

53. Crew statement to be maintained

(1) The owner or skipper of every vessel to which these rules apply shall maintain, in Form CS-1, a crew statement containing the particulars of every person onboard the vessel.

(2) The crew statement shall include the following details for each person:

(a) full name;

(b) date of birth, age and sex;

(c) address and nationality;

(d) identity particulars including Crew Identity Document or Aadhaar or any other Government-issued identity document;

(e) capacity in which engaged;

(f) details of Certificate of Competency or Certificate of Proficiency held, if any;

(g) date and place of joining the vessel;

(h) date and place of discharge or leaving the vessel; and

(i) signature or thumb impression of the person engaged.

(3) The crew statement shall be signed by the skipper before the vessel proceeds to sea and countersigned by the owner or his authorised agent.

(4) Any change in the crew statement occurring during the voyage shall be entered immediately, with date and position of the vessel noted.

(5) The crew statement shall be —

(a) kept onboard the vessel at all times;

(b) produced on demand to a proper officer; and

(c) submitted to the port clearance authority in such manner as the Director-General may specify.

(6) The owner shall retain a duplicate copy of every signed crew statement for a period of five years for inspection by the Director-General.

(7) No vessel shall be granted port clearance unless the proper officer is satisfied that a valid and complete crew statement is carried onboard.

(8) The Director-General may require that the crew statement be uploaded electronically in such format and through such digital system as may be notified, including real-time reporting at departure and arrival.

(9) A crew statement that is false, incomplete or not updated shall be treated as a violation of these rules, without prejudice to the penalty under Section 275(2) of the Act.

54. Submission, Notification and Retention of Crew Statement

(1) A duplicate copy of every crew statement prepared under Rule 53 shall be submitted-

(a) to the Registrar of the port of registry; or

(b) to such authority as the Director-General may notify, within forty-eight hours of the vessel's departure from port.

(2) Any change in the crew occurring during the voyage shall-

(a) be entered immediately in the crew statement; and

(b) be communicated to the Registrar or notified authority at the earliest opportunity, but not later than twenty-four hours after arrival at the next port.

(3) A vessel shall not be granted port clearance unless the Proper Officer is satisfied that-

(a) a valid and complete crew statement is carried on board; and

(b) the required duplicate copy has been submitted in accordance with this rule.

(4) The owner shall retain a duplicate copy of every crew statement for a period of five years, for inspection by the Director-General or any authorised officer.

SCHEDULE I
Form of Indian Vessel Safety Certificate
(See Rule 49)

INDIAN VESSEL SAFETY CERTIFICATE

This Certificate should be supplemented by a Record of Equipment and Ship Information

Under the Government of India

(Recognized Organisation acting on behalf of the Government of India)

Name of Ship	Official No. & Call Sign	Port of Registry	Date of Build (dd/mm/yy)	Gross Tonnage	Propulsion Power(kW)	Deadweight (tons)	IMO Number

This is to certify:

- 1. That the vessel has been surveyed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the rules.**
- 2. That the survey showed that the vessel complied with the requirements of the rules as regards :**
 - .1 the structure, stability, machinery and electrical installations as defined in Annex 4 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025
 - .2 the safety equipment, safety navigation and radio communication equipment as defined in Annexes 5,6,7,8 and 9 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025.
 - .3 all relevant requirements of prevention of marine pollution as defined in Annex 11 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025
 - .4 all relevant requirements of the Ship Security measures as defined in Annex 12 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025
 - .5 a freeboard of _____mm was assigned and marked on the vessel's side at amidship.

.6 in all other respects the vessel complied with the relevant requirements of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025

Completion date of the survey on which this certificate is based.....

This certificate is valid until subject to the annual surveys, intermediate survey and inspections of the outside of the ship's bottom in accordance with MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025

Delete as appropriate

Issued at

(Place of issue of certificate)

.....

.....

.....

(Date of Issue)

(Signature of authorised official issuing the certificate) (Seal or stamp of the issuing authority, as appropriate).

Endorsement for intermediate survey relating to condition of structure, machinery and equipment as required by Annex 10 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that, at an intermediate survey required by Annex 10 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025 was found to comply with the relevant requirements of the said Rules

Annual survey

Signed:.....

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Annual/Intermediate
Survey

Signed:

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Intermediate/Annual
Survey

Signed:

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Annual survey

Signed:

.....

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Endorsement for inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that at an inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom as required by Annex 10 of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025 , the vessel was found to comply with the relevant requirements of the said Rules.

First Inspection: Signed:

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Second Inspection: Signed:

.....

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Endorsement where the renewal survey of the vessel has been extended

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the validity of this certificate is hereby extended until as the vessel was considered to comply with the relevant provision of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025 for the period of extension.

Signed:

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

Endorsement where the renewal survey of the vessel has been completed

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that the validity of this certificate is hereby extended until

..... as the vessel was considered to comply with the relevant provision of the MS (Vessels of Less than Fifteen Tons) Rules , 2025 for the period of extension.

Signed:

(Signature of authorised official)

Place:

Date:

(Seal or stamp of the authority, as appropriate)

FORM CS-1:

[See rule 53(1)]

Crew Statement

1. Vessel Details

- Name of Vessel: _____
- Official / Registration Number: _____
- Port of Registry: _____
- Voyage (From – To): _____
- Date of Departure: ___ / ___ / _____

2. Crew Details Table

Sl. No.	Full Name	DOB / Age / Sex	Address & Nationality	Identity Particulars (CID / Aadhaar / Govt. ID)	Capacity in Which Engaged	Agreement Details (Section 271) – Agreement No./Date	Wages Payable	Next-of-Kin (Name & Address)	Date & Place of Joining / Commencement of Employment	Date & Place of Discharge	Signature / Thumb Impression

3. Skipper & Owner Certification

I certify that the above crew statement is true and complete.

- Signature of Skipper: _____
Date: ___ / ___ / _____
 - Countersignature of Owner / Authorised Agent: _____
Date: ___ / ___ / _____
-

4. Amendments During Voyage

(Any change must be entered immediately with vessel's position)
