

Merchant Marine Circular

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

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-195

To: Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organizations (RO).

Subject: Long Range Identification and Tracking of ships (LRIT)

Reference: Law No. 7 of October 27, 1977.
Law 57 of August 6, 2008.
Resolution MSC.202(81) of May 19, 2006 adopted by Resolution No. 106-OMI-06-DGMM of November 26, 2007.
Resolution MSC.263(84) adopted on 16 May 2008 MSC.1/Circ.1295 of December 8, 2008.
Resolution No. 106-048-DGMM dated August 19, 2019
Resolution J.D. No. 063-2022 of November 17, 2022.
Resolution No. 106-077-DGMM of August 9, 2023.
MSC.1/Circ.1307/Rev.1 of November 28, 2022.
MMC-155 – Automatic identification System (AIS).

This Merchant Marine Circular supersedes **MMC-197**, **MMC-249** and **MMC-400**.

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to provide revised instructions on the implementation, maintenance, and compliance with the requirements for Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) on board Panamanian-flagged vessels as required by Regulation 19-1 of Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended (SOLAS).

2. SCOPE:

This Merchant Marine Circular applies to all Panamanian flagged vessels engaged on international voyages of 300 GRT and above and described in paragraph 4.1.

3. BACKGROUND:

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) adopted Resolution MSC.202(81) on May 19, 2006 amending Chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS) Regulation V/19-1

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introducing mandatory position reporting obligations, called Long-Range Identification and Tracking system for ships (LRIT).

- The amendment came into force on January 1, 2008, with compliance required by December 31, 2008.
- The LRIT system is a satellite-based system that tracks ships in real-time.
- The LRIT information ships are required to transmit include: the ship's identity, location and date/time of the position at 6-hour intervals.
- All Panamanian flagged vessels under SOLAS V/19-1 regulation must comply with LRIT requirements.

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4.1 Applicability:

SOLAS V/19-1 applies to the following types of Panamanian flagged self-propelled vessels, engaged on international voyages:

1. All passenger ships, including High Speed passenger craft,
2. Cargo ships, including High Speed craft of **300** gross tonnage and upwards,
3. Mobile Offshore Units (MODU), including Mobile Offshore Drilling Units (MODUs) when comply with the provisions of the 2009 IMO MODU Code and are certified as MODU Safety Certificate (2009) or MODU Safety Certificate (2009),
4. Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSOs),
5. Floating Storage Units (FSUs), Offshore Supply Vessels (OSVs) and Special Purpose Ships (SPSs) of 300 gross tonnage and above operating in sea areas A1 and A2; or A1, A2 and A3; or A1, A2, A3 and A4.



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4.1.1 Panamanian-flagged fishing vessels and/or vessels engaged in fishing-related activities that are fitted with LRIT equipment shall undergo a Conformance Test and obtain a Conformance Test Report (CTR) and shall report through the LRIT system.

4.2 Compliance Dates:

4.2.1 In accordance with SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19-1, and IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ.1307, all ships, whether constructed before or after 31 December 2008, are required to comply with the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system when the vessel is placed into service.

4.2.2 Panamanian-flagged vessels must comply with LRIT regulations and be fitted with a terminal capable of automatically transmitting the information specified in paragraph 4.3.1.

4.2.3 Regardless of the construction date, vessels fitted with an automatic identification system (AIS), as defined in SOLAS V/19.2.4, and operated exclusively within sea area A1, as defined in SOLAS IV/2.1.12, **are not** required to comply with the provisions of SOLAS V/19-1.

4.3 Shipborne LRIT Equipment Testing:

4.3.1 Shipborne LRIT equipment must be capable of being configured to transmit the following minimum information automatically, at intervals of 6 hours, to the LRIT Data Centre designated by the Flag Administration:

- The identity of the ship (IMO Number and Name),
- The position of the ship (Latitude and Longitude), and
- The date and time of the position reported.

4.3.2 Shipowners may use any equipment to transmit LRIT information provided that the onboard equipment complies with the requirements of SOLAS Regulations V/19-1.6, V/19-1.7 and IMO MSC.1/Circ. 1307/Rev.1.

