

ILO C185 Guideline:

The Brazilian immigration authority has stated that, as of April 2023, only SIDs issued in accordance with ILO Convention 185 will be recognised as valid travel documents for seafarers.

Chinese seafarers are exempt from SID 185 or visa requirements only when serving on Chinese-flagged vessels pursuant to the specific bilateral agreement between Brazil and China. By contrast, Bangladeshi seafarers must always hold a valid SID 185 or a visa, regardless of the vessel's flag.

Below is a concise summary of the current immigration rules for foreign seafarers in Brazil:

Chinese Seafarers

China has not ratified ILO Convention No. 185; therefore, Chinese seafarers do not qualify for a general SID-based visa exemption.

Visa requirement: Chinese seafarers must obtain a visa unless covered by a specific exemption.

Exemption clause: Under the Brazil–China Maritime Transport Agreement (Decree 85.314/1980), Chinese seafarers on Chinese-flagged vessels may go ashore without SID 185 or a visa, provided they:

- a) hold valid national seafarer documents;
- b) remain within the port city during the vessel's stay;
- c) are signed on to Chinese-flagged vessels (owned or time-chartered); and
- d) do not remain in Brazil for more than 90 days.

Extension of coverage: This exemption has been extended to include seafarers from Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Tibet, Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan; shipowners employing seafarers from these territories on vessels flagged in these jurisdictions will therefore not be subject to immigration fines on this basis.

Bangladeshi Seafarers

Bangladesh has ratified ILO Convention No. 185, but there is no bilateral agreement with Brazil granting visa exemption.

Visa requirement: Bangladeshi seafarers must present either a valid SID issued under ILO C185 or a valid passport with an appropriate visa.

No exemptions: The vessel's flag does not affect this requirement; immigration fines may be applied if these documents are not presented.

The Brazilian Migration Law provides for fines applicable to travelers (ranging from BRL 100 to BRL 10,000) and to carriers (from BRL 1,000 to BRL 1 million) for breaches of immigration regulations. Penalties may be increased substantially in cases of repeated offences.

The shipowner is legally responsible for all crew members, passengers and stowaways carried on board. Liability may only be excluded where the violation results directly from force majeure or an Act of God.

In addition to financial penalties, the immigration authority may order the repatriation or deportation of foreign travelers who are found to be in breach of Brazilian immigration requirements.

Whenever those penalties are wrongfully applied, they may be contested either administratively or judicially, with full rights of defence guaranteed under the adversarial system, including the right to appeal.



Immigration fines are subject to a five-year limitation period counted from the date of the alleged violation. In cases involving continuous or ongoing non-compliance, the limitation period begins only once the infringement has ceased.