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CIRCULAR

Panama Flag – Fleet Optimization

Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators

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The Panama Maritime Authority has issued Merchant Marine Circular [MMC-405](#), which provides information on revised measures to optimise the performance of the Panamanian Merchant Fleet. The Circular replaces MMC-380 and its formats.

To strengthen maritime safety, security, pollution prevention, and the living conditions onboard ships, in compliance with international regulations, the Republic of Panama established, through Resolution No. 106-003-DGMM of January 03, 2025, measures for vessels representing certain risk levels according to their performance and based on risk assessment of the fleet registered.

Points to Note:

Definitions

Warning vessels:

Those with a moderate risk performance, having had previous inspections with few deficiencies and no detention records.

Critical vessels:

Those that present a high-risk performance, given the history of multiple deficiencies.

Applicable measures for critical ships

The General Directorate of the Merchant Marine may require that **critical vessels** comply with the following:

- An additional survey every three months, carried out by the Recognized Organization (RO) that issues the statutory certificates. The scope of these surveys will be annual and/or periodical.
- Additional verification of the Ship Safety Management System (SMS Certificate), with an initial scope and the possibility of increasing its frequency if non-conformities or deficiencies are identified that could affect the Safety Management System.
- Ships may also be subject to the Performance Monitoring Accelerated Program (PMAP), consisting of additional verifications and surveys conducted by the RO in cooperation with a flag state surveyor at intervals specified by the Administration according to each case.

Applicable measures for warning vessels

Shipowners, operators, technical managers, the Designated Person Ashore (DPA), and the vessel Captain are responsible for completing a [pre-arrival checklist](#).

This checklist must be submitted to prearrival@amp.gob.pa one hundred and twenty (120) hours (5 days) before the arrival of the vessel to ports under the supervision of the United States Coast Guard (USCG), Paris MOU, AMSA-Australian Maritime Safety Authority and MSA-Maritime Safety Administration (People's Republic of China).

Records of these checks must be kept on board and may be requested by flag state surveyors during **Annual Safety Inspections (ASI)**.

Maintenance of conditions after survey

In case of any equipment failure, or if a defect is discovered onboard, which cannot be solved immediately, the shipowners, operators, technical managers, DPA or the ship Master is to report at the earliest opportunity to the nearest Segumar Office, and the Recognized Organization responsible for issuing the relevant certificate, who shall investigate to determine whether an additional survey is necessary.

If the ship is en route to a port under the supervision of a port state control authority, the master or owner is also to report and notify immediately the appropriate local Port State Control Authority (PSC), as indicated in SOLAS Convention Chapter I Regulation 11 "Maintenance of conditions after survey".

Shipowners, operators, technical managers, DPA or the ship Master is to coordinate corrective actions with the RO and report at the earliest opportunity to the nearest SEGUMAR office. Refer to MMN-18/2021 for the contact list and MMC-156 in case of further actions required.

Corrective and Preventive Measures

Corrective measures

For all deficiencies identified during a Port State Control Inspection, the following documents and forms are to be submitted to the Panama Port State Control Section as soon as possible:

- the corrective actions plan (CAP),
- evidence of the corrective actions taken by the vessel, duly documented,
- [Correction of Deficiencies Reports Form \(F-27\)](#) as per Annex 1 of the Merchant Marine Circular.

An onboard file containing records and supporting documentation that demonstrate the closure of deficiencies identified during previous Port State Control (PSC) inspections is to be maintained onboard.

Preventive measures

Ships that have been found with deficiencies or detained by a port state control (PSC) authority are to maintain on board the documentation specified in [MMN-08/2025](#), concerning the onboard record-keeping requirements for Panamanian-flagged ships, PSC Compliance File.

Additional inspection and/or verification reports related to inspections resulting in deficiencies or detentions are to be submitted to the Navigation and Maritime Safety Department of the General Directorate of Merchant Marine within a period not exceeding fifteen (15) days from the date of the last day of inspection.

Failure to take corrective action, including the implementation of measures to prevent recurrence within the prescribed time limits, shall be considered a major non-conformity or deficiency. Such failure may lead to enforcement actions in accordance with the legal procedures established by applicable law, including:

- Prohibition from Sailing,
- the imposition of fines, or
- cancellation of the vessel's registration.

Act now

Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators should take note of the contents of MMC-405 and be guided accordingly.