

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-192

To: Owners/Operators of Panamanian flagged vessels, Recognized Organizations and users of the Panama Flag Registry.

Subject: Guidance on “Type Approvals” and “satisfaction of the Administration”.

Reference: Resolution N° 106-002-DGMM of January 4, 2024.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Circular is to issue guidance on “Type approvals” and “the satisfaction of the Administration” criteria, in accordance with Resolution No.106-002 of January 4, 2024 which revokes Resolution No. 106-181-DGMM of December 24, 2021, this Resolution revokes previous Resolution No. 106-34-DGMM of August 22, 2008.

2. Scope

- 2.1. All vessels registered under Panama flag.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. “Criteria of the Administration” or “satisfaction of the Administration” means, in the first instance, the unified interpretations developed and approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and/or specialized International Organizations recognized by the IMO, that given their judgment are satisfying the requirements for each specific case. Besides, Panama’s interpretations might be established to comply with certain provisions of the relevant international instruments open to the criteria or satisfaction of the Administration.



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4. Guidance for Type-Approved Equipment or Systems Acceptance

4.1. The equipment will be considered as accepted by the Republic of Panama in the following two (2) circumstances:

- a) Equipment or systems provided in technical specifications or performance standards of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), in which cases they have been developed and approved within the IMO Committees. The Recognized Organizations must accept its use in vessels registered in the Republic of Panama for the equipment.

To clarify further the above indicated, "technical specifications or performance standards of the International Maritime Organization (IMO)", the Recognized Organizations shall ensure when verifying equipment or systems the type-approval certificate has been issued by other IMO member States. If new technologies require approval of the IMO Committees the Recognized Organizations shall verify that technology has been already approved.

- b) Equipment or systems not addressed by technical specifications or performance standards approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in which the relevant international instruments simply provide that the equipment must be type-approved, the Republic of Panama will accept the following:

- Equipment or systems approved by traditional maritime countries that are members of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which have national, regional or international provisions for the approval of certain types of equipment or systems; therefore, the Recognized Organizations must accept such approved equipment or systems.

Traditional maritime countries shall be understood as those IMO member states having experience, records among other aspects related to the provisions of maritime services with regards to the manufacture of equipment, systems or apparatus on board, including the shipbuilding.

- Equipment or systems approved under the standards for equipment, systems or materials on board developed by specialized International



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Organizations and recognized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

To clarify further over the second bullet point, “the standards developed by specialized International Organizations” means, the ISO, IEC standards, and the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) according to their specifications to approve equipment, systems or materials on board their classed ships.

- 4.2. In both scenarios if any doubt exists about such approvals, then the Recognized Organizations may perform additional verification of the type-approved equipment or system.
- 4.3. The above policy will not apply in case of services and/or inspection approvals, alternative designs and arrangements, and in case of equivalents, considering that IMO guidelines exist for the Administration approval, unless expressly delegated by this Administration.

5. Guidance concerning the “Criteria of the Administration” or “Satisfaction of the Administration”

- 5.1. This Administration will consider in the first instance the interpretations developed and approved by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). In their absence, the unified interpretations approved by the International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) may be used as a base to establish specific requirements to comply with certain provisions of the relevant international instruments.
- 5.2. However, if the Administration is not satisfied with any unified interpretation or no interpretation exists, then, its own interpretation will be established through the Merchant Marine Circulars or through individual statements according to the specific case.

March, 2024 – Reference updated. Paragraphs 1.1, 3.1, 4.1 a) and b); amended. New paragraph 4.3 added. Paragraph 2. Scope included, therefore paragraphs renumbered.

April, 2022 – Completely revised.

November, 2008.



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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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