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Marine Circular No. 3 /2021

Electronic Record Books Requirements under MARPOL

Notice to all Maritime Authorities, Recognised Organisations, Equipment Manufacturers, Ship Owners, Ship Operators, Ship Managers, Masters, Ships' Officers and Surveyors of British Virgin Islands Ships.

This notice should be read with Resolution MEPC.312(74) Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Record Books under MARPOL, Resolution MEPC.314(74) – Amendments to MARPOL Annexes I, II, V and VI, Resolution MEPC.317(74) – Amendments to the NOx Technical Code 2008.

SUMMARY:

This Marine Circular has been published to advise regarding the acceptance of Electronic Record Books under MARPOL as listed in Resolution MEPC.312(74). It offers clarity on which record books may be accepted in an electronic format and advises on the use of combined electronic/hard copy record keeping on British Virgin Islands flagged ships

1. Background

- 1.1 The International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) amendments to MARPOL Annex I, II, V, VI and the NOx Technical Code to allow for the use of electronic record books, came into force on 1st October 2020. To support the use of electronic record books, guidelines for their approval and acceptance have been developed (Resolution MEPC.312(74)) by the IMO.
- 1.2 These amendments follow the resolutions adopted by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and are only applicable to:
 - Oil Record Book, parts I and II
 - Cargo Record Book
 - Garbage Record Book, parts I and II
 - Ozone-depleting Substances Record Book
 - Recording of the tier and on/off status of marine diesel engines
 - Record of Fuel Oil Changeover
 - Record Book of Engine Parameters
- 1.3 The VISR has permitted the use of electronic record books, under MARPOL, as an alternative substitute of the traditional paper records. Electronic record books are considered key to ease the administrative burden associated with paperwork.

2. Use and Approval of Electronic Record Books under MARPOL

- 2.1 This circular reflects the policy on electronic record books under MARPOL as agreed and adopted by all Red Ensign Group Administrations.

- 2.2 The VISR has delegated the approval of electronic record books to the classification societies that are authorised to act as VISR Recognised Organisations (ROs).
- 2.3 Manufacturers seeking approval of their systems by the VISR should directly contact one of the listed ROs, who will be able to advise on the process needed to gain.
- 2.4 Once a system has been approved, a Declaration of Acceptance of Electronic Recording Systems (Declaration) may be issued to vessels using the approved system. The form of the Declaration will be the same as that found in the Appendix to Resolution MEPC.312 (74).
- 2.5 A Declaration may be issued by any VISR Authorised RO.
- 2.6 British Virgin Island flagged vessels may utilise any electronic recording system that has been approved on behalf of the Administration.
- 2.7 British Virgin Island flagged vessels must be in possession of a valid Declaration when using an electronic recording system.
- 2.8 Shipowners are reminded that the use of electronic recording systems may not be accepted by all Administrations and as such should ensure hard copies of records are available if required by a Port State. Additionally, the procedures related to the use of Electronic Record Books (ERB) must be documented in the ship's Safety Management System (SMS)
- 2.9 Electronic record books in no way relieves shipowners of their existing duty to accurately maintain and produce records during an inspection, as required by MARPOL. It is recommended that if a ship cannot produce the electronic record book or a Declaration during a Port State Control (PSC) inspection, the ship should provide an alternative verified copy of the records or a hard copy record book for verification.

Director of Shipping