USE OF ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATES ON BOARD SHIPS FLYING THE FLAG OF SINGAPORE

This circular brings to the attention of all stakeholders on the use of electronic certificates on board ships flying the flag of Singapore.

2. With the aim to reduce the administrative burden on Administrations, port State control officials, ships’ crew and other stakeholders caused by, amongst other reasons, the reliance on traditional paper certificates, the Facilitation Committee (FAL) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), at its fortieth session approved the Guidelines for the use of electronic certificates (FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2) that provides guidance to facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates.

3. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) advocates the maritime industry’s transformation towards smarter ships and intelligent ports, so as to facilitate greater administrative and operational efficiencies. Recognised Organisations (ROs) acting on behalf of MPA to conduct survey and certification of Singapore ships are encouraged to develop such capabilities that align with our objective to bring about greater efficiency for the multiple stakeholders. In this regard, ROs issuing statutory certificates to Singapore ships on behalf of Singapore are authorised and encouraged to develop capabilities to issue electronic version of the statutory certificates to replace the traditional paper statutory certificates.

4. The electronic statutory certificates issued by ROs to Singapore-registered ships shall comply with FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 which contains the following features:

(i) validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument;

(ii) protected from edits, modifications or revisions;
(iii) a unique tracking number for verification;

(iv) reliably and securely verifiable through a conveniently accessible and continuously available platform; and

(v) a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.

5. The electronic statutory certificates issued by ROs in accordance to FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 for ships flying the flag of Singapore shall be deemed valid in accordance with all applicable international instruments that Singapore is a party to. In addition, the ROs must provide clear and simple instructions for any party who may wish to verify the validity and authenticity of the electronic statutory certificates. Notwithstanding the compliance with requirements under Singapore, owners of Singapore ships should still continue to exercise the necessary due diligence to address any entry and clearance requirements that are specific to each foreign ports that the ship calls at.

6. Owners of Singapore ships who wish to be issued with electronic certificates should approach the ROs to enquire if they are ready to issue the electronic certificates and to confirm the suitability of ship to replace the traditional paper certificates with electronic versions. Upon confirmation by the ROs, a letter on the use of electronic certificates will be issued by MPA to the ship stating approval for the ship to be issued with electronic certificates in-lieu of traditional paper certificates. This approval letter is to be placed on board the ship as an additional measure to facilitate acceptance by other port authorities.

7. Queries relating to this circular should be directed to Mr. Calvin Lee at telephone: 6375-6269 or email calvin_lee@mpa.gov.sg or shipping@mpa.gov.sg.

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