

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 033 (Amended)
SUBJECT	Mandatory Migration to Electronic Registry Certificates and Disposal of Superseded Hardcopy Documents
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, Special Agents, Recognized Organizations, Flag State Inspectors and document-control personnel
AMENDMENT DATE	20 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	1 September 2026, subject to the transition provisions below
STATUS	Version 2.0 - Supersedes the prior version of Circular No. 033

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. Transition deadline

All vessels and responsible companies must complete migration to the current VISR electronic Registry certificates no later than 31 August 2026. From 1 September 2026, a superseded hardcopy Registry certificate is invalid unless VISR has issued a written vessel-specific exception or the applicable mandatory instrument requires the original paper form.

2. Company and vessel actions

- Confirm receipt of every required electronic certificate and verify all vessel, company, date, status and endorsement data.
- Ensure current files are accessible onboard and ashore, capable of display and printing, and backed up securely.
- Train masters, DPAs and document-control staff in official QR-code and portal verification.
- Identify every superseded hardcopy and prevent further presentation, scanning, circulation or use.
- Report missing, inaccurate, duplicate or unverifiable electronic certificates immediately and do not alter the file.

3. Disposal and evidence

- Unless VISR directs surrender, superseded hardcopies must be visibly cancelled and securely destroyed so that the seal, signature, document number and security features cannot be reused.
- Retain a destruction record identifying vessel, document type and number, issue and expiry dates, method, date, responsible person and photographs where directed.
- Do not destroy documents subject to a casualty, investigation, legal hold, mortgage, title dispute, sanctions review or specific preservation instruction.
- Historical copies retained for legitimate records must be watermarked or marked "SUPERSEDED - NOT VALID" and access-controlled.

4. Exceptional extension

A company that cannot complete migration for a genuine technical or convention-related reason must request a written exception before the deadline, identify the affected documents, explain the cause, state the corrective plan and propose a short completion date. Silence, agent delay or lack of internal preparation does not create an extension.

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. 033 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