

# Merchant Marine Circular

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

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-151

**To:** All Ship-owners, Operators, Masters, Officers of Merchant Ships, and Recognized Organizations.

**Subject:** IMO Unique Company and Registered Owner Identification Number Scheme; and IMO ship identification number scheme.

**Reference:**

- a) SOLAS Chapter XI-1, Regulations 3-1 and 5.
- b) SOLAS Chapter IX, Regulation 1, the ISM Code.
- c) Resolution No. 106-OMI-02-DGMM October 18, 2007, adoption of Amendments to Chapter II-1 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974 amended.
- d) Resolution No. 106-OMI-03-DGMM October 18, 2007, adoption of Resolution MSC.194(80), May 20, 2005.
- e) Resolution No. 106-OMI-55-DGMM October 22, 2008, adoption of MSC. 196 (80) of May 20, 2005.
- f) Resolution No. 107-OMI-204-DGMM, May 25, 2019, adoption of A.1117(30) December 6, 2017 - IMO ship identification number scheme.
- g) IMO Circular Letter 2554, Rev. 4 March 8, 2023. (**Only recommendation**).
- h) IMO Circular Letter No. 1886, Rev.7 of 28 November 2022 (**IMO recommendation**).

---

### 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1. The purpose of this MMC is to inform all interested parties on the use of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme and the permanent identification number to companies and registered owners, to enhance maritime safety and pollution prevention and also to facilitate the prevention of maritime fraud. It is not intended as a prejudice liability matter, civil law, or other commercial considerations in the operation of a ship.

# Merchant Marine Circular

## 2. SCOPE:

- 2.1. All Ship-owners, Operators, Masters, Officers of Merchant Ships, and Recognize Organizations.
- 2.2. The following vessels registered for international service (international registry certificate) are subject to compliance with the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme:
  - 2.2.1. ships of 100 gross tonnage and above, including fishing vessels of steel and non-steel hull construction;
  - 2.2.2. passenger ships of less than 100 gross tonnage,
  - 2.2.3. high-speed passenger craft and mobile offshore drilling units covered by SOLAS regulation V/19-1; and
  - 2.2.4. all motorized inboard fishing vessels of less than 100 gross tonnage down to a size limit of 12 meters in length overall (LOA).
- 2.3. However, the following exception will apply:
  - 2.3.1. ships without mechanical means of propulsion;
  - 2.3.2. pleasure yachts;
  - 2.3.3. ships engaged on special service (for example lightships, floating radio stations, search and rescue vessels.);
  - 2.3.4. hopper barges;
  - 2.3.5. floating docks and structures classified in a similar manner;
  - 2.3.6. ships of war and troop ships; and
  - 2.3.7. wooden ships, other than fishing vessels.

## 3. INTRODUCTION:

- 3.1. In May 1994, the Conference of Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS Convention), held at IMO Headquarters, adopted amendments to the SOLAS Convention, which included the addition of a mandatory regulation on the ship identification number scheme (current SOLAS regulation XI-1/3), which entered into force on 1 January 1996.

# Merchant Marine Circular

- 3.2. Under this Scheme a permanent identification number is assigned to a ship which would remain unchanged upon transfer of its flag and would be inserted on ships' certificates.
- 3.3. The IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme was adopted through the resolution A.600(15), on 19 November 1987, and by resolution A.1078(28), the revised IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme, allows the voluntary application of the Scheme to ships of 100 gross tonnage and above, including fishing vessels.
- 3.4. Later on, through the Resolution A.1117(30) in 6 December 2017, the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme was 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.
- 3.5. The Republic of Panama through the resolution No. 107-OMI-204-DGMM dated May 25, 2019, adopted the resolution A.1117(30) of December 6, 2017, related to the international adoption of the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme; therefore, the Scheme shall apply to new and existing ships registered under Panama flag engaged in international service.
- 3.6. The IMO unique company and registered owner identification number scheme was introduced through the adoption of resolution MSC.160(78) on 20 May 2004.
- 3.7. Subsequently, since its entry into force on 1 January 2009, references to the number are included in the continuous synopsis record (CSR) as per SOLAS regulation XI-1/5 adopted through resolution MSC.194(80), and amendments to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code) adopted through resolution MSC.195(80) as well as to the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code adopted through resolution MSC.196(80).

