

Loss Prevention 27 Apr, 2023

Brazil – Changes to the Immigration Requirements for Seafarers



Dean Crossley
Loss Prevention Manager

The topic of Seafarer Identity Documents (SID) and Seaman's Books has been an ongoing issue for seafarers travelling to Brazil. In January 2021, it was highlighted that the SID issued under ILO Convention No. 185 should be used for immigration purposes instead of the Seaman's Book issued under the revoked ILO Convention No. 108.

This was due to the fact that the SID was recognised as a travel document and allowed for temporary visa exemption in Brazil. The reasoning behind the change was that a SID is a more modern and secure document that includes biometric data and is designed to replace the Seaman's Book as the official travel document for seafarers. Furthermore, the SID is recognised by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and accepted by many countries as a valid travel document for seafarers.

The Brazilian immigration authority issued several fines regarding the use of the Seaman's Book instead of the SID. However, due to uncertainty at the time, [Circular Note No. 09/2021](#) was issued on 11 May 2021 by the Division of Immigration Control and Border Security, a body linked to the Federal Police, establishing that, exceptionally and until 01 May 2022, the Seafarer Identity Document under the terms of the ILO Convention No. 108 (i.e., the Seaman's book) would be accepted for the purpose of immigration control. It also established that the terms of this exception should only apply to the signatory countries of the ILO Convention No. 185.

On 18 April 2022, the General Coordination of Immigration Police, also a body linked to the Federal Police, issued [Circular Note No. 02/2022](#) extending the exception period until 30 April 2023. This meant that until 30 April 2023, the Seaman's Book could still be used as a valid travel document for seafarers visiting Brazil.



However, this exception is ending on **01 May 2023**, and it is expected that the SID issued in accordance with the ILO Convention No. 185 will become the official immigratory document for seafarers in Brazil. As a result, the Seaman's Book issued under the ILO Convention No. 108 will no longer be considered a valid immigration document for seafarers, and failure to comply with this rule will result in immigration fines.

Vessel owners and operators need to be aware of this change and ensure that their seafarers have the correct documents for immigration purposes when travelling to Brazil. However, the specific requirements and periods allowed for seafarers with a valid SID to stay in the country without a visa requirement differ from those covered in this article. Therefore, seeking consultation with the appropriate authorities for more information on these requirements is recommended.

Seafarers travelling to Brazil should ensure they have the correct documents to avoid potential fines, and vessel owners and operators should be aware of the upcoming change in regulations regarding immigration documents for seafarers.

We thank the Club's local correspondent, Brazil P&I, for highlighting the upcoming changes to the temporary visa exemption in Brazil for seafarers.

Members requiring further guidance should contact the Loss Prevention Department.