

Merchant Marine Circular

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

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-155

To: Owners/Operators, Master, Marine Inspectors of Panamanian flag Vessels, and Recognized Organizations

Subject: Automatic Identification System (AIS)

Reference:

- a. Resolution MSC.99 (73) dated 5 December 2000, adopted through Resolution No. 106-OMI-02-DGMM of October 18, 2007.
- b. Resolution MSC.308 (88) dated 3 December 2010, adopted through Resolution No. 106-OMI-101-DGMM of June 25, 2012.
- c. Circular MSC.1/Circ.1252 dated 22 October 2007, adopted through Resolution No. 106-OMI-52-DGMM,
- d. Resolution A. 694(17) dated 6 November 1991 **(only as recommendation)**
- e. Resolution A.1106(29) dated 2 December 2015 **(only as recommendation)**
- f. Resolution MSC.74 (69) dated 12 May 1998 **(only as recommendation)**
- g. Circular MSC.1/Circ. 1576 dated 16 June 2017 **(only as recommendation).**

1. This merchant marine circular replaces **MMC-139**.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to remind all parties concerned with Panamanian flag ships of the full implementation of the carriage of AIS on board Panamanian flag ships as well as the approved guidelines adopted for annual testing of the Automatic Identification System.

3. Background

3.1. Since SOLAS 2000 amendment the Chapter V significantly changed the carriage requirements for shipboard navigation equipment. Regulation V/19 of SOLAS 74,

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as amended, requires ships to be fitted with an automatic identification system (AIS). This regulation became mandatory on July 1, 2002.

- 3.2.** Concerning the guidelines adopted for annual testing of the Automatic Identification System, the Panama Maritime Authority has decided to implement these guidelines since the 1 June 2008, with the purpose to determine if AIS is operational as defined by IMO performance standards.

4. Scope / Applicability

- 4.1.** The Automatic Identification System applies to:

- 4.1.1.** All ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards engaged on international voyages;
- 4.1.2.** Cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged on international voyages; and
- 4.1.3.** All passenger ships irrespective of size.

- 4.2.** The progression to be fitted with the AIS is as follow:

- 4.2.1.** All ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002 must be fitted with approved AIS.
- 4.2.2.** Existing ships engaged on international voyages constructed before 1 July 2002 must be fitted as follows:
 - Passenger ships – not later than 1 July 2003.
 - Tankers – not later than the first Safety Equipment Survey¹ after 1 July 2003.
- 4.2.3.** Existing ships other than passenger ships and tankers must be fitted as follows:
 - 50,000 gross tonnage and upwards – not later than 1 July 2004;

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- 300 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 50,000 gross tonnage, not later than the first safety equipment survey¹ after 1 July 2004 or by 31 December 2004, whichever occurs earlier.

5. Requirement

- 5.1. Ships fitted with AIS shall maintain AIS in operation at all times except where international agreements, rules or standards provide for the protection of navigational information.
- 5.2. AIS should be installed according to the guidance provided and adopted by the Organization.
- 5.3. The automatic identification system (AIS) shall be subjected to an annual test. The test shall be conducted by an approved surveyor or an approved testing or servicing facility. The test shall verify the correct programming of the ship static information, correct data exchange with connected sensors as well as verifying the radio performance by radio frequency measurement and on-air test using, e.g., a Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). A copy of the test report shall be retained on board the ship.
- 5.4. For the purpose of vessels operating in Jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama the AIS will apply to any vessel of foreign flag irrespective of her size and type, and this also will include, tugboats towing non-self-propelled ships carrying oil products with Panama Flag irrespective of their size, since 1 July 2008.
- 5.5. Regulation V/3.1, allows Administrations to grant a general exemption to ships without mechanical means of propulsion from specific SOLAS regulations, with the exception specified in the paragraph 4.4.
- 5.6. All Panamanian flag ships inside the Scope / Applicability of this regulation will be expected to comply in accordance with the above schedule of implementation. Panama Maritime Authority may penalize violations to the provisions of this Merchant Marine Circular according to the national legislation.

6. Instructions to the Recognized Organizations

- 6.1. The annual performance test of the AIS shall be carried out within the "time window" of the annual / periodical / renewal survey under the Harmonized System

¹ The first safety equipment survey means the first annual survey the first periodical survey or the first renewal survey for the safety equipment, whichever is due first after the specific implementation date and, in addition, in the case of ships under construction, the initial survey.



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of Survey and Certification (HSSC), but not later than the date of completion of the survey for endorsement / renewal of the relevant Certificate.

6.2. Where the time window will include:

6.2.1. Up to 3 months before the due date of the passenger ship safety certificate renewal survey or the cargo ship safety equipment certificate renewal survey; and

6.2.2. 3 months before or after the due date of the cargo ship safety equipment certificate periodical/annual survey (the maximum period between subsequent tests is governed by the time window associated to the subsequent surveys, unless either certificate has been extended as permitted by SOLAS regulation I/14, in which case a similar extension may be granted by the Administration).

6.3. The annual testing should be recorded in the form of the model test report given in the appendix of the IMO MSC.1/Circ.1252. If the language used is neither English, nor French, nor Spanish, the text should include a translation into one of these languages. A copy of the test report should be retained on board the ship.

6.4. The annual testing of the AIS installation should include those requirements specified on the IMO MSC.1/Circ.1252 - Guidelines on annual testing of the Automatic Identification System (AIS)

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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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