#### 4. DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1. **Company** is defined according to SOLAS regulation IX/1 (typically the company responsible for ship operations).
- 4.2. **Registered Owner** is listed on a ship's official certificate of registry.

# Merchant Marine Circular

## **5. IMO UNIQUE COMPANY AND REGISTERED OWNER:**

- 5.1.** The system assigns unique seven-digit numbers to companies and registered ship owners—even if their ships don't require IMO numbers. The Number consists of seven digits assigned by S&P Global Market Intelligence. The label begins with the letters "IMO" followed by either "Company" or "Registered Owner", then followed by the seven digits.
- 5.2.** New companies and/or registered owners managing ships covered by the scheme are assigned a Number by S&P Global Market Intelligence when their ship is registered with a flag Administration.
- 5.3.** For existing companies and/or registered owners, the Number should be assigned at an early convenient date, such as when any the documents listed later on is issued or renewed:
- 5.4.** The IMO unique company and registered owner identification number should be inserted on the following documents:
  - 5.4.1.** Document of Compliance, in any form Interim, etc. (required by the International Safety Management Code);
  - 5.4.2.** Safety Management Certificate, in any form Interim, etc. (required by the International Safety Management Code);
  - 5.4.3.** Continuous Synopsis Record required by SOLAS chapter XI-1, regulation 5;
  - 5.4.4.** International Ship Security Certificate (in any form Interim, etc.), required by SOLAS chapter XI-1, Part A, appendices 1 and 2.
  - 5.4.5.** International Certificate on Inventory of Hazardous Materials (in any form);
  - 5.4.6.** International Ready for Recycling Certificate (in any form);
- 5.5.** Once assigned, the Number remains unchanged for a company and/or registered owner. When companies and/or registered owners merge, as a matter of general policy, S&P Global Market Intelligence assigns the Number of the larger company and/or registered owner to the new amalgamated entity, while the Number of the smaller entity is frozen and not reused.

# Merchant Marine Circular

- 5.6. The Numbers can be obtained by contacting or S&P Global Market Intelligence at the following address:

S&P Global Market Intelligence  
5th Floor  
Kingsgate  
62 High Street  
Redhill,  
Surrey RH1 1SG  
United Kingdom  
Tel.: +44 (0) 1344 328300;  
Fax: +44 (0) 2032 532102  
Web: [www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence](http://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence)  
E-mail: [maritime.owners@ihs.com](mailto:maritime.owners@ihs.com)

Or through this Administration (the flag of which **their ships** are entitled to fly).

For more information see the [Circular Letter 2554, Rev. 4 March 8, 2023](#).

## 6. IMO SHIP IDENTIFICATION NUMBER SCHEME:

- 6.1. IMO ship identification number (identification number) is made of the three letters "IMO" in front of the seven digits assigned by the S&P Global Market Intelligence.
- 6.2. If the IMO number for an existing ship cannot be determined or is required for a new newbuilding, applications for an identification number should be addressed to S&P Global Market Intelligence, requests can be submitted on the following website <http://imonumbers.ihs.com> or sent to S&P Global Market Intelligence, together with the information on the individual ships concerned, using the form set out in the annex of Circular Letter No.1886/Rev.7, at the following address:

S&P Global Market Intelligence  
5th Floor  
Kingsgate  
62 High Street  
Redhill,  
Surrey RH1 1SG  
United Kingdom  
Email: [ship.imo@ihsmarkit.com](mailto:ship.imo@ihsmarkit.com)  
Tel: +44 (0)1334 328300





# Merchant Marine Circular

- 6.3. Should there be any difficulty in contacting S&P Global Market Intelligence, requests (including information on the ship concerned as detailed above) should be addressed to IMO at the following address [IMONumbers@imo.org](mailto:IMONumbers@imo.org).

*July, 2025 – General Review.*

*September, 2007.*

---

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

Ship Registry Department  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5021 / 5022

E-mail: [rjimenez@amp.gob.pa](mailto:rjimenez@amp.gob.pa) / [ireina@amp.gob.pa](mailto:ireina@amp.gob.pa)

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