



CIRCULAR

Belize – Change of Vessel Status

C25063 | 18 November 2025

Notice to: Ship Owners / Managers / Operators / Surveyors

The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) has issued Merchant Marine Notice [MMN-21-001r2](#), which gives updated requirements for the process of changing the status of a Belize-registered vessel.

All Belize-registered vessels intending to change their status from operational to dry-docking, under repair, maintenance or laid-up must notify IMMARBE's Technical Department of this intention, including the period required under the new status. For fishing vessels, this notification should also be copied to the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU) at info@bhsfu.gov.bz. Failure to make these notifications, as appropriate, will result in the vessel being considered as operating normally.

The notice does not apply to:

- Non-propelled vessels,
- Newly registered vessels with the conditions "Not Valid for Navigation".

Points to note

The Responsible Organization (RO) responsible for Statutory, ISM, ISPS and MLC certifications is to be informed, and their procedures for change of status are to be followed to avoid suspension or cancellation of the vessel's certification.

Failure to comply with all procedures set by the RO for changing status may lead to serious non-compliance with national requirements and may be considered grounds for disciplinary measures under the Belize Merchant Ships (Registration) Act and the Registration of Merchant Ships (Disciplinary) Regulations.

Statement Of Authorization

Every Belize-flagged vessel wishing to change its status from operational to maintenance, dry-docking, repairs, or laid-up must apply for a Statement of Authorization. This Authorization is subject to confirmation that the vessel will:

- be safely moored or dry-docked
- be provided with adequate crew in the case of a hot layup, and
- comply with all RO requirements and procedures for change in status to avoid suspension of class.

To obtain the Statement of Authorization, the Owner/Operator must submit, through their Designated Office or Deputy Registrar, per section 5 of MMN-19-002, the following:

- 1) A complete Application Form (TDF-006) addressing the change of status, location of the vessel, crew particulars, and the period needed.
- 2) A written statement from the shipyard/port confirming that the vessel will be in their custody.
- 3) For fishing vessels, in addition to the above, a Letter of Confirmation duly signed and stamped by the shipyard/port.
- 4) A statement from the vessel's RO confirming that they will have no inconvenience with the change of status of the vessel.
- 5) Confirmation that LRIT, AIS, and/or VMS will be operational during this period.
- 6) If LRIT, AIS, and/or VMS need to be deactivated or switched off, the operators, via their designated office, must provide reasons for the deactivation of these systems.
- 7) If there is an intention to reduce the crew complement, a request for a new Minimum Safe Manning Certificate is to be made along with the application for Change of Status.
- 8) The Designated Office or Deputy Registrar shall then apply to IMMARBÉ's Technical Department at technicalservices@immarbe.com for the issuance of a Statement of Authorization

Minimum Safe Manning

If an operator wishes to reduce the crew complement on board, authorization must be requested from IMMARBÉ's Seafarers Department. The vessel may not proceed on any voyages with a reduced crew. Instead, a notification shall be sent to the Administration (Technical and Seafarers Department) and the RO to reactivate the vessel.

LRIT, AIS and VM

If the LRIT, AIS and VMS (for fishing or fishing-related vessels) need to be deactivated or switched off during the maintenance, dry-docking, repairs, or laid-up period, immediate notification to IMMARBÉ's Technical Department must be made to authorize such action.

Failure to comply will be considered in contravention of MMN-24-006 concerning Long-Range Identification and Tracking System (LRIT), the Automatic Identification System (AIS), and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) - Compliance Requirements for Belize Flagged Ships.

Reactivation Requirements

Any vessel wishing to return to operational status must notify the Administration via technicalservices@immarbe.com. For fishing vessels, this notification should also be copied to the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU) at info@bhsfu.gov.bz

Before proceeding to sea, the operator must ensure the LRIT, AIS, and/or VMS are reactivated, as applicable, and comply with all RO requirements for reactivation of the vessel certificates and verification of compliance with LRIT, AIS, and/or VMS, as appropriate.

Fees

The applicable fees are in accordance with MMN-19-003 Fees Applicable for the Issuance of Technical Certificates by IMMARBE.

Disciplinary Measures

Failure to adhere to the requirements of the Notice may result in disciplinary action, including:

- Revocation of the vessel's certification.
- Imposition of fines or penalties.
- Restrictions on the vessel's operations or trading activities.
- Other legal actions as specified under the Belize Merchant Ships (Registration) Act, and Statutory Instrument 56 of 1999 (as revised).

Act now

Ship Owners / Managers / Operators should review the contents of MMN-21-001r2 and be guided accordingly.