REPUBLIC OF VANUATU
OFFICE OF THE MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR
VANUATU INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING REGISTRY
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CIRCULAR	Circular No. 016 (Amended)
SUBJECT	**Enhanced Safety Inspections for High-Risk Vessels**
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, Special Agents, Recognized Organizations and Flag State Inspectors
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 016

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

1. Risk-based inspection authority

VISR may require an Enhanced Safety Inspection (ESI) in addition to routine ASIs and statutory surveys where a vessel, company, trade or service provider presents elevated risk. An ESI is tailored to the identified risk and may be announced or unannounced where lawful and practicable.

2. Typical triggers

- PSC detention, repeated deficiencies, poor company or sister-vessel performance, recent casualty or serious incident.
- Advanced age, high-risk vessel type, change of ownership or management, long lay-up, class or RO change, sanctions indicators or opaque ownership.
- Overdue surveys, repeated exemptions, conditions of class, major repairs, conversion, reactivation or operation in a high-risk region.
- Credible complaint, suspected fraud, documentary inconsistency or failure to comply with a prior VISR direction.

3. Scope and conduct

- VISR will identify the objectives and may require physical attendance by an FSI, RO surveyor, auditor, specialist or combined team.
- The scope may include hull, machinery, lifesaving, fire safety, navigation, pollution prevention, cargo, manning, MLC, ISM, ISPS, cyber, security and document verification.
- Testing, drills, thickness measurement, specialist attendance or additional audit may be required where justified.
- The company must disclose known deficiencies and provide access to records, equipment, crew and relevant shore management.

4. Outcome and cost

VISR may clear the vessel, require corrective action, impose operating conditions, order follow-up attendance, suspend documents or take other lawful action. Reasonable costs arising from vessel-specific risk or non-compliance are for the owner or company unless VISR determines otherwise.

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. 016 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 Makhlouf
Maritime Administrator of the Republic of Vanuatu
Vanuatu International Shipping Registry

Issued in Port Vila and New York
20 August 2026