

Merchant Marine Circular

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

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-285

- To:** Ship-owners/Operators, of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Class Societies and Recognized Organizations.
- Subject:** Principles of Minimum Safe Manning.
- Reference:**
- a) Resolution MSC.325(90) of 24 May 2012 - Adoption of amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended, adopted by Resolution No. 106-OMI-118-DGMM date 2 September 2013.
 - b) Resolution A.1047(27) of 30 November 2011 – Principles of Minimum Safe Manning adopted through Resolution 106-OMI-117-DGMM date 22 August 2013.
 - c) Resolution No. 106-176-DGMM dated 15 December 2021, revoke Resolution 106-147-DGMM of 15 October 2013.
 - d) Resolution J.D. N°. 028-2022 dated 14 June 2022.
 - e) Resolution 106-50-DGMM of 18 June 2018 – Lay-up Special Registration.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Merchant Marine Circular supersedes **MMC-21, MMC-43, MMC-65, MMC-73, MMC-78 and MMC-80.**

2. Scope

- 2.1. Chapter V regulation 14 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), as amended establishes that: *“Contracting Governments undertake, each for its national ships, to maintain, or, if it is necessary, to adopt, measures for the purpose of ensuring that, from the point of view of safety of life at sea, all ships shall be sufficiently and efficiently manned.”*

3. Background

- 3.1. Effective as of January 1983, the Panama Registry requires that every Passenger and Cargo Vessel of more than 200 GRT registered under the Panama Flag should have on board a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate. As well in 1986 and 1987 the



Merchant Marine Circular

requirement for a "Minimum Safe Manning Certificate" was extended to Mobile Offshore Drilling Units and Offshore Supply vessels registered under Panama.

- 3.2.** The Administration revised all the existing resolutions regarding the Rules for the Issuance of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificates contained in previous Resolutions No. 614-308-ALCN of 31 December 1982, Resolution No. 603-04-222-ALCN of 27 October 1986 and Resolution No. 603-04-42-ALCN of 8 April 1987, through Resolution No.106-147-DGMM of 15 October 2013.
 - 3.3.** Article 3 of Resolution MSC.325(90) establishes that in accordance with article VIII (b) (vii) (2) of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), the amendments shall enter into force on 1 January 2014.
 - 3.4.** Considering the aforementioned, this Administration Adopted the Resolution A.1047(27) which contains the Principles of Minimum Safe Manning, consisting of Guidelines for the application of principles of safe manning; Guidelines for determination of minimum safe Guidance on contents and model form of minimum safe manning document and Framework for determining minimum safe manning.
 - 3.5.** Having considered the Content of the Resolution A.1047(27), this Administration has changed the form of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate in order to be in accordance with the model set out by the Resolution.
- 4. Panama Rules for MSMC**
- 4.1.** A new review of the Republic of Panama Rules for the issuance of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC) has been approved by Resolution No. 106-176-DGMM dated 15 December 2021 and posted through the Republic of Panama Official Gazette of 7 January 2022.
 - 4.2.** According to the new revised Rules the MSMC applies to vessels holding a Registry Certificate for International Service:

 - 4.2.1. Supply vessels regardless of their gross tonnage,
 - 4.2.2. offshore support vessels regardless of their gross tonnage,
 - 4.2.3. tugs regardless of their gross tonnage, yachts,
 - 4.2.4. mobile offshore units, all cargo ships of 200 gross tonnage and above,
 - 4.2.5. passenger ships of 200 gross tonnage and above.
 - 4.3.** Second Article of the Rules of MSMC exclude the following vessels:



Merchant Marine Circular

- 4.3.1. Fishing vessels,
- 4.3.2. Floating Production Storage Offloading Units (FPSO),
- 4.3.3. Floating Storage Units (FSU), not propelled,
- 4.3.4. Warships, naval auxiliaries or other ships owned or operated by a State and engaged only on governmental non-commercial service,
- 4.3.5. Wooden ships of primitive build,
- 4.3.6. Ships not propelled by mechanical means,

4.4. This Administration is aware that under international law, Coastal States may impose their own regime of safety and pollution prevention requirements to vessels operating within their jurisdictional waters; therefore, the vessels listed in point 9 above-mentioned, will not be required to have a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC), unless a Coastal State provides otherwise.

