



# Merchant Marine **Notice**

Panama Maritime Authority  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Maritime Ship Security Department

F-34  
(DCCM)  
V.04

## PANAMA FLAG PRECHECK PROCESS

No: **MMN-11/2024**

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1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Notice is to inform all our users about the precheck process for a vessel to be eligible to enter the Panama Ship Registry.
2. The precheck process involves **a thorough risk assessment** of various aspects related to the vessel, its owner, operator, and/or charterer before applying for the entry into the Panama Ship Registry to ensure that the vessel meets the international standards regarding safety, environmental protection, crew welfare, and to promote cooperation and best practices in the maritime industry; therefore, the Merchant Marine General Directorate will ensure full compliance with national and international regulations in accordance with the legal provisions of Law No. 57 of August 6, 2008.
3. The precheck will apply to:
  - Any vessel that requests to enter the Panama Ship Registry, in any of its flag registry modalities.
  - When a registered vessel, in international service, requests a change of owner, or charterer.
4. For those vessels already registered in Panama and requesting only a change in the vessel's name or operator, a precheck will not be necessary.



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5. The precheck must be requested by a Panamanian Law Firm or by a Panama Merchant Marine Consulate, prior to the registration and will be valid for fifteen (15) calendar days.
  
6. All requests must be sent to [pmaprecheck@amp.gob.pa](mailto:pmaprecheck@amp.gob.pa) indicating the following information:
  - 6.1. Vessel's IMO Number
  - 6.2. Previous registry of the vessel (not apply for new construction)
  - 6.3. Current vessel's owner (not apply for new construction)
  - 6.4. Intended owner under Panama flag and Registered Owner(s) Number.
  - 6.5. Economic group
  - 6.6. Current Operator (Company responsible of the operation of the vessel), not apply for new construction
  - 6.7. Intended Operator under Panama flag (Company responsible of the operation of the vessel) and Company Identification Number.
  - 6.8. Vessel Charterer's name (in case of bareboat charter registration)
  - 6.9. Keel laying date (in the absence of this date, please provide the delivery date):
  - 6.10. Ballast Water Management Method used: **D2**, **D4** or **Other Approach** (in case of vessels subject to IBWM Convention)

**Note:** According to the Merchant Marine Notice [MMN-09/2024](#), all ships fitted with ballast water tanks entering the Panamanian Registry must comply with the requirements of the International Ballast Water Convention (BWMC), regarding the installation of the Ballast Water Management Treatment System in accordance with Regulation **D-2**, **no later than September 8, 2024**. Therefore, confirmation on the Ballast Water Management Method used is required for the precheck in case of prospected vessels.



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7. For those vessels that an **IMO Number** is not applicable the following information must be submitted:

7.1. Vessel's name

7.2. Previous registry of the vessel (not apply for new construction)

7.3. Current vessel's owner (not apply for new construction)

7.4. Intended owner under Panama flag and Registered Owner(s) Number.

7.5. Economic group

7.6. Current Operator (Company responsible of the operation of the vessel), not apply for new construction

7.7. Intended Operator under Panama flag (Company responsible of the operation of the vessel) and Company Identification Number.

7.8. Vessel Charterer's name (in case of bareboat charter registration)

7.9. Keel laying date (in the absence of this date, please provide the delivery date):

7.10. Ballast Water Management Method used: **D2**, **D4** or **Other Approach** (in case of vessels subject to IBWM Convention)

8. As part of the policies implemented by the Panama Registry to purge its fleet, aiming to improve both operational performance and reduce the risk of detentions, the Republic of Panama will not accept oil tankers or bulk carriers over fifteen (15) years of age for registration. Exceptions may apply in cases of bulk carriers up to twenty (20) years of age subject to the satisfactory results of internal risk assessment.

9. In the case of oil tankers intended to operate within the jurisdictional waters of the Republic of Panama, age-related registration restrictions may be waived up to twenty five (25) years of age, subject to the submission of its valid Operating License issued by the Ports and Ancillary Industries General Directorate for existing Companies. For new Companies a sworn affidavit declaration for the intended service duly apostilled



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must be submitted. In addition to the information indicated in paragraph 6 above, the vessel's operating area shall be clearly described.

10. The General Directorate of Merchant Marine may request any other additional information and/or document to complete the precheck process.
11. The precheck evaluation will lead to the following results: approved or rejected. In some cases of approval, the vessel may be subject to conditions that shall be complied with after the registration.
12. The vessel must be registered based on the same information provided for the approved precheck; in case of variations a new precheck must be requested.
13. The fact that the vessel is eligible for Panama flag does not constitute its registration, and neither constitutes a pre-evaluation of the registration requirements.
14. The Merchant Marine General Directorate encourage all parties involved in the operation of a registered vessel, to periodically conduct risk assessments and due diligence to prevent marine incidents, protect the marine environment, ensure fair working conditions and to avoid illegal operations or activities that are not aligned with the policies and commitment acquired by the Republic of Panama.



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**February, 2026** - text added to paragraph 8 and paragraph 9 added.

**July, 2025** – Modification in paragraph 8

**February, 2025** – Modification of paragraph 5, 6.4, 6.7, 7.4 and 7.7.

**November, 2024** – Modification on paragraph 3 second bullet, inclusion of new paragraph 4, and modification of paragraph 6 currently paragraph 7.

**September, 2024** - New.

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

Maritime Ships Security Department  
Fleet control and Monitoring Section  
General Directorate of Merchant Marine  
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5016/5032

E-mail : [pmaprecheck@amp.gob.pa](mailto:pmaprecheck@amp.gob.pa)

Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/marine-category/marine-notice/>