



clever solutions | beyond class

CIRCULAR

Panama Flag Precheck process

C26015 | 10 February 2026

Notice to: Ship Owners / Managers / Operators

The Panama Maritime Authority have issued a revised Merchant Marine Notice [MMN-11/2024](#) detailing the precheck process for a vessel to be eligible to enter the Panama Ship Registry.

The precheck process involves a thorough risk assessment of various aspects related to the vessel, its owner, operator, and/or charterer before applying for entry into the Panama Ship Registry.

The precheck applies:

- to any vessel that requests to enter the Panama Ship Registry, in any of its flag registry modalities.
- when a registered vessel, in international service, requests a change of owner or charterer.

A precheck is not necessary for vessels already registered in Panama and requesting only a change in the vessel's name or operator.

The precheck evaluation will lead to the following results: approved or rejected. In some cases of approval, the vessel may be subject to conditions that shall be complied with after the registration.

The Republic of Panama will not accept oil tankers or bulk carriers over fifteen (15) years of age for registration. Exceptions may apply in cases of bulk carriers up to twenty (20) years of age, subject to the satisfactory results of internal risk assessment.

For oil tankers intending to operate within the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama, age-related registration restrictions may be waived up to twenty-five (25) years of age, subject to the submission of their valid Operating

License issued by the Ports and Ancillary Industries General Directorate for existing Companies. For new Companies a sworn affidavit declaration for the intended service, duly apostilled, must be submitted. In addition to the required information, the vessel's operating area is to be clearly described.

The Merchant Marine General Directorate encourages all parties involved in the operation of a registered vessel to periodically conduct risk assessments and due diligence to prevent marine incidents, protect the marine environment, ensure fair working conditions and avoid illegal operations or activities that are not aligned with the policies and commitment acquired by the Republic of Panama.

Points to Note:

The precheck must be requested by a Panamanian Law Firm or a Panama Merchant Marine Consulate, before the registration and will be valid for fifteen (15) calendar days.

Requests must be sent to pmaprecheck@amp.gob.pa and include:

- Vessel's IMO Number (if an IMO Number is not applicable: the vessel's name);
- Previous registry of the vessel (does not apply to new constructions);
- Current vessel's owner (does not apply to new constructions);
- Intended owner under Panama flag and Registered Owner(s) Number;
- Economic group;
- Current Operator (Company responsible for the operation of the vessel), does not apply to new construction;
- Intended Operator under Panama flag (Company responsible for the operation of the vessel) and Company Identification Number;
- Vessel Charterer's name (in case of bareboat charter registration);
- Keel laying date (in the absence of this date, the delivery date);
- Ballast Water Management Method used: D2, D4 or Other Approach (for vessels subject to IBWM Convention).

The Merchant Marine General Directorate may request any additional information and/or documents to complete the precheck process.

Act now

Ship Owners/Managers/Operators are to take note of the contents of the Merchant Marine Notice and be guided accordingly.