

# Merchant Marine Circular

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

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-390

- To:** Recognized Organizations (RO's), Ship-owners/Operators, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates, SEGUMAR Regional Offices, ASI Inspectors, Port State Control Inspectors, and all other maritime industry stakeholders.
- Subject:** Foreign Passenger Vessel Examination Covid-19 Guidance (Cruise Ship Exam Policy for USA).
- Reference:**
- Law No. 57 of August 6, 2008** – General Law of Merchant Marine.
  - Resolution JD No. 019-2005** of November 24, 2005 - regulation of the Recognized Organizations by the Republic of Panama.
  - CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02** - Foreign Passenger Vessel Examination Covid-19 Guidance (U.S. Coast Guard).
  - CSNCOE Field Notice 01-2021** - Evaluation of Alternative Passenger Muster Protocols (U.S. Coast Guard).
  - SOLAS – Regulation III/19.2.2** – Familiarity with safety installations and practice musters.
  - STCW – Section A-V/2** - Mandatory minimum requirements for the training and qualification of masters, officers, ratings and other personnel on passenger ships.

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### 1. Purpose

- a. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to provide information to recognized organizations (RO's), ship-owners/operators and masters about the [CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02](#) regarding the guidance to the Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE) and Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI), on U.S Coast Guard examination requirements for all foreign passenger vessels, herein referred to as cruise ships, seeking to resume suspended passenger operations within U.S. ports due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02 will expire in one (1) year, unless cancelled or superseded.



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- b. In addition this Merchant Marine Circular also provides information in relation to [CSNCOE Field Notice 01-2021](#) about the Evaluation of Alternative Passenger Muster Protocols to clarify examination techniques for attendance and observation of alternative passenger muster protocols to fulfill the requirements of SOLAS–Regulation III/19.2.2 and STCW–Section A-V/2.

## 2. Action

- a. The Cruise Ship National Center of Expertise (CSNCOE) and Officers in Charge, Marine Inspection (OCMI) shall refer to [CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02](#) to determine the U.S Coast Guard examination requirements expected for all cruise ships seeking to resume commercial operations within U.S. ports.

## 3. U.S Coast Guard Policy

- b. Refer to Section 6 POLICY, subsections a., b., c., d., e., f., g., h., of the [CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02](#).

## 4. Panama Policy

4.1 The requirements of the U.S Coast Guard Policy 6e. and 6f., mentioned on [CG-CVC Policy Letter 21-02](#), should be verified and approved by Recognized Organizations duly authorized by the Panama Maritime Authority for the surveys of Passenger Ships as required by SOLAS, Chapter I, Regulation 7, as applicable.

## 5. Verification

The verification and approval of the requirements mentioned on Policy 6e. and 6f will be a responsibility of the Recognized Organizations duly authorized by the Panama Maritime Authority for the surveys of Passenger Ships as required by SOLAS, Chapter I, Regulation 7, as applicable. This administration reserves the right to request at any time objective evidence on the verification, approval and fulfillment of the requirements indicated in this Merchant Marine Circular.



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Our Administration encourages recognized organizations (RO's), ship-owners/operators and masters to review the information provided on this Merchant Marine Circular.

**September, 2023** – CANCELLED.

**May, 2021** – New

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

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