

Commonwealth of Dominica**Office of the Maritime Administrator**

**TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS AND OPERATORS OF MERCHANT VESSELS,
AND DOMINICA FLAG STATE INSPECTORS**

**SUBJECT: FLAG STATE INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR DOMINICA FLAG
VESSELS**

REFERENCE:

- a) **Dominica Marine Safety Regulations**
- b) **IMO Assembly Resolution A.948(23)**
- c) **Dominica Marine Safety Circular CD – MSC -12 -01 rev. Safety Inspections**
- d) **Dominica Marine Safety Circular CD – MSC – 01-07 Detention Prevention Program**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this notice is to provide guidance to Dominica Ship owners/ Operators and Flag State Inspectors on Commonwealth of Dominica requirements in order to prevent detentions of Dominica Flag vessels.

APPLICABILITY: This Circular applies to all Dominica flag vessels and vessels entering the registry.

DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of the **FLAG STATE INSPECTION PROGRAM** is to assist ship owners/operators to reduce the detention rate on the vessels flying the Dominica Flag. The Flag State Inspection Program has been created to incorporate different types of inspections that are necessary to efficiently assist owners/operators in the reduction of deficiencies and detentions as well as to increase the level of safety onboard their vessels.

The Program is not intended to replace surveys for the issuance of Class and statutory certificates. Such activities will continue to be performed by duly recognized organizations.

Each inspection has a different purpose, but the final goal is to assist the ship owner/operator in complying with the application of international standards prescribed by a host of treaties and conventions such as Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Marine Pollution Convention (MARPOL), etc. and national regulations to demonstrate that the Flag Administration provides the service and programs for owners/operators to operate their vessels safely, efficiently and cost-effectively.

The program consists of the following:-

- Pre-Registration inspection.
- Annual Safety Inspection,
- Detention Prevention Inspection,
- Post Detention Inspection,
- Post Marine Casualty Inspection
- ISM additional audit
- Special safety inspections

EFFECTIVE DATE

This program will come into force 01 June 2008.

DEFINITIONS:

DMA: Commonwealth of Dominica Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator Head Office (Fairhaven)

COORDINATION OFFICES:

Asia Pacific Coordination Office – responsible for North and South Pacific Ocean region, Indian Ocean region.

Europe Coordination Office – responsible for European region, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, red Sea and West, North, East and West Coast of Africa

FLAG STATE INSPECTOR: Nautical Inspector appointed and duly authorized by the Maritime Administrator carry out Flag State Inspections of Dominica vessels registered under the International Maritime Act, 2000.

PSC: Port State Control

OPERATOR: Company as defined in the ISM Code

OWNER: As per the certificate of registry.

Dominica INSPECTION: Any inspection within the Flag State Inspection Program (Pre-registration Inspection, Annual Safety Inspection, Detention Prevention Inspection, Post-detention Inspection, Post-marine Casualty Inspection, ISM additional Audit, ISPS Verification Audit, Special Safety Inspection)

REQUIREMENTS:

General

It is the responsibility of owners/operators to present their vessels for timely inspection when a required inspection is due. In order to do so, the owners/operators shall inform and request the Dominica Maritime Administration (DMA) through the relevant Coordination Office for the Dominica Inspection, when one or more are applicable. Vessels not inspected by the due date will be considered as "overdue" and follow up procedures will be initiated.

The minimum information provided to Coordination Office should include:

1. vessel's name;
2. call sign;
3. IMO number;
4. proposed ports of call;
5. the estimated time of arrival (ETA) for each port; and
6. agent information.

The Coordination Office will appoint a Flag State Inspector to attend the vessel for the Dominica Inspection and coordinate all necessary details with the owner/operator. To ensure adequate time for notifying all interested parties of the planned inspection, the above information should be made available at least 3 days prior to the vessel's arrival. The appointed inspector will liaise with the vessel's agent to determine a suitable time to board the vessel. The Owner/operator shall ensure that the vessel will be available in the port for an adequate period of time to complete the inspection.

It is also the responsibility of the Master to present the vessel for the scheduled inspection and accordingly cooperate with a duly appointed Dominica Flag State Inspector. Such an inspector has the right of access to the vessel.

All Dominica vessels, which were subjected to Port State Control inspections, are required to submit to DMA copies of PSC inspection reports carried out on these vessels. The PSC reports, referred to above, shall be submitted electronically to DMA directly and to the relevant Coordination Office.

Upon satisfactory completion of a vessel's initial annual safety inspection or the Pre-Registration Inspection (if applicable), the Dominica Maritime Administration will issue the Safety Inspection Certificate. The certificate will be sent to the company described on the ISM Document of Compliance for placing on board. This certificate is reissued every five (5) years.

The vessel's Safety Inspection Certificate will be endorsed annually upon completion of the Annual Safety Inspection. The inspector shall endorse the certificate (as appropriate), in order to

confirm attendance of the ship, irrespective of whether recommendations, remarks, etc. have been imposed during that visit.

Pre-entry Inspections

The purpose of the Pre-Registration Inspection is to determine the eligibility/suitability of vessels of 20 years and over for registration under the Dominica Flag.

