

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 031 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Zero-Tolerance Policy on Forged VISR Documents, False-Flag Representation and Unauthorized Use of VISR Identity
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, agents, ROs, FSIs, insurers, banks, brokers, charterers, port and coastal authorities and stakeholders
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	Upon publication
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 031

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. Prohibited conduct

- Creating, forging, altering, counterfeiting, backdating, reproducing or modifying a VISR certificate, endorsement, transcript, letter, seal, signature, QR code, seafarer document or Registry record.
- Presenting, circulating, using or attempting to validate a forged, cancelled, superseded, suspended or otherwise invalid VISR document.
- Representing by AIS, hull markings, documents, websites, email, databases or commercial communications that a vessel is entitled to fly the Vanuatu flag when it is not.
- Operating or promoting a website, portal, application, email domain, social-media account or validation system that impersonates VISR or the Office of the Maritime Administrator.
- Aiding, facilitating, concealing or knowingly failing to report the misuse where a legal or contractual reporting duty exists.

2. Verification and reporting

- The official public domain is www.register-vu.com. Look-alike domains and third-party portals must not be treated as authoritative.
- Verify the vessel, document identifier, status and issuing authority through the official Registry system or direct written confirmation.
- Report suspected misuse immediately with the complete document, metadata, presenting-party details, correspondence, QR code, link, screenshots and transaction context.
- Owners, masters, managers, ROs, insurers, banks and agents must maintain reasonable verification controls appropriate to the risk.
- No person should destroy, return or alter suspected evidence after notice that it may be relevant to an investigation.

3. Administrative and legal consequences

Where authorized by applicable law and written authority, VISR may refuse or suspend services, withdraw or revoke documents, suspend or terminate an appointment, delete a vessel, notify competent authorities and pursue civil, administrative or criminal referral. Any monetary penalty or criminal sanction must arise from applicable law and be imposed by the competent authority; this Circular does not create a criminal offence or invent a penalty amount.

4. Rights and fair process

Immediate protective action may be taken where necessary to prevent continuing fraud, false-flag operation, sanctions evasion or reliance on invalid documents. Affected parties will be informed of the material basis and may submit verifiable evidence for reconsideration, without limiting a competent authority's investigation.

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. 031 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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