

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-204

- To:** Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates, Recognized Organizations (RO), Regional Offices, Manning Agencies, Nautical Inspectors, Shipping Companies, Recognized Trainings Organizations.
- Subject:** Outside Ship's Bottom inspection and Dry docking Interface Periods for Panamanian Flagged Vessels.
- References:** Resolution A.1140(31) adopted through Resolution No. 107-OMI-234-DGMM, of May 18, 2020, Law No. 7 of October 27, 1977, (SOLAS) Convention as amended, Resolution MSC.204(81) and Resolution No. 106-34-DGMM of August 22, 2008.

This Circular supersedes **MMC-141** and **MMC-116**.

Purpose

This Circular contains the dry-docking survey interval requirements for the Panamanian flag registered ships. The instructions described in this circular have been prepared based on the Survey Guidelines under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification, 2019 set out in the annex of the Resolution A.1140(31) and considerations of the Panama Maritime Authority.

Definitions

The following definitions shall be considered:

- i. "An inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom is an inspection of the underwater part of the ship and related items to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and fit for the service for which the ship is intended" (Res.A.1140 (31), p.8).*
- ii. "Any five-year period is the five-year period of validity of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate." Res.A.1140 (31), p.18). However, for this Administration, in case of ships less than 500 gross*



Merchant Marine Circular

tonnage “any five-year period” is the five-year period of validity of the International Load Line Certificate.

- iii. “Related items mean those items which may only be inspected when the ship is in dry dock or undergoing an in-water examination of the outside of its bottom. For oil tankers, chemical tankers and gas carriers, this may mean that the ship has to be specially prepared by, for example, being cleaned and gas freed. Then the survey of items such as the internal examination of cargo tanks, as referred to in (CIn) 2.3.2 and (CIn) 2.3.3 in annex 1 may be undertaken at the same time.*

Outside ships bottom inspections

Outside ship’s bottom inspections are to be attended by a surveyor from a Recognized Organization. The Administration may request at any time the survey report and related documentation used for the analysis and evaluation of the ship’s conditions.

The Panama Maritime Authority inform to all Ship Owners/ Operators, Legal Representatives and Recognized Organizations that the **outside ship’s bottom inspection** periods for the Panamanian Flag registered ships, are as follows:

1. Cargo vessels of 500 Gross Tonnage and above:

- 1.1 Cargo vessels of 500 Gross Tonnage and above in accordance with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 74 as amended (SOLAS) regulation I/10(a)(v), all ships in possession of a Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate requires a minimum of two inspections of the outside ship’s bottom during any five year period of validity of its certificate, except where SOLAS 74/88 regulation 14 (e) or (f) is applicable.
- 1.2 One of such inspections should be carried out on or after the fourth annual survey in conjunction with the renewal of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate. Where regulation SOLAS 74/88 regulation 14 (e) or (f) is applicable, this five-year period may be extended to coincide with the extended period of validity of the certificate. In all cases the interval between any two such inspections shall not exceed 36 months.
- 1.3 The inspection of the outside of the ship’s bottom and the survey of related items,¹ should include an inspection to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and fit for the service for which the ship is intended.
- 1.4 Inspections of the outside of the ship’s bottom should normally be carried out with the ship in a dry dock (out of water), and consideration may be given to alternate

¹ Related items as defined in item 5.1 of the Assembly Resolution A.1140 (31).

Merchant Marine Circular

inspections being carried out with the ship afloat, as it is indicated in “Survey Guidelines under the harmonized system of survey and certification (HSSC)”.

