



Merchant Marine **Notice**

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

F-34
(DCCM)
V.04

APPEAL PROCEDURES ON PORT STATE CONTROL (PSC) INSPECTIONS

No.: MMN-11/2026

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this Merchant Marine Notice is to:

- Encourage Panamanian flagged vessels, particularly those with good performance records and strong inspection history, to exercise their right of appeal when deficiencies or detentions issued during Port State Control (PSC) inspections are considered unjustified.
- Reinforce the importance of early engagement with the Flag Administration to ensure proper handling of appeals in a confidential and professional manner.
- Remind stakeholders of the applicable procedures under Merchant Marine Circular MMC-384 – Appeal Procedures.

2. Right of Appeal and Reference Framework:

Shipowners/operators and their representatives are reminded that, in accordance with IMO Resolution A.1206(34) – Procedures for Port State Control (2025):

- The Company has the right to appeal against a detention decision.
- Such appeal does not suspend the detention.
- The Master must be properly informed of the appeal procedures.

Further guidance is provided in MMC-384 – Appeal Procedures, issued by the Panama Maritime Authority, which outlines:

- Appeal processes across different Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs), including the Tokyo MoU (Asia-Pacific).
- Required documentation, timelines, and coordination channels.
- The role of the Flag State as facilitator and intermediary.



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3. Guidance for Appeals in China.

This Administration strongly encourages vessels with:

- Demonstrated compliance history
- Low deficiency ratios
- Positive PSC performance indicators

to not hesitate in submitting appeals where deficiencies are considered:

- Incorrectly assigned
- Disproportionate
- Not aligned with applicable conventions or standards

Prior to formal appeal, companies should:

- Attempt resolution directly with the Port State Control Officer (PSCO) in a professional and respectful manner.
- Collect and preserve all supporting evidence, including records, statements, photos, videos, and technical documentation.

4. Engagement with the Flag Administration.

In cases where:

- There are concerns about potential reprisals, or
- The Company prefers a confidential approach,

operators are strongly advised to contact the Panama Maritime Authority (Flag State) at the earliest stage.

The Administration will:

- Conduct a technical review of the case
- Act as an intermediary with the Port State Authority
- Support escalation to the relevant MoU where necessary

All communications will be treated with strict confidentiality.



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5. Responsibilities of Shipowners and Operators.

Shipowners and operators are encouraged to:

- Promote a culture of compliance and transparency onboard
- Maintain adequate records and evidence related to PSC inspections
- Report questionable PSC actions, even when no formal appeal is pursued
- Maintain close coordination with the Flag Administration during appeal procedures

6. Final Recommendations.

The Panama Maritime Authority urges all stakeholders to:

- Actively exercise their right of appeal when justified
- Avoid refraining from appeals due to fear of retaliation
- Maintain close coordination with the Flag Administration
- Support fair and harmonized PSC implementation practices

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

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