

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 004 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Annual Safety Inspections - Scheduling, Conduct, Reporting and Closure
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, Special Agents and Flag State Inspectors
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 004

Authority and legal status. This Circular is issued by the Maritime Administrator under the functions and powers conferred by the Maritime Act [CAP 131], as amended by the Maritime (Amendment) Act No. 21 of 2025, including section 10C where applicable, and any additional written authority lawfully applicable to the subject. It shall be read with applicable mandatory IMO instruments and controlled VISR policies. It does not convert a direct statutory power into a delegated power, transfer a function assigned by law to another State entity, or amend any valid appointment, concession or other governing instrument.

Related controlled policies: VISR-QMS-POL-COMP-007 - Competence, Training, Resource Planning and External Technical Experts Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-PSC-008 - International Fleet PSC Performance, Detention and Corrective Action Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-REC-005 - Document and Records Control, Retention and IMSAS Evidence Management Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-CI-002 - IMSAS Compliance, Internal Audit, Corrective Action and Continual Improvement Policy.

1. Purpose and applicability

This Circular establishes the uniform process for Annual Safety Inspections (ASI) of Vanuatu-flagged vessels. An ASI is a flag State verification measure and does not replace statutory surveys, class surveys, ISM audits, port State inspections or the owner's continuing duty to maintain the vessel.

2. Scheduling and assignment

- ASI requests must be submitted to the VISR Technical Department sufficiently in advance and include vessel particulars, port, dates, agent, class, RO, trading pattern and any known operational limitations.
- Only VISR may assign or approve the Flag State Inspector. Owners, managers and agents must not self-appoint an inspector or treat a prior relationship as authorization.
- Remote inspection is prohibited unless VISR gives prior written approval for defined exceptional circumstances and specifies the evidence and verification method.
- The company must provide safe access, documents, crew assistance, testing arrangements and sufficient time for a complete inspection.

3. Inspection conduct

- The inspector must verify identity, authorization and independence before boarding and conduct the inspection using the current VISR checklist and applicable instructions.
- The scope includes statutory documentation, condition, lifesaving, fire safety, navigation, machinery, pollution prevention, manning, labour, security and implementation of the SMS, as applicable.
- Deficiencies must be described objectively, supported by evidence and classified by seriousness. The inspector must not conceal, minimize or close a deficiency without verification.
- Any immediate danger, suspected fraud, serious SMS failure or matter likely to justify detention must be reported to VISR without delay.

4. Reporting and closure

- The signed inspection report and supporting evidence must be submitted through the approved system within 48 hours, or sooner when directed.
- The company must submit a corrective-action plan within the deadline set by VISR and provide objective closure evidence.
- VISR may require follow-up attendance, RO survey, additional ISM audit, remote verification or other measures before closure.
- An ASI is closed only when the Technical Department records formal closure. Verbal acceptance by an inspector is insufficient.

Compliance records and communications

All applications, approvals, notices, reports, evidence, decisions, acknowledgements and corrective-action records required by this Circular must be transmitted through an official VISR channel and retained in the controlled Registry file in accordance with the VISR records policy. Communications from unverified domains or persons without written authority must not be relied upon.

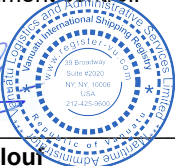
Official contact: technical@register-vu.com. Urgent safety, casualty, sanctions or fraud matters must also be copied to info@register-vu.com and reported without delay.

Enforcement, reasons and reconsideration

Non-compliance may result in enhanced inspection, corrective-action requirements, service restrictions, suspension, administrative penalties, withdrawal or revocation of documents, or deletion from the Registry, to the extent authorized by law and the applicable written authority. Except where immediate protective action is necessary for safety, security, sanctions compliance, documentary integrity or preservation of evidence, an affected person will be notified of the material grounds and given a reasonable opportunity to respond. A request for reconsideration must be submitted in writing to the Office of the Maritime Administrator with supporting evidence within ten business days of the written decision, unless a shorter period is stated because of an urgent risk.

Supersession and effective application

This amended Circular supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 004 from the effective date stated above. Existing obligations, liabilities, investigations, fees and corrective actions arising under the prior version remain enforceable to the extent lawfully incurred and are to be administered under the clearer procedures stated in this amended version. If this Circular conflicts with a later Act, regulation or controlled VISR policy, the higher or later instrument prevails and the Circular shall be updated through document control.



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