



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY
(AUTORIDAD MARÍTIMA DE PANAMÁ)
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF MERCHANT MARINE
(DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE MARINA MERCANTE)
DEPARTMENT OF CONTROL AND COMPLIANCE
(DEPARTAMENTO DE CONTROL Y CUMPLIMIENTO)**

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(DCCM)
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MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-355

To: Ship-owners/operators, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates, Recognized Organizations (ROs) and Port State Control Administrations

Subject: Use of Electronic Certificates onboard

Reference: a) FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 - Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates, of 20 April 2016.
b) Merchant Marine Circular No.347 - Online Certificates Verification.
c) Merchant Marine Circular No.193 - Optional and Voluntary System for Electronic Books on board of Panamanian Flagged Vessels.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to inform that the Republic of Panama has welcomed the use of the Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates, adopted by the International Maritime Organization by the Facilitation Committee for the use of electronic certificates through the FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 of 20 April 2016, in order to facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates on board.
- 1.2. Furthermore, to inform the stakeholder on the List of Certificates that has been already issued by this Administration as Electronic Certificates, as well as to inform the list of Recognized Organizations authorized on the issuance of Electronic Certificates a per the delegation of authority approved by the Republic of Panama.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Considering that signed paper certificates issued by our Administration and Recognized Organizations authorized to act on our behalf have been the traditional means of documenting compliance with International Maritime Organization requirements, as well as ships have experienced instances of Port State Control actions because a traditional paper certificate has been issued but has not arrived on the ship, or the traditional paper certificate has been damaged or lost.
- 2.2. The use and acceptance of electronic statutory certificates, including printed versions of electronic certificates is an initiative well supported by the Panama Maritime Authority, in order to reduce the instances of Port State Control authorities denying the validity of these certificates, resulting in a burden to the master and crew, ship owner or operator, Port State Control authorities, Administration, and other stakeholders.
- 2.3. This Administration recognizes that the established set of features for using electronic certificates should help alleviate problems inherent in reliance on paper.
- 2.4. As per FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 of 20 April 2016:
- 2.4.1. Certificate means a document issued by the Administration or its representatives that is used to show

compliance with IMO requirements and used to describe operating conditions, crewing requirements, and ship equipment carriage requirements. The term "certificate" does not include publications, manuals, instructions or ships' logs used to record ongoing operations; (for the use of electronic books please see our MMC.193).

2.4.2. Electronic certificate means a certificate issued in an electronic format;

2.4.3. Electronic signature means data in electronic form which is attached to or logically associated with other electronic data to serve as a method of authentication of the issuer and contents of the electronic data;

2.4.4. Printed version of electronic certificate means a paper printout produced from the electronic certificate;

2.4.5. Unique tracking number (UTN) means a string of numbers, letters or symbols used as an identifier to distinguish an electronic certificate issued by an Administration or its representative from any other electronic certificate issued by the same Administration or its representative; and

2.4.6. Verifying means a reliable, secure and continuously available process to confirm the authenticity and validity of an electronic certificate using the unique tracking number.

2.5. The use of electronic certificates should include the following features:

2.5.1. validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument, as applicable;

2.5.2. protected from edits, modifications or revisions other than those authorized by the issuer or the Administration;

2.5.3. a unique tracking number used for verification as defined in 2.4.5 and 2.4.6; and

2.5.4. a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.

2.5.5. instructions for verifying the information contained in the certificate, including confirmation of periodic endorsements, when necessary, should be available on board the ship.

3. E-CERTIFICATES ISSUED BY THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

3.1. Following the initiative of the International Maritime Organization and being aware of the technology advantages, the Panama Maritime Authority has implemented among the Certificates issued as prerogative of this Administration the following Electronic Certificates:

- a) International Ballast Water Management Certificate (IBWMC)
- b) Ballast Water Management Plan (BWMP)
- c) Certificate Of Insurance or other Financial Security In Respect of Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage (CLC)
- d) Declaration of Maritime Labour Compliance (DMLC Part I).

3.2. Certificates listed above may be verified by using any of the following methods:

3.2.1. QR Code: by scanning the QR Code in your Mobile Device, your certificate is immediately verified.

3.2.2. Verification System: through the following link <http://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates>, the selecting the option "Verification System" and inserting the UNT displayed at the bottom of the Electronic Certificate.

3.2.3. Certificates Query: verification instructions for using the option "Certificates Query" through the following link <http://certificates.amp.gob.pa/certificates> is available in our MMC.347.

3.2.4.A user friendly manual has been prepared as well that is annexed to this Merchant Marine Circular.

4. RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS APPROVED FOR STATUTORY E-CERTIFICATES

4.1.As per the authorization granted by this Administration and the correspondent delegation of authority, the following Class Societies/Recognized Organizations has been approved for the issuance of electronic Statutory Certificates to Panama registered ships:

- 1) DNV GL
- 2) Nippon Kaiji Kyokai
- 3) Bureau Veritas
- 4) Indian Register of Shipping
- 5) Isthmus Bureau of Shipping
- 6) American Bureau of Shipping
- 7) China Classification Society
- 8) RINA Services S.p.A.
- 9) Korean Register of Shipping

4.2.Verification instructions for the Statutory Electronic Certificates have been given through the web services provided by each Organization.

5. INSTRUCTION FOR FLAG STATE INSPECTORS

5.1.Flag state inspectors (FSI) should accept electronic certificates containing the features identified in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5. The FSI may request the master to demonstrate the validity of the electronic certificate following the instructions available on board the ship (also refer to MMC.347) or by using the QR Code or the Verification System.

5.2.If the master does not succeed to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the FSI that an electronic certificate is meeting the requirements, the FSI is advised to consult with this Administration, in order to review any inconvenience with the system or the Class/RO system.

October 2018 – Inclusion of Korean Register of Shipping in paragraph 4.

July 2018 – Inclusion of RINA Services S.p.A. in paragraph 4.

May 2018 – Inclusion of American Bureau of Shipping and China Classification Society in paragraph 4.

March 2018 – Inclusion of Isthmus Bureau of Shipping and Indian Register of Shipping in paragraph 4.

February, 2018 – Inclusion of Bureau Veritas in paragraph 4.

August, 2017.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular or any request should be directed to:

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