

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-344

- To:** Parties, Administrations, Port State Control Supervision Authorities, Recognized Organizations (RO's), Ship-owners/Operators, Seafarers, Legal Representatives, Authorized Maritime Training Centers, Authorized Medical Practitioners, Private Consulates of Merchant Marine of the Republic of Panama, Inspectorates, Authorized Offices, Brokers, Departments of the GDS, Regional Documentation Offices of the Panama Maritime Authority and users of the Panama Ship Registry.
- Subject:** Restrictive measures for the recognition of seafarers' technical documentation issued by other Maritime Administrations of States Parties.
- Reference:** 1978 STCW Convention, as amended, Law No. 4 of May 15, 1992, and Resolution J.D. No. 076-2020 of October 8, 2020 and its modifications.
Circular No. DGGM-002 (**Only as recommendation**).
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1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this Circular is to communicate to the users of Panamanian Registry, the restrictive measures of the Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) with respect to the recognition of seafarers' technical documentation issued by other Maritime Administrations of States Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention, as amended.

2. Scope

- 2.1.** This Merchant Marine Circular applies to seafarers; ship-owners, operators and companies of Panamanian flag ships, States Parties, Administrations, Private Consulates of Merchant Marine, broker or any office authorized to carry out requests of seafarers' technical documentation by the PMA, and to all interested parties.

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3. The PMA shall recognize by endorsement any Certificate of Competency (CoC) or Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) issued by a country on the list of States Parties to the STCW'78 Convention, as amended, to which the PMA recognizes the Certificates of Competency and Certificates of Proficiency, as indicated in Merchant Marine Circular MMC-343, except for the restrictive measure established for in paragraph # 5 of this Circular.
4. For the purposes of this Circular, the term **NON-NATIONAL** refers to any person who was not born or naturalized in the country whose Maritime Administration has issued the technical documentation held by the person for endorsement or any other process before the PMA, therefore, there is no link or relationship between the person and the country issuing the document.
5. The PMA establishes as a restrictive measure that it does not recognize by endorsement or for any other process, the Certificate of Competency (CoC), Certificate of Proficiency (CoP), Course Certificate and Seaman's Book issued to a **NON-NATIONAL** person by the Maritime Administrations of the following States Parties:
 - 5.1. Belize.
 - 5.2. Bolivia.
 - 5.3. Cook Islands.
 - 5.4. Dominica.
 - 5.5. Honduras.
 - 5.6. Mauritania.
 - 5.7. Palau.
 - 5.8. Samoa.
 - 5.9. Sint Maarten.
 - 5.10. Syrian Arab Republic.
 - 5.11. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.
 - 5.12. Vanuatu.
6. The PMA reserves the right to establish requirements of additional supporting documentation as part of the requirements within the process of recognition by endorsement of Certificates of Competency (CoC), Certificates of Proficiency (CoP), Course Certificates, Seaman's Book or any other documentary evidence. The PMA shall establish the requirement of additional supporting documentation for endorsement or any other process, through the mechanisms determined by this Maritime Administration for such purpose.

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7. The PMA does not recognize or process seafarers' technical documentation issued by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The aforementioned is due to numerous and repeated reports from the General Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and resolutions issued by United Nations Security Council (UN). Therefore, because of the Republic of Panama has been a member of the United Nations since November 13, 1945, it is our obligation to fulfill the established precepts and provisions.
8. The PMA requests all interested parties to take all necessary measures for due compliance with this Circular.

January, 2025 – The Subject, Reference and the paragraphs # 1.1 and 2.1 are modified; the paragraphs # 3, 3.1, 3.2 and 4 becomes paragraphs # 5, 7 and 8; paragraphs # 3, 4 and 6 are added; and paragraph # 5 includes Mauritania and The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and excludes Indonesia and The Federated States of Micronesia.

December, 2023 – Reference and the paragraphs # 1, 2, and 3 are modified, and paragraph # 4 is added.

May, 2021 – Change in the paragraph # 1.1., and the hyperlink of paragraph # 2 was updated.

March, 2021 – Change in subject, reference and change in the paragraphs # 1 and 2.

June, 2019 – Modification to Paragraph 1 & 2.

May, 2018 – Modification to Paragraphs 1 & 2.

December, 2017 – Modification to Paragraphs 1 & 2. Added Paragraph 3.

December, 2016.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

Certification Department
General Directorate of Seafarers
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

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Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/circulars/>