

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 027 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Mandatory STCW Endorsements and Onboard Availability of Valid, Verifiable Certificates
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, crewing managers, Special Agents, seafarers and Recognized Organizations
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 027

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-STCW-009 - STCW Quality Standards, Training Institution Oversight and Independent Evaluation 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. Endorsement requirement

Every master, officer or other seafarer serving in a capacity for which the STCW Convention and Vanuatu law require a certificate or flag-State recognition must hold the appropriate valid certificate and, where recognition of a foreign certificate is required, a valid Vanuatu endorsement attesting recognition before or within any strictly permitted documentary period.

2. Documents to be available and verifiable

- Valid certificate of competency or proficiency appropriate to the capacity, ship type, propulsion, tonnage and voyage.
- Valid Vanuatu endorsement attesting recognition where required, together with any authorized documentary evidence permitted pending issuance.
- Valid medical fitness certificate, seafarer identity or discharge document and evidence of required specialized training.
- Records supporting safe manning, watchkeeping, familiarization, security, tanker, passenger, GMDSS or other applicable duties.
- Electronic documents must be retrievable onboard and independently verifiable through the issuing authority or VISR system.

3. Company verification duties

- Verify authenticity, validity, capacity, limitations, issuing administration and identity before engagement and periodically thereafter.
- Do not place or retain a seafarer in a capacity exceeding the certificate, endorsement, medical fitness or safe-manning requirements.
- Maintain a controlled expiry-monitoring system and begin renewal sufficiently early to avoid operation on expired documents.
- Report suspected fraud, alteration, identity mismatch or unverifiable certification immediately and preserve the evidence.
- An application receipt is not an endorsement unless it is an official document expressly permitting service for a stated period and capacity.

4. Inspection and corrective action

FSIs, ROs and authorized auditors must verify a representative and risk-based sample of certificates and endorsements during inspections and audits. Deficiencies must be corrected before sailing where they affect safe manning, competence or legal authority to serve, unless a competent authority gives a lawful written direction.

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: admin@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. 027 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 Marniou

Maritime Administrator of the Republic of Vanuatu
Vanuatu International Shipping Registry

Issued in Port Vila and New York
20 August 2026