

**REPUBLIC OF PANAMA**

*Ministry of Finance and Treasury*

*Office of the Directorate of Merchant Marine Circular No. 38*

*Consular and Maritime Affairs*

**To:** Shipowners/Operators of Panamanian Cargo Vessels under 500 GRT

**Subject:** Safety Requirements for Cargo Vessels under 500 GRT

**Reference:** Executive Decree No. 45 of 21 December 1981

The policy of the Republic of Panama is to ensure that all cargo vessels flying its flag which are in service outside its jurisdictional waters are so constructed, equipped, maintained, operated and inspected as to attain the highest standards of safety of life at sea.

To fill a gap in the international regulations in force, this Administration has introduced the "Rules for Cargo Vessels less than 500 Tons Gross Tonnage in Service Outside the Jurisdictional Waters of the Republic of Panama."

These Rules may be periodically updated if operational experience so warrants, at which time, owners/operators will be so informed.

According to Article 4 of the Rules, the requirements do not apply to the following vessels:

- a. Vessels under 100 GRT or vessels under 24m in length (loadline length)
- b. Non-propelled vessels
- c. Fishing vessels
- d. Pleasure yachts not engaged in trade

Owners/operators of vessels to which the Rules apply should make the arrangements to have such vessels surveyed by specially appointed representatives. After the successful completion of a survey, interim certificates valid for five (5) months will be issued by the surveyor. Full term certificates will be issued by the Directorate General of Consular and Maritime Affairs, New York Office and will be sent to the owners/operators at the address they indicate.

Certificates to be issued are the following:

- a. Cargo Ship Safety Certificates (vessels under 500 GRT)
- b. Cargo Ship Radiotelephony Certificate (vessels under 300 GRT)

The SOLAS Cargo Ship Radiotelephony Certificates of vessels of 300 GRT and above shall be issued as indicated in Merchant Marine Circular No.15.

At the time of the first survey, owners/operator (through the Master or ship's officers) must also prepare, with the eventual assistance of the surveyor the "Record of Approved Safety Details," an approved copy of which must be carried on board the vessel at all times.

Annual safety inspections will be carried out by DGCN inspectors to check the compliance with the above mentioned provisions, under the authority of Executive Decree No.56 of October 8th, 1976.

**SEPTEMBER 2023 - CANCELLED**  
February 1992

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular should be directed to:  
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CANCELLED