

Merchant Marine Circular

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

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-270

- To:** Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organizations (ROs).
- Subject:** Fishing Vessels and other ships engaged in activities and support of capturing fishing resources operations.
- Reference:**
- a. Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021 establishes the procedure to impose administrative sanctions for violations of the rules on aquatic resources, aquaculture, marine-coastal and fishing resources.
 - b. Law No. 57 General Merchant Marine of August 6, 2008.
 - c. Executive Decree No. 161 of June 6, 2013.
 - d. Executive Decree No. 131 of April 14, 2020.
 - e. Resolution No. 107-OMI-204-DGMM of May 27, 2019 (Resolution A.1117(30) adopted on December 6, 2017).
 - f. Circular Letter 2554, Rev. 4 March 8, 2023

1. Purpose:

1.1 The purpose of this Circular is to inform our users that Reefers, Tankers or Supply Vessels that are interested in being part of any transshipment program or providing assistance to any fishing vessel, must apply and obtain consent (International Fishing License), issued by the Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama (ARAP).

Note: Cargo or Supply Vessels that do not have this consent (International Fishing License), will not be accepted as part of the Panama Merchant Fleet. In other words, no cargo vessel or fishing vessel will be accepted without this consent (International Fishing License), issued by the Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama (ARAP).

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2. Scope:

- 2.1 The Panama Maritime Authority, in order to faithfully fulfill the obligations undertaken by the Republic of Panama in accordance with Executive Decree No. 131 of April 14, 2020, which establishes that vessels of international service registered or seeking to be registered under the Panama Merchant Fleet engaged in fishing, capturing, transferring and transporting aquatic resources, as well as those engaged in activities and supporting operations for capturing these resources, must have an International Fishing license issued by the Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama (ARAP).
3. Merchant vessels whose type or classification are Reefers, Oil Tankers and Supply Vessels, will be issued the International Service Ship Registry Certificate / Patent (with the respective footnote/annotation and clarification, for example “that this document does not represent a fishing permit or an International Fishing License”, attached to an **Statement Of Compliance**, in which it will be stated that such vessels are not authorized to perform fishing or fishing support activities, otherwise they must have the respective **International Capture Fishing License** or **International Fishing License for activities related to fishing**, according to the current laws and regulations of the Republic of Panama.
 4. For your reference we have included Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021, [Executive Decree No. 161 of June 6, 2013](#) and [Executive Decree No. 131 of April 14, 2020](#), related to the requirements to be met by the Panama Merchant Fleet that performs or support fishing activities.
 5. The capability of giving any other service different from that specified in the aforementioned Ship Registry Certificate / Patent constitutes a violation of the national and international standards applicable in this matter and therefore, a cause for sanctions (administrative or economic) or cancellation of the Panama Merchant Registry, as provided in Law No. 57 General Merchant Marine of August 6, 2008.
 6. The Statement of Compliance referred in item 3 of this Circular is essential to be on board the ship and must be kept attached to the International Service Ship Registry Certificate / Patent.
 7. The company that owns the ship as its economic group, its operators and / or Captain are responsible for keeping interested parties informed and to maintain compliance with the standards on board the ships.

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8. Currently, a great number of Regional Fishing Organizations are foreseeing requiring an “IMO number” to all ships that belong and are registered in their organizations. Thus, the Panama Maritime Administration through the General Directorate of Merchant Marine will implement all necessary instruments in order to assure proper compliance.
9. Through [Resolution A.1117\(30\)](#) “IMO ship identification number scheme”, adopted on December 6, 2017 which revokes Resolution A.1078(28), indicates the following:

“RECOGNIZING the need for the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme to be revised to allow its application to ships of 100 gross tonnage and above, including fishing vessels of steel and non-steel hull construction; passenger ships of less than 100 gross tonnage, high-speed passenger craft and mobile offshore drilling units covered by SOLAS regulation V/19- 1; and all motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 gross tonnage down to a size limit of 12 meters in length overall (LOA), authorized to operate outside waters under the national jurisdiction of the flag State.”

9.1 This Administration is focused on supporting the duties conducted by Regional Fishing Organizations and with the objective of improving Maritime Safety, as well as to facilitating the prevention of maritime fraud, by adopting the provisions given in the aforementioned Resolution A.1117(30) in our national legislation through Resolution No. 107-OMI-204-DGMM of May 27, 2019, therefore, requires that all ships of international fishing service, request an identification IMO number, based on the standards established by the International Maritime Organization.

9.2 In order to obtain an “IMO number”, for both new and existing vessels, please visit the website www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence or send your request to the E-mail maritime.owners@ihs.com – ([Circular Letter 2554, Rev. 4 March 8, 2023](#)).

10. The Ship Registry Certificate / Patent issued by this General Directorate of Merchant Marine to all Fishing Vessels, Reefers, Oil Tankers, Supply Vessels and any other type of ship shall have the following remark: “This Ship Registry Certificate / Patent does not constitute a fishing license and in the case the vessel requires to perform any fishing activities, it must be asked with prior authorization to the Panama Maritime Authority and the Authority of Aquatic Resources of Panama”.



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December, 2023 – Change in the Reference section concerning to the Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021, which revokes Executive Decree No. 160 of June 6, 2013 and change in paragraph 4; new paragraph 2 (Scope) and change in paragraph 9 (9.2) - Circular Letter 2554, Rev. 4 March 8, 2023.

May, 2020 – Change in the Reference and overall changes in items 1, 2, 3 and 4; new item 5 and 6; renumbering of items 7,8 and 9 and overall changes in these.

November, 2019 – New item 7 included.

June, 2019 - New item 6 included (hyperlinks)

August, 2018 – Change in the Reference section concerning to the Resolution A.1117(30) adopted on 6 December 2017, which revokes Resolution A.1078(28) and change in paragraph 6.

September, 2014– New item 6 included and changes in reference and subject.

August, 2013– New item 5 included (hyperlinks).

April, 2013– New changes in paragraph 3 (elimination of its first paragraph).

April, 2013– Change in paragraph 3.

March, 2013.

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

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