- 1.5 Therefore, for *ships less than 15 years of age other than bulk carriers and oil tankers*, alternate inspections being carried out with the ship afloat might be carried out in cases where the RO/Class consider that is proper and reasonable to do so; and in such cases this Administration shall be informed for our records.
- 1.6 In case of ships subject to IACS Extended Dry Dock Scheme, the Administration may permit alternate inspections of the ship’s bottom afloat, provided it is demonstrated that ship is subject to an approved comprehensive planned maintenance system for the hull as well as for machinery. In addition, the ship must be fitted with a shaft bearing and sealing system of approved design with implementation of regular monitoring procedures, authorization for these cases is granted to IACS directly.
- 1.7 *Ships of 15 years of age and over others than bulk carriers and oil tankers, shall be subject to special consideration by this Administration for permitting that bottom surveys are carry out afloat* (in water), authorization by SEGUMAR Technical Offices should be requested for.
- 1.8 *However, in case of Oil Tankers and Bulk carriers less than 15 years of age, alternate inspections of the ship’s bottom not conducted in conjunction with the Renewal Survey of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate may be carried out with the ship afloat* (in water), as it is indicated in paragraph 2.2.2 of applicable part of annex A or B of 2011 ESP Code.
- 1.9 All inspections with the ship afloat (in water) should only be carried out when the conditions are satisfactory, and the proper equipment and suitably trained staffs are available.
- 1.10 *Inspection of the outside of the ship’s bottom of bulk carriers and oil tankers of 15 years of age and over should be carried out with the ship in dry dock* (out of water), as it is indicated in paragraph 2.2.2 of applicable part of annex A or B of 2011 ESP Code.

I. Extending the period between inspections of the outside of the ship’s bottom

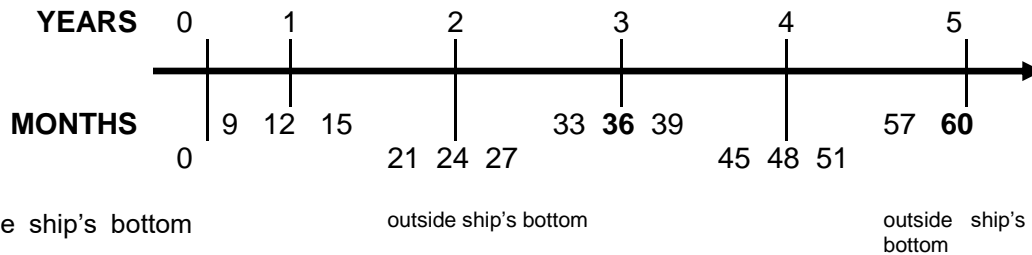
- i) According to SOLAS 74 as amended, regulation I/10(a) (v), this permits the period of five years (60 months) in which two inspections of the ship’s bottom are to be carried out to be extended when the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate is extended under regulation I/14(e) and (f). However, no extension should be permitted on the period of 36 months between any two such inspections. If the first ship’s bottom inspection is carried



Merchant Marine Circular

out between **24 and 27 months**, then the thirty-sixth (36) month limitation may prevent the certificate being extended by the periods permitted in regulation I/14(e) and (f).

Explained as follows:



ii) A certificate ceases to be valid if the inspection of the outside of the ship's bottom is not completed within the periods specified above. 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 period of time beyond the survey due date (authorization for revalidation should be requested to Segumar Offices). The Administration will require detailed description why the survey was not carried out within its lapse of time and consider further action, if necessary.

2. Cargo vessels of less than 500 Gross Tonnage:

2.1 Irrespective of the navigation area this group of ships shall be subject to a minimum of two outside ship's bottom inspections during **any five-year period**² following the same instructions applicable to Cargo **vessels of 500 Gross Tonnage and above**. The required inspections of the ship's bottom for the renewal surveys of the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate under the provisions of the Resolution No.106-138-DGMM of September 10, 2013 could be carried out with the ship afloat.

2.2 Authorization from this Administration shall be requested to SEGUMAR Offices to carry out an alternate inspection with the ship afloat in case of **ship of 15 years of age and over, other than bulk carrier and oil tanker** (request will be analyzed thoroughly considering type, service and age of the ship).

² The definition of "any five-year period" for this Administration is the five-year period of validity of the International Load Line Certificate.



