

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 008 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Mandatory Certification Requirements for Vanuatu-Flagged Vessels
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All Flag State Inspectors, Special Agents, Recognized Organizations, shipowners, managers and masters
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 008

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-GOV-001 - Governance, Statutory Authority, Responsibility and Strategic Performance Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-REG-003 - Regulatory Monitoring, Legislative Change and Administrative Decisions Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-COMP-007 - Competence, Training, Resource Planning and External Technical Experts Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-REC-005 - Document and Records Control, Retention and IMSAS Evidence Management Policy.

1. Purpose

This Circular clarifies who may issue statutory and Registry documentation for Vanuatu-flagged vessels and establishes mandatory authenticity and verification controls. It applies to vessels subject to SOLAS, MARPOL, Load Line, ISM, ISPS, MLC, the CCSS Code or any other applicable statutory regime.

2. Authorized issuers

- Statutory certificates may be issued only by the Maritime Administrator or a Recognized Organization acting within a current written authorization and approved scope.
- Flag State Inspectors and Special Agents may not issue, endorse, extend, amend or cancel statutory certificates unless a separate written instrument expressly authorizes the specific action.
- No person may use a VISR seal, signature, letterhead, certificate number, QR code or electronic template without controlled access and written authority.
- Interim, conditional, exemption, equivalency or extension documents require prior approval under the applicable decision procedure.

3. Verification and onboard carriage

- All certificates must be current, complete, legible and immediately verifiable through the issuing system or confirmed channel.
- Owners and masters must keep electronic copies available offline and maintain any original paper document required by the issuing authority.
- Any mismatch in vessel name, IMO number, official number, dates, issuer, signature, QR code or certificate status must be reported before reliance.
- ROs must verify the scope and validity of supporting documents and may not rely on unverified insurance, class, manning or Registry documents.

4. Unauthorized or defective documents

An unauthorized, forged, altered, backdated, unsupported or unverifiable document has no validity. VISR may direct its immediate withdrawal, require replacement, initiate investigation, restrict services and notify relevant authorities or port States.

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. 008 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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