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CIRCULAR

Vanuatu - Mandatory transition to e-Certificates

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Notice to: Ship Owners / Managers / Operators

The Vanuatu International Ship Registry (VISR) has issued [Circular #33](#), which initiates the final phase of full fleet-wide digital integration. VISR has also issued an [Addendum to Circular #33](#), giving clarification and ensuring a uniform, transparent, and efficient transition across the fleet.

The transition to electronic certification is an administrative replacement process, not a renewal or revalidation of certificates, and:

- Replacement certificates are issued solely to convert existing documents into the electronic QR-code format.
- The process does not alter the legal status, validity, or compliance condition of the vessel.

Points to Note:

Certificates Subject to Replacement

The following certificates are required to be replaced with electronic versions:

- Certificate of Registry (Provisional and Permanent);
- Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC);
- Ship Radio Station License;
- Latest issued Continuous Synopsis Record (CSR). Only the latest CSR document is to be reissued. Historical CSR records (Forms 2, 3, etc.) do not require reissuance.

Mandatory Deadline for Full Electronic Transition

All Vanuatu-flagged vessels must complete the transition from hardcopy to electronic certification by **August 31, 2026**.

Effective **September 1, 2026**, any statutory certificate issued by the Administration in hardcopy format shall be null and void. This supersedes the previous provision in Circular #26, which allowed hardcopy certificates to remain valid until their indicated expiry date.

Implementation Approach

To ensure an orderly transition:

- Replacement may be carried out progressively, aligned with operational schedules or certificate handling requirements.
- Shipowners are not required to replace all certificates simultaneously.
- Priority should be given to vessels operating in high PSC exposure regions.

Application for Reissuance

To maintain compliance, shipowners and managers must ensure that all current hardcopy certificates are replaced with electronic versions before the deadline. Applications for reissuance must be submitted to the Administration at info@register-vu.com.

All reissued certificates will incorporate the mandatory QR Code as an integral verification feature to ensure authenticity.

Validity of Replacement Certificates

All replacement certificates shall retain the same expiry date as the original certificate being replaced, and shall not be extended, renewed, or revalidated through the replacement process.

Certificate Format and Identification

Each replacement certificate will:

- Be issued as a new document;
- Contain a new certificate number and serial number;
- Be electronically signed by the Administration;
- Include a QR Code for real-time verification;
- Include the statement *“This certificate is issued as a replacement of a previously issued certificate and retains the original validity period”*.

Mandatory Disposal and Evidence of Destruction

To eliminate the risk of dual-documentation and fraudulent use, the following procedures are mandatory:

- **Disposal:** Upon receipt of the new electronic certificates, all superseded or expired hardcopy documents must be immediately removed from the vessel's files and disposed of permanently.
- **Proof of Disposal:** The Administration requires confirmation of this action. Masters or Ship Managers must provide evidence of disposal (e.g., a written confirmation or photographic evidence of destruction) to the Administration via email.

Verification, Port State Control (PSC) and On-Board Documentation

All electronic certificates:

- Are fully valid under international regulations;
- May be verified by scanning the QR code;

- Should be presented in digital or printed format during inspections.

The Administration advises that a copy of Circular #33 and the Addendum should be maintained on board, either in digital or printed format, to be presented to Port State Control officers if required.

Exceptional Circumstances

The issuance of hardcopy certificates after August 31 2026, shall be:

- strictly limited to exceptional circumstances;
- at the sole discretion of the Maritime Administrator;
- subject to rigorous verification requirements.

Fees and Charges

To facilitate an efficient and cooperative transition, no fees will be charged for the replacement of certificates under the migration process.

Compliance

Failure to comply with the requirements of Circular #33 and its Addendum may result in regulatory action.

Act now

Ship Owners/Managers/Operators are to take note of the contents of Circular #33 and the Addendum, and are required to:

- Ensure timely replacement of certificates;
- Maintain accurate and verifiable onboard documentation;
- Cooperate fully with the Administration during the transition;
- Take immediate measures to align their documentation practices with the Circular and Addendum.