4.5. In events where FPSOs/FSUs have to be disconnected and moved off location to avoid adverse/severe environmental conditions/loads, for dry-docking repair or maintenance work, it is recommended that they possess a level of safety equivalent to that afforded by the SOLAS; therefore, an authorization to ensure such safety level could be issued by this Administration through Segumar Offices, as a transitional measure until the event is completed and the FPSO/FSU returns to its stationary location.

4.6. The period of validity of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate is indefinite unless the circumstances of equipment, trading area, and type of service change enough to affect the prescribed manning. The certificate shall be renewed every time that there is a change of name of the vessel, call sign and/or Company.

4.7. Furthermore, the Administration stipulated as of January 1, 1987 the fee for issuance of this certificate has been USD150.00.

4.8. In addition to each Certificate regular fee, from September 25, 2022, an additional charge applies for reviewing and handling documentation of fifty dollars (USD 50.00), for the issuance of any other technical certificate duly authorized by the General Directorate of Merchant Marine or through any SEGUMAR Office in a Merchant Marine Consulate, including the SEGUMAR offices in the State of Florida, the United States of America based in the city of Miami and SEGUMAR Head Office. The additional charge applies for the issuance in Panama, of technical certificates by the General Directorate of Merchant Marine. This charge shall be reflected in the official receipt, as fees for this service. (Resolution J.D. No.028-2022 dated 14 June 2022).

5. New Form

5.1. The Minimum Safe Manning of a vessel as prescribed in Merchant Marine Circular No. MMC-285, may be reduced when a vessel is under Lay-Up Special Registry (Inactive).



Merchant Marine Circular

- 5.2. Application for such reduction should be made through this Administration, which would process the request of the minimum safe manning certificate for the laid-up vessel accordingly to the instructions in the Merchant Marine Circular No. MMC-285.
- 5.3. In addition to each Certificate regular fee, from 25 September 2022, an additional charge applies for reviewing and handling documentation of fifty dollars (USD 50.00), for the issuance of any other technical certificate duly authorized by the General Directorate of Merchant Marine or through any SEGUMAR Office in a Merchant Marine Consulate, including the SEGUMAR offices in the State of Florida, the United States of America based in the city of Miami and SEGUMAR Head Office. The additional charge applies for the issuance in Panama, of technical certificates by the General Directorate of Merchant Marine. This charge shall be reflected in the official receipt, as fees for this service. (Resolution J.D. No. 028-2022 dated 14 June 2022).
- 5.4. Due to certain special circumstances, there may be occasions when a temporary reduction in manning is called for. As a case in point, the disembarkation of an officer due to serious medical reasons, and at which time no replacement officer will be readily available. Under such circumstances a request for temporary dispensation shall be requested to the Seafarers General Directorate (please refer to MMC# 175 for further information).
- 5.5. Minimum Safe Manning Certificate in new forms is being issued since 1 October 2013 for vessels newly applying or requesting a new Minimum Safe Manning Certificate as well for existing ships holding a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate. Since 1 August 2018, Minimum Safe Manning Certificates (MSM E-Certificate) (for cargo, passenger, supply vessels & tug boats) shall be requested through E-Segumar; therefore, the period of grace to re-issue existing MSM Certificates at no-cost have ceased. You may apply for the MSM E-Certificate online to the Segumar Office of your convenience. In case of Mobile Offshore Units please contact offshore@segumar.com.
- 5.6. It is important to indicate that the total main propulsion machinery power shall be stated in Kilowatts (kW) at the time of your application. Kilowatts (kW) is the unit measure used for certification of chief engineer officers and second engineer officers of ships powered by main propulsion machinery of between 750 kW and 3,000 kW propulsion power.
- 5.7. Other applications forms to request the minimum safe manning certificate to Mobile Offshore Unites is available in <https://panamashipregistry.com/forms-requirements/> option "Maritime Safety", then option "Segumar".