4.3.3 The Panama Maritime Authority (AMP), by Resolution No. 106-38-DGMM issued on September 9, 2008, adopts Circular MSC.1/Circ.1257 of June 5, 2008, amended by Circular MSC.1/Circ.1307/Rev.1 of November 28, 2022 as the relevant standard (Guidance on the Survey and Certification of Compliance of Ships with the Requirement to Transmit LRIT Information).

4.3.4 This Administration reminds all shipowners that LRIT shipborne equipment may be operated using Communication Service Providers (CSPs) recognized by the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO).



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4.3.5 Vessels registered under the Panama flag and equipped with LRIT-compliant Inmarsat-C equipment shall ensure that both the Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system and the Automatic Identification System (AIS) are maintained in continuous and proper operation. All reasonable measures shall be taken to prevent any interruption in the transmission of the vessel's identity and position, in accordance with **Resolution No. 106-048-DGMM dated August 19, 2019**.

4.3.6 Shipborne equipment used for LRIT shall, upon successful completion of a Conformance Test conducted by the authorized ASP, be considered compliant with the applicable LRIT requirements under SOLAS Regulation V/19-1.

4.4 Panama LRIT National Data Centre (NDC):

4.4.1 The Panama Maritime Authority has established a fully operational National Data Centre, which is operated on its behalf by Pole Star Global (www.polestarglobal.com), which is also authorized as a Panama Recognized Application Service Provider (Recognized ASP) to conduct shipborne equipment testing and issue Conformance Test Reports (CTR).

POLE STAR GLOBAL

3rd Floor, the Studio Building, 21 Evesham St.,
London W11 4AJ, United Kingdom
Support center: +44 20 7313 7402
Email: support@polestarglobal.com

4.4.2 All applicable Panamanian-flagged vessels shall be integrated into the Panama LRIT Data Centre and shall be subject to a satisfactory conformance test of the shipborne LRIT equipment, as well as the issuance of the Conformance Test Report (CTR).

4.5 LRIT Conformance Test:

4.5.1 The LRIT Conformance Test is intended to demonstrate that the shipborne terminal complies with the functional requirements established under **SOLAS Regulation V/19-1**. The test shall be conducted directly by Pole Star Global, acting as the Recognized Application Service Provider (ASP) on behalf of the Panama Maritime Authority.

4.5.2 The **LRIT Conformance Test** may take approximately **48 hours** and is conducted remotely, preferably while the vessel is at sea. The test should be completed well in advance of the radio survey to allow sufficient time to address any issues that may arise.

4.5.3 Following registration under the Panamanian flag, all owners and operators shall arrange for the LRIT Conformance Test to be duly conducted prior to the radio survey and shall ensure that the corresponding Conformance Test Report (CTR) is obtained and maintained on board the vessel.

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4.5.4 For information on how to request a Conformance Test and/or obtain a Conformance Test Report (CTR), please visit: <https://ondemand.polestarglobal.com>

4.6 LRIT Conformance Test Report (CTR):

4.6.1 The CTR refers to the “**Conformance Test Report**” and shall not be confused with the conformance test results.

4.6.2 Recognized Organizations (ROs) shall not issue an interim or full-term Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate **based solely on the conformance test results**. Accordingly, ROs shall proceed in accordance with **Section 4.13.3**

4.6.3 The CTR serves as evidence of compliance with LRIT requirements and is required for radio surveys and inspections. The shipowner/operator shall ensure that a valid CTR is maintained on board at all times.

4.7 Conformance Test validity and amendments:

4.7.1 Effective 1 July 2023, all Conformance Test Reports (CTRs) issued on behalf of the Panama Maritime Authority shall be issued as **electronic documents bearing an electronic signature and a QR code**.

4.7.2 Effective January 1, 2024, all Conformance Test Reports (CTRs) shall be issued with a validity period not exceeding twelve **(12)** months.

