



# Maritime Circular No.13

To:

**Ship – Owners / Managers / Operators, Registration Officers (RegOffs), Recognised Organisations (ROs), SLMARAD Departments (All)**

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Subject:

**Extension of Bottom Survey, Special Survey or Statutory Certificates Policy**

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Date:

**24<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

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References:

**SOLAS 74/88 Regulation I/10(a)(v)**

**SOLAS 74/88 Regulation I/14(e), (f)**

**IMO Resolution MSC.204(81)**

**IMO Resolution A.744(18)**

**IMO MSC.1/Circ.1223**

**IMO Resolution A.1207(34)**

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## **Purpose**

To inform all interested parties on the requirements for the inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom of cargo ships.

To outline the procedure for the extension of such an inspection for Sierra Leonean Vessels.

## **Application**

1. This Circular applies to all Sierra Leonean Cargo Vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above.
2. There should be a minimum of two inspections of the outside of the ship's bottom during any five-year period, except where SOLAS 74/88 Regulation I/14(e) or (f) is applicable. For the definition of "any five-year period" refer to paragraph 5.7 of the IMO Resolution A.1207 (34).
3. One such inspection should be carried out on or after the fourth annual survey in conjunction with the renewal of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate. Where the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate has been extended under SOLAS 74/88, Regulation I/14(e) or (f), this five-year period may be extended to coincide with the validity of the certificate. In all cases the interval between any two such inspections should not exceed 36 months.
4. The inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom and the survey of related items should include an inspection to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and fit for the service for which the ship is intended (as per IMO MSC.1/Circ.1223). For the definition of "related items" refer to paragraph 5.1 of the IMO Resolution A.1207(34).

5. Inspections of the outside of the ship's bottom should normally be carried out with the ship in dry dock. However, consideration may be given to conducting alternative inspections with the ship afloat. Special consideration should be given before permitting ships of 15 years of age and over, other than bulk carriers and oil tankers, to undergo such surveys afloat.
6. Inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom for bulk carriers and oil tankers of 15 years of age and over should be carried out with the ship in dry dock. Inspections with the ship afloat should only be carried out when conditions are satisfactory and proper equipment and suitably trained staff are available. In such cases, the responsible Recognized Organization and/or Classification Society shall inform the Administration of the shipowner's intention to proceed with an alternative inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom and obtain written approval by the Administration at least 15 days prior to the inspection.
7. For ships subject to enhanced survey, the provisions of paragraph 2.2.22 of the applicable part of annex A or B of the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections during Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, 2011 (2011 ESP Code), adopted by resolution A.1049(27), as amended, should apply.
8. Where an inspection of the ship's bottom has not been carried out before the due dates reference should be made to paragraph 5.6 of the IMO Resolution A.1207 (34).
9. Extending the period of inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom of cargo ships:
  - a. According to SOLAS 74 as amended, Regulation I/10 (a) (v), it is permitted for the period of five years in which two inspections of the ship's bottom were carried out, to get an extension of not more than three (3) months when the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate is extended under regulation I/14 (e) and (f). This extension should be permitted within a period of 36 months between any such two inspections as referred in paragraph 3 of this circular.
  - b. For SLMARAD to grant extension between inspections of the outside of the ship's bottom the Recognized Organization issuing the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate the following documents must be submitted:
    - i. Formal letter from the Ship Owner(s) and/or Management Company addressed to Sierra Leone International Maritime Administration requesting the extension of the inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom and clarifying the reasons that such inspection cannot be carried out at due time.
    - ii. Confirmation from the Dock Yard that the vessel is scheduled to carry out inspection of the outside ship's bottom no later than by the extended date.
    - iii. An underwater survey report which must be carried out in the presence of the Recognized Organization including the approval of the diving company by the Recognized Organization or by an Organization approved by the Flag State Administration.
    - iv. Statement from the Recognized Organization confirming the acceptance of dry dock extension based on the evaluation of the underwater survey report.

- v. An updated Survey Status Report of the vessel clearly indicating the previous dry dock survey and the upcoming intermediate or renewal survey on the vessel.
  - vi. SLMARAD Application form “TE-DOC-24 - Application for Extension of Bottom Survey, Special Survey or Statutory Certificates” duly filled and signed by the Recognized Organization.
  - vii. Copy of current Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or Cargo Ship Safety Certificate.
- c. SLMARAD will evaluate each application and grant authorization for the extension of the outside of the ship’s bottom in accordance with the relevant regulation or article. SLMARAD will not grant more than three (3) months dry dock extension. In exceptional cases that a vessel requires further extension, the documents requested in paragraph 9 of this circular must be submitted for re-evaluation from this Administration.
- d. A certificate cease to be valid if the periodical, intermediate or annual survey, as appropriate, or the inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom is not completed within the period specified in the relevant regulation or article. The validity of the certificate should be restored by carrying out the appropriate survey which, in such circumstances, should consist of the requirements of the survey that was not carried out, but its thoroughness and stringency should have regard to the time this survey was allowed to lapse. SLMARAD will ascertain why the survey was allowed to lapse and consider further action, if necessary.

10. Unscheduled inspections of the outside of the ship’s bottom for cargo ships

- a. Any unscheduled dry docking survey for emergency repairs will not be credited by SLMARAD as an inspection of the outside of the ship’s bottom as per SOLAS 74/78 Regulation I/10(a) (v). SLMARAD may only credit such a bottom survey in case the Recognized Organization issuing the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate, ascertains that the repairs and survey were equivalent to the requirements of such an inspection of International Standards and the Requirements of the Recognized Organization.

11. The above will enter into effect as of 24<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

For additional information please contact SLMARAD at [info@slmarad.com](mailto:info@slmarad.com)

**Revision Status**

Date	Revision	Comments - Changes
10/01/2017	0	Initial – Adopted
24/03/2026	1	Amended paragraphs 5 and 6