Merchant Marine Circular

3. Passenger ships:

3.1 Irrespective of the navigation area passenger ships shall be subject to two outside ship's bottom inspection with the ship in a dry dock in a five (5) year period² (60 months). In all cases the period of time between these two bottom inspections in dry dock shall not exceed 36 months. The remaining bottom surveys of these ships can be carried out as in water surveys. Consecutive underwater surveys will be allowed for these ships.

3.2 The required inspections of the ship's bottom can be carried out with the ship afloat for the renewal surveys of the Passenger Ship Safety Certificate, provided that RO/Class responsible of this Certificate agrees to do so.

3.3 Inspections with the ship afloat should only be carried out when the conditions are satisfactory, the proper equipment and suitably trained staff is available, as well as previous authorization has been granted by this Administration through the SEGUMAR Offices in case of passenger ships of 15 years of age and over, as follows:

3.3.1 Operators of Panamanian Passenger ships will make the request for underwater survey in lieu of dry dock directly to the ship's Recognized Organization. The Recognized Organization will evaluate the request and, after considering all relevant information, should make a recommendation to this Administration (Segumar Offices). If the request is approved, the correspondent underwater examination will be carried according to the Recognized Organization procedures, using approved companies certified by them to do specific work and to the satisfaction of the attending surveyor.

4. Fishing vessels of 24 meters in length and above:

4.1 Irrespective of the navigation area shall be subject to a minimum of two inspection of the outside ship's bottom during the five-year period. The five-year period is defined by the Fishing Vessels Safety Certificate.

5. Fishing vessels of less than 24 meters in length:

5.1 Irrespective of the navigation area this group of vessels shall be subject to a minimum of two inspection of the ship's outside during any five year period.

6. Vessel Operating Exclusively on Panamanian Jurisdictional Waters:

6.1 For every vessel with an International Register Certificate, operating exclusively within jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama, and regardless of service



Merchant Marine Circular

and tonnage, the two (2) inspections of the outside of the ship's bottom, during any five (5) year period, shall be carried out with the ship in dry dock.

6.2 Notwithstanding the above mentioned, this Administration, through SEGUMAR offices could authorize to replace the intermediate outside ship's bottom survey by an in-water survey, for ships operating exclusively within the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama after evaluation of criteria such as vessel age, type of service, maintenance checks of ships. This authorization could only be granted on a case by case basis by Segumar Offices.

7. Unscheduled Dry-Docking Survey

7.1 Dry docking for emergency repairs after a damage of the ship or any other fortuity circumstances will not be taken as one of the dock attendance specified in this circular if the ship does not carry out the equivalent surveys according to the International Standards, Requirements of the Flag or the Recognized Organization acting on their behalf. The Administration may require the supervision of a Flag State Surveyor if necessary by written order of the General Director of Merchant Marine.

7.2 The Recognized Organization surveyors shall be appointed to attend and supervise the two outside ship's bottom inspections of every ship and submit the Dry Dock Survey Report or In water survey with the conclusion of the inspected areas, repairs and pending items; to keep the same at least at their Main Office. The Administration may request at any time those surveys reports and related documentation used for the analysis and evaluation of the ships condition.

7.3 The Dry Docking of Cargo ships should coincide with the renewal or intermediate survey of the Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate, International Load Line certificate, International oil Pollution prevention Certificate (if applicable) or any other related certificate.

February, 2022 – definitions added, changed subject, references, purpose and paragraphs 1.5, i), 2.1 and 4.1 amended.

June, 2019 – 1.1 to 1.9 completely revised, insertion in paragraphs I ii), 2.1, 2.2, 3.1., 3.2, 3.3, 3.3.1 and 6.2, previous sub-paragraphs were re-numbered.

April, 2019 – References on top updated, 2.1 amended referring to Resolution 106-138-DGMM of September 10, 2013,

April, 2014 – 1.6 added from separating paragraphs contained in 1.5, paragraph 1.6 renumbered 1.7.

January, 2012 - Change of format and addition of point 6.

August, 2010 - Change of format and addition of point 6.

July 2009.



Merchant Marine Circular

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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