4.7.3 In cases where a vessel changes its name, ownership, Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI), call sign (distinctive number or letters), gross tonnage, or certified sea areas of operation, a new Conformance Test shall not be required. However, an amended Conformance Test Report (CTR) shall be obtained through the authorized service provider, subject to the applicable fee.

4.7.4 In such cases, the owner/operator shall submit a request to the **authorized ASP for an amendment to the Conformance Test Report (CTR)** at the following email address: support@polestarglobal.com.

4.8 Changes of Shipborne LRIT equipment:

4.8.1 The shipborne equipment shall undergo a **new Conformance Test**, and a **new Conformance Test Report (CTR)** shall be obtained, in the following cases:

1. All new installations or any changes to LRIT shipborne equipment;
2. If the onboard LRIT equipment ceases to operate;
3. When the recognized ASP has notified the Administration that the onboard equipment is not operating within the parameters of the Conformance Test Report and/or in accordance with LRIT performance standards;



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4. If the vessel has changed flag or has been re-registered under the Panamanian Registry;
5. If the vessel wishes to operate outside the maritime area indicated in the conformance test report;

4.9 Change of Flag:

4.9.1 To ensure compliance with **SOLAS Regulation V/19-1**, the vessel's LRIT equipment shall be properly integrated into the **Panama National Data Centre (NDC)**. Accordingly, upon a change of flag to the Panamanian flag, the shipowner/operator shall arrange for the LRIT Conformance Test to be conducted and successfully completed, and shall ensure that a valid Conformance Test Report (CTR), issued by an authorized provider, is obtained and maintained on board prior to the radio survey.

4.9.2 The new **Recognized Mobile Satellite Service Vessel Ground Station Number**, issued by the Panama Maritime Authority following the change of flag, shall be provided to the **Testing ASP** to enable the issuance of a **new Conformance Test Report (CTR)** on behalf of the Panama Maritime Authority.

4.9.3 In the event that a vessel is not equipped with LRIT equipment or does not have LRIT capability, the owner/operator may apply for an authorization letter through the E-Segumar platform prior to the radio survey, in order to allow sufficient time for the installation, configuration, and/or scheduling of the LRIT Conformance Test. The application may be submitted through the following link: <https://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates/>

4.10 Switching off LRIT equipment:

4.10.1 This Administration reminds all owners and operators that switching off the LRIT (Long-Range Identification and Tracking) equipment **requires prior authorization** from the vessel's Flag Administration and is permitted only under specific circumstances:

1. vessel is in dry dock for repairs, modifications or conversions,
2. vessel is moored for a period exceeding 7 days,
3. vessel in laid-up condition,
4. vessel is operating in jurisdictional waters,
5. any merchant marine notice.

The Master/Operator of the vessel shall promptly notify and contact the Panama Maritime Authority at monitoringfleet@amp.gob.pa regarding any matter related to the monitoring and transmission of the vessel's information.

4.10.2 The LRIT equipment shall remain switched on before entering and while navigating through high-risk areas. The onboard Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) system and Ship Security Alert System (SSAS) must be properly configured, operational, and fully functional to ensure compliance with the applicable Best Management Practices

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(BMP) and the Internationally Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC), as stipulated in the relevant Merchant Marine Circular **(MMC-230)**.

4.11 Operation of LRIT in Areas Affected by Radio Frequency Interference or Jamming:

4.11.1 The presence of a vessel in an area affected by radio frequency interference, including jamming, does not, by itself, constitute authorization or justification to switch off, disconnect, deactivate, or otherwise render the LRIT equipment inoperative.

4.11.2 The LRIT equipment shall remain continuously switched on and in proper operating condition while the vessel is navigating in such areas.

4.11.3 The vessel shall continue transmitting LRIT information in accordance with the applicable requirements and shall not intentionally deactivate, disconnect, switch off, or otherwise disable the LRIT equipment solely because the vessel is navigating in an area affected by radio frequency interference or jamming.

4.11.4 Where an interruption in LRIT reporting is detected, the vessel shall verify the operational status of the LRIT equipment and take all possible, reasonable, and technically practicable measures to maintain or restore LRIT transmission as soon as practicable.

