

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 012 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Zero Tolerance for Fraudulent, Altered or Unverifiable Maritime Documentation
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, Special Agents, Recognized Organizations, Flag State Inspectors, seafarers and stakeholders
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 012

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-REG-003 - Regulatory Monitoring, Legislative Change and Administrative Decisions 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. Zero-tolerance rule

VISR will not accept, issue, validate or rely upon a document that is forged, altered, backdated, fraudulently obtained, unsupported or incapable of immediate verification. The rule applies to Registry, statutory, class, insurance, manning, seafarer, corporate, ownership and fisheries documents.

2. Required verification

- Check QR codes, serial numbers, electronic signatures, issuer portals and official contact channels before reliance.
- Confirm vessel identity, IMO number, official number, names, dates, scope, issuer and signatory.
- Where authenticity cannot be established immediately, treat the document as unverified and obtain written confirmation from the issuing authority.
- Do not accept documents supplied only through unverified intermediaries or altered image files.

3. Reporting and preservation

- Report suspected fraud immediately and do not confront or alert a suspected wrongdoer where doing so could compromise evidence or safety.
- Preserve the original file, email headers, metadata, payment records, correspondence, screenshots, website links and any hardcopy.
- Do not edit, annotate, forward repeatedly or convert the only copy of suspected evidence.
- Cooperate with VISR and competent authorities and maintain confidentiality while an inquiry is active.

4. Consequences

VISR may invalidate or withdraw documents, suspend services, restrict an agent, inspector, provider or vessel, initiate deletion, publish an alert and refer the matter for investigation or prosecution. A person who relied in good faith must still cease reliance once notified of the defect.

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: compliance@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. 012 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.



Saade Makhoul

Maritime Administrator of the Republic of Vanuatu
Vanuatu International Shipping Registry

Issued in Port Vila and New York
20 August 2026