

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 020 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Procedure for Bareboat Charter-Out of a Vanuatu-Registered Vessel to a Foreign Flag
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All registered owners, bareboat charterers, managers, mortgagees, Special Agents and Recognized Organizations
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 020

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-REC-005 - Document and Records Control, Retention and IMSAS Evidence Management Policy.

1. Prior approval required

A Vanuatu-registered vessel may not be bareboat chartered out to a foreign flag or obtain foreign bareboat registration without prior written approval from the Office of the Maritime Administrator. No private agreement or foreign registry action is sufficient by itself.

2. Application documents

- Written application by the registered owner and bareboat charterer, full charter-party or certified extract, proposed period and foreign flag.
- Consent or no-objection from every recorded mortgagee and evidence that ownership and encumbrances remain correctly recorded in Vanuatu.
- Written acceptance or eligibility confirmation from the foreign bareboat registry and details of applicable safety, manning and certification arrangements.
- Current class, statutory, insurance, ownership, corporate, sanctions and fee status.
- Undertaking that the vessel will not display conflicting flags or use Vanuatu operational certificates during the foreign bareboat registration.

3. Effect of approval

- Vanuatu underlying title registration and recorded mortgages remain in force unless otherwise decided, while the right to fly the Vanuatu flag and use operational Registry documents is suspended for the approved period.
- Foreign bareboat registration must not alter ownership, mortgage priority or permanent Registry status without further approval.
- VISR may impose conditions concerning certificates, markings, records, notifications, insurance and return to Vanuatu flag.

4. Termination and reactivation

At the end or early termination of the charter, the owner must provide evidence of cancellation of the foreign bareboat registration, surrender foreign documents and complete any surveys or document replacement required before the Vanuatu flag is reactivated.

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: registry@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. 020 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