

# Merchant Marine Circular

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

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-184

**To:** Owners/Operators, Masters of Panama flagged Vessels, Recognized Organizations.

**Subject:** Maritime Affairs & Casualty Investigations of Panama flagged vessels.

**Reference:** Resolution No. 106-33-DGMM of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022.  
Resolution No. 106-OMI-164-DGMM of December 24, 2015 adopted Resolution MSC.255 (84) of May 16th, 2008.  
Resolution MSC.257 (84) of May 16th, 2008, MSC/Circ.953 and MEPC/Circ.372 of December 14, 2000 (**Only as recommendation**).

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1. This Merchant Marine Circular replaces the **MMC-31, MMC-32, MMC-33** and **MMC-37**.

2. **Purpose:**

The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to set forth current rules and regulations on Marine Accident Investigations.

3. **Scope:**

This circular applies to the Maritime matters and Investigations of Accidents of vessels flying the Panama flag.

4. The **Chapter I, Regulation 21** of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) establishes that “each Administration undertakes to conduct an investigation of any casualty occurring to any of its ships” and that “each Contracting Government undertakes to supply the Organization with pertinent information concerning the findings of such investigations”.

5. Through, Resolution No.106-33-DGMM of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022. Panama has approved the Rules and Regulations pertaining to Marine Casualties and Labour Complaints (MLC 2006) investigations.

6. These Rules and Regulations establish that the **Maritime Affairs Investigation Department** is the Special Unit in charge of investigating Marine Casualties and Incidents which may increase the risk for human life or for the marine environment and Labour Complaints (MLC 2006) involving all the Panamanian registered vessels.

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7. The Rules and Regulations set forth that the purpose of all marine casualties and incidents investigations to be carried out by the Maritime Affairs Investigation Department shall not be to practice criminal, civil, or administrative actions; for which they will only be subject for the purposes established in the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents adopted by the International Maritime Organization.
8. These Rules and Regulations empower the Maritime Affairs Investigation Department to confiscate or withdraw, in the course of their investigations, the Log Book, equipment, licenses, documents, books, registries or vessel parts, with the whole purpose of executing a proper investigation.
9. Also, it empowers the Maritime Affairs Investigation Department to request all personnel on board a Panamanian registered vessel or any foreign registered vessels which are within the territorial waters of the Republic of Panama, operators, or individuals directly or indirectly involved in a marine accident or incident, so that they testify or be interrogated, either verbally or in writing, in reference to the marine accident or incident. All Masters, property owners, or operators of vessels which have suffered a marine accident or incident, shall maintain and keep all entries or materials relevant to the voyage, and must cooperate with the investigation.
10. All Recognized Organizations, as well as all marine safety inspectors directly or indirectly involved in a marine accident or incident, may be called to render statements, and they must provide all the entries and documents which shall be required to carry out the investigation of the marine casualty or incident.
11. In the event owners, operators, masters, crew members and officers, or recognized organizations, do not comply with their duties and obligations to duly cooperate with the investigation or to inform whenever a marine accident or incident occurs, will be subject to the sanctions imposed by Law.
12. The General Directorate of Merchant Marine shall establish the necessary procedures or mechanisms to carry out adequate investigations of marine casualties or incidents, including the application of administrative restrictions against Panamanian registered vessels which become involved in a marine casualty or incident.
13. In the event of marine casualties or incidents involving Panamanian registered vessels or marine casualties or incidents involving foreign vessel within Panamanian jurisdictional waters, owners/operators or masters shall immediately give notice thereof to the Maritime Affairs Investigation Department.

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14. The contact details of the Maritime Affairs Investigation Department are as follows:

Telephone numbers: +507 501-5087 / 5039

E-mail: [casualty@amp.gob.pa](mailto:casualty@amp.gob.pa)

**October, 2023** – Maritime Affairs Investigation Department Resolution was updated in the regulation/legislation reference and in paragraph #5, change in paragraph #5 excludes Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Investigations, change in Paragraph #6 excludes Labour Complaints (MLC 2006) and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Investigations.

**January, 2022** – Change in paragraph #4 includes Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Investigations, change in Paragraph #5 includes Labour Complaints (MLC 2006) and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Investigations. Contact number extension 4238 has been deleted from paragraph #13 and from inquiries contact details.

**May, 2021** – Change in reference and paragraph #4 concerning the resolution number by which Panama has approved the Rules and Regulations pertaining to Marine Casualties, Labour Complaints (MLC 2006) and Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing investigations.

**August, 2020** - This Merchant Marine Circular replaces the MMC-31, MMC-32, MMC-33 and MMC-37 was added, paragraph #1. Change in the resolution number by which Panama has approved the Rules and Regulations pertaining to marine accident investigations, paragraph #4. Wording was changed from “Marine Accident Investigation Department” to “Maritime Affairs Investigation Department”, paragraphs #5, 6, 7, 8, 12 and 13. Fax number was deleted, paragraph #13.

**September, 2008.**

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

Maritime Affairs Investigation Department  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5087 / 5039

E-mail: [casualty@amp.gob.pa](mailto:casualty@amp.gob.pa)

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