Merchant Marine Circular

- 5.8. We remind you that our Administration is fully committed to grant you the best service in the most prompt and efficient possible way.
- 5.9. Last but not the least, this Administration understood that some ships due to their size are carrying personnel in addition to the minimum certified manning, and considering that most of the times the manning does not include this personnel, the Administration has decided to include the following notation within the Minimum Safe Manning Certificates as follows: "The certificate of competency (CoC/CoP) provided shall also authorize the holder thereof to perform any lower ranking position, as long as it is of the same nature as the one for which the respective CoC or CoP was issued". For example, in case that One Able Seaman (II/4) is not on board the Able Seafarer Deck (II/5) could perform such duties.

6. New STCW regulations

- 6.1. In order to clarify some frequent inquiries about the STCW Manila Amendments 2010 in terms of the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate:
- 6.2. The Able Seafarer Deck (ASD) and the Able Seafarer Engine (ASE), whose standards of competence were included through STCW Convention's Manila Amendments 2010 under the regulations II/5 and III/5 respectively will be inserted on the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate as an alternative Grade / Capacity to the existing Rating forming part of the Navigational Watch (II/4) and Rating forming part of a Watch in an Engine Room (III/4).
- The Electro-technical Officer (ETO) and the Electro-technical Rating (ETR) (whose standards of competence are III/6 and III/7 respectively), also included through said Amendments, are not mandatory to be inserted on the MSMC issued by this Administration.
- 6.3. By virtue of the STCW Regulation I/14, companies will have responsibility to ensure if a dedicated ETO is or not required onboard vessels. Please bear in mind the content of IMO Res. A. 1047 (27), on submission from the Companies for determination of the minimum safe manning of a ship, which should be based on operational functions, Operational factors, task capabilities and workload assessments.
- 6.4. Considering the above described, the MSMC of a vessel could be amended by this Administration if, after an evaluation and request submitted by the company, is determined that an additional Grade/ Capacity on it is required to ensure that its ship/unit is sufficiently, effectively and efficiently manned.
- 6.5. In case of having questions related to Certificate of Competence (CoC), Certificate of Competence's Endorsement, Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) or any other



Merchant Marine Circular

consultation of certification to be held by Seafarers onboard, in those particular cases, they shall directly be sent to our colleagues of the Directorate General of Seafarer whose email addresses are available in MMC-175.

7. Laid-up periods

7.1. The Minimum Safe Manning of a may be reduced when a vessel is under Lay-Up Special Registry (Inactive).

7.2. Application for such reduction should be made through Segumar Offices which would process the request of the minimum safe manning certificate for the laid-up vessel accordingly.

September, 2023 – Completely revised and renumbered.

September, 2022 – Paragraph 13.1 and reference d) added.

January, 2022 – References amended. Paragraphs 7,8,9,12,14,15,16,20 and 21 revised/added.

August, 2019 – previous paragraphs 10 and 13 deleted. New paragraph 12 added, paragraphs 13 and 14 amended. From paragraphs 10 and on, renumbered.

October, 2017 - Paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 added, after than all paragraphs has been renumbered. Typo error amended in subparagraphs a) and c) of paragraph 18.

August, 2016 – Amendment to paragraph 14 and adding point 15 to 17.

July, 2014 – Adding new point 2 and point 3; renumbering points 2, 3, 4 and 5 as 4, 5, 6 and 7; adding new point 8 and 9; and renumbering point 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 as 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

December, 2013 – Modification of point 5 and addition of new point 10 and reference c).

September, 2013 – Modification of point 5 and addition of new points 6 and 9

September, 2013.

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

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