4.11.5 Radio frequency interference or jamming shall not, by itself, be interpreted as an LRIT equipment malfunction or as authorization to apply the procedures applicable to an LRIT malfunction.

4.11.6 The Panama Maritime Authority may request supporting information or documentation to verify any LRIT non-reporting event attributed to radio frequency interference or jamming. The presence of a vessel in an area affected by reported interference shall not, by itself, constitute sufficient evidence to justify LRIT non-reporting.

4.11.7 Any intentional or unauthorized deactivation, disconnection, or disabling of the LRIT equipment, as well as any failure to comply with the applicable LRIT reporting requirements, may be subject to investigation and the corresponding administrative sanctions in accordance with Resolution No. 106-048-DGMM, dated August 19, 2019.

4.12 Authorization Conformance Test:

4.12.1 Effective April 10, 2025, all users may apply through the E-Segumar platform for an authorization letter related to the Conformance Test Report (CTR) at the following link: <https://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates/>

4.12.2 These authorizations are issued free of charge and will be processed through the Administration's Head Office in Panama:

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- LRIT Process for New Constructions
- LRIT Process for Change of Flag
- Vessels Operating in Jurisdictional Waters
- LRIT Reporting for Laid-Up Vessels
- Postponement of LRIT Conformance Test Report (Applicable only to ships with an issued CTR).

4.12.3 Effective May 1, 2025, all users may apply for an authorization letter related to LRIT or AIS malfunctions through the E-Segumar platform at the following link: <https://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates/>. The authorization letter shall be valid for thirty (30) days:

- LRIT Malfunction
- AIS Malfunction
- LRIT Equipment Replacement

4.12.4 In cases where the malfunction request exceeds 30 days, it shall be submitted directly to conditionals@segumar.com for further processing.

4.13 Survey and Certification - Instructions to the Recognized Organizations (RO):

4.13.1 Effective 1 June 2026, all Recognized Organizations (ROs) shall verify, during Safety Radio Surveys, that a valid and up-to-date Conformance Test Report (CTR) is available on board, in accordance with sections 4.7.1 and 4.7.2. **Failure by the RO** to perform this verification shall be considered a poor practice.

4.13.2 The verification of the Conformance Test Report (CTR) is a mandatory element of the Safety Radio Survey and shall be duly reviewed and documented during the inspection. This verification shall not be confused with the LRIT Conformance Test.

4.13.3 Recognized Organizations (ROs) shall not issue an interim or full-term Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate when the vessel does not have a valid Conformance Test Report (CTR) available on board. However, if there is documented evidence that the LRIT Conformance Test has been initiated by a Recognized Application Service Provider (ASP), the RO may issue a conditional certificate valid for a period of one (1) month, subject to the vessel obtaining and maintaining a valid CTR on board prior to the expiration of the conditional certificate.

- a) For vessels of 500 GRT and above, a Conditional Cargo Ship Safety Certificate may be issued.
- b) For vessels of less than 500 GRT, a Conditional Safety Certificate may be issued.



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4.13.4 The conditional certificate may be issued without prior authorization from the Segumar Office; however, a copy shall be submitted immediately to conditionals@segumar.com.

4.13.5 Shipowners intending to install a dedicated LRIT terminal on board shall ensure that such installation is carried out well in advance of the vessel's first Safety Radio Survey, so as to guarantee that the Conformance Test Report (CTR) is issued and available on board prior to the radio survey.

4.14 Exemptions and Equivalent arrangements:

4.14.1 Panamanian-flagged vessels operating exclusively within a GMDSS Sea Area A1 and fitted with an Automatic Identification System (AIS), as required under SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19.2.4, are not required to comply with the provisions of SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19-1, provided that they operate exclusively within Sea Area A1, as defined in revised SOLAS Chapter IV, Regulation 2.1.15. Accordingly, an exemption certificate from the requirements of SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 19-1 is not required.

4.14.2 In cases where a vessel maintains a Conformance Test Report (CTR) for operations in A2+A3 sea areas and, for any reason, operates in domestic waters for a certain period, the vessel shall notify the Administration by email at conformancetest@amp.gob.pa and request authorization to suspend LRIT reporting for the duration of its domestic operations.

4.14.3 In cases where a vessel is not normally engaged in international voyages but is required to undertake a single international voyage, or is repositioning from a GMDSS Sea Area A1, the owner/operator should apply to the Administration at exemptions@segumar.com for consideration of an exemption or equivalent arrangement in accordance with the applicable provisions of SOLAS Regulations I/4, IV/3.1, IV/3.2, and V/3.

4.14.4 Any application for an exemption or equivalence shall include full details of the proposed voyage, including the intended dates, duration of the voyage, port or place of departure, and port or location of destination.

4.14.5 Panamanian vessels applying for exemptions should note that, in accordance with MSC.1/Circ.1295, guidance for certain ship types with respect to exemptions, equivalents and certain operational matters related to the LRIT requirements, the operator company may be required to submit the voyage plan, including any amendments thereto, and/or to report at specified intervals not only to the government(s) of the State(s) to which the vessel is proceeding, but also to the government(s) of the coastal State(s) in whose waters the vessel may be navigating, provided that such State(s) are entitled to receive the LRIT information in accordance with the requirements of SOLAS V/19-1.

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4.14.6 Applications for permanent exemptions for offshore units operating in a fixed location, such as FPSOs, are to be made directly to the PMA exemptions@segumar.com. The exemption request should state the position of the unit (latitude/longitude) and the period of time that the unit will remain at the specified location. Where no period of time is stated, the exemption will be valid until the expiry date of the radio related certificate.

4.15 Non-compliance:

4.15.1 The Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) equipment and Automatic Identification System (AIS) shall be maintained in continuous and proper operation, and all reasonable measures shall be taken to prevent interruption of the transmission of the vessel's identity and position.

4.15.2 According to Resolution No. 106-048-DGMM dated August 19, 2019, all Panamanian flagged vessels that deliberately deactivate the Long-Range Identification and Tracking Equipment (LRIT) and the Automatic Identification System (AIS) will be sanctioned for noncompliance with the Panama Maritime Authority Regulations.

4.15.3 Panamanian-flagged vessels engaged in fishing or fishing-related activities that are not reporting their positions through the Automatic Identification System (AIS) and/or the Long-Range Identification and Tracking System (LRIT) equipment will be sanctioned and/or cancelled from the Panamanian registry in accordance with the provisions of the Resolution No. 106-077-DGMM dated August 9, 2023.

October, 2026 - References were updated, entire revised, new paragraphs 4.11.

April, 2026 - Paragraphs 4.4.1, 4.6.1, 4.6.2, 4.11.4, 4.12 were modified.

September, 2025 – Paragraph 4.2.1, 4.4.1, 4.12.2 and 4.13.3 were modified.

May, 2025 - Restructuring of the entire circular.

May, 2024 – Scratch out in numeral 16.4 item was removed.

April, 2024 – March, 2024 paragraph details was modified, being the correct form: Paragraph 15.2 updated, removing in case of change of owner, item. Paragraph 15.8 updated, including the item for change of owner and adding the reference of the cost for amended certificate.

March, 2024 – Paragraph 14.2 updated, removing in case of change of owner, item. Paragraph 14.8 updated, including the item for change of owner and adding the reference of the cost for amended certificate.

May, 2023 - References were updated, entire revised, new paragraphs 13, 14 and 15 included. The annual conformance test included issuance of Electronic Certificate (QR introduced).

November, 2020 - New paragraph 3, 7, 8, 10 / Update ASP name and contact details.



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May 2017 – Update ASP and NDC name, physical address and contact details

July, 2014 – Update of email address.

April, 2012 – Update of email address.

August, 2009 – Addition of two CSP and changes in contact information

December, 2008.

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

Maritime Ships Security Department
Control and Monitoring Section
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone : (507) 501-5016

E-mail : conformancetest@amp.gob.pa.

Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/circulars/>