Vessels that are required to undergo a Pre-Registration Inspection are as follows:-

1. Vessels of the age of 20 years or more, but less than 25 years, when they meet one or more of the criteria below:-

- .1 have at least one detention within the last 12 months;
- .2 have incurred a casualty or very serious casualty within the last 12 months;
- .3 changing the Flag from a Black listed flag administration as defined by the Port State Control MOU annual reports;
- .4 with 20 or more ship related deficiencies reported by PSC within the last 12 months.

2. Vessels of the age of 25 years or more.

Vessels which fall under Section 1 must complete the Pre-Registration Inspection within 3 months from the date of initial registration. Vessels which fall under Section 2 must complete the Pre-Registration Inspection before acceptance into the Dominica Registry. In addition to that, these vessels shall be classed with a member of International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) or class recognized by European Union.

The owner/operator shall apply for the Pre-Registration Inspection by contacting the relevant DMA Regional Office. The DMA Regional Office will then contact the relevant Coordination Office to arrange the required Pre-Registration Inspection in the most convenient port for the vessel.

Upon satisfactory completion of the pre-registration inspection, DMA will make its decision regarding acceptance of the vessel into the Commonwealth of Dominica Registry.

If the vessel is accepted and registered under the Commonwealth of Dominica Flag, DMA may, based upon the results of the Pre-Registration Inspection, issue a Safety Inspection Certificate via the relevant Coordination Office which will be sent to the ship operator for placing on board the vessel.

Annual Safety Inspection

The purpose of the Annual Safety Inspection is to confirm compliance of the ship and crew with Dominica and International requirements and to verify the general safety condition of the vessel in order to reduce the number of deficiencies on Dominica flagged vessels.

All Dominica vessels are required to undergo an annual safety inspection with the following exceptions:

- Unmanned barges;
- Pleasure yachts;
- Vessels fishing in waters within the jurisdiction of Dominica; and
- Cargo vessels under 150 gross tons or less than 24 meters in length.

All newly registered Dominica vessels shall undergo their first Annual Safety Inspection within three (3) months from the initial date of registration.

All vessels currently registered with the Commonwealth of Dominica shall undergo their first Annual Safety Inspection within 3 months of the date of their annual re-registration taking place after 01 June 2008, but in no case later than 01 June 2009.

For subsequent inspections, the operator shall apply for the Annual Safety Inspection by contacting the relevant Coordination Office within 3 months before or after the anniversary date of the Safety Inspection Certificate.

The Coordination Office will appoint a Flag State Inspector to attend the vessel and coordinate all necessary arrangements with the ship operator.

Detention Prevention Inspections

The purpose of the inspection is three-fold. Firstly, to verify and clear all the deficiencies found by the PSC Officer; secondly, to determine, and if so rectify, any other problems that might be revealed during further PSC inspections; and thirdly, to assist the Master / operator / crew member in any technical concerns which arose during the previous PSC inspections or external/internal audits.

The ship operator should contact the relevant Coordination Office and apply for a Detention Prevention Inspection when its vessel underwent PSC inspection(s):-

- .1 resulting in 10 deficiencies without being detained (not Class-Related); or
- .2 as a result of 20 or more deficiencies (not Class-Related) within one year.

The inspection should be undertaken as soon as possible, but no later than 1 month after the PSC inspection.

Upon completion of the Detention Prevention Inspection, the Dominica inspector shall endorse the Safety Inspection certificate in order to confirm attendance of the ship, irrespective whether recommendations, remarks, etc. have been imposed during his visit.

Post Detention Inspection

The purpose of the Post Detention Inspection is to assist in the rectification of reported deficiencies and in the case of an ISM related detention, review the proposed action with respect to the Safety Management System.

Each vessel, which was detained by PSC Officer, is obliged to undergo a Post Detention Inspection as soon as possible and before departure from the port of detention.

The operator shall notify DMA and the relevant Coordination Office immediately regarding the detention of its vessel. As soon as DMA is informed of a detention of a Dominica flagged vessel, the operator will be notified as soon as possible that the vessel must be inspected without delay.

The Post-Detention Inspection shall confirm and clear all of the deficiencies found by the PSC Officer, as well as uncover and rectify any other problems that might be revealed during the follow-up PSC inspection. In case of class-related deficiencies, Class is required to attend the vessel and rectify them.

An expanded inspection shall be completed when following criteria are met and taking into consideration vessel's flag requirements:-

- .1 Ship type is:
 - a. Oil tanker over 15 years old; or
 - b. Chemical and gas carrier over 10 years old; or
 - c. Bulk carrier over 12 years old; or
 - d. Passenger and ro/ro passenger ship over 15 years old;
- .2 Vessel has two (2) detentions within the previous 12 months;

Upon completion of the inspection, the Flag State Inspector should submit to the relevant Coordination Office both the detention and release reports together with the Post Detention Inspection report, stating item by item action taken (deficiencies / non-conformities or observations rectified immediately and those that have to be rectified within certain period or next port of call).

In the case of the prompt notification of a detention, concurrently with notification of release of ship from PSC detention, consideration will be given to the nature of deficiencies when deciding the time of the post-detention inspection.

ISM Additional Audit

An ISM additional Audit shall be carried out in the following situations:-

- When major non-conformities in the Safety Management System were found during a PSC inspection; or
- the vessel had been detained twice within the last two years irrespective of whether the detention had been recorded by different MOU's (Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control).

The ISM Additional Audit will be conducted by ISM qualified Flag State Inspectors/Auditors, selected by the DMA via the relevant Coordination Office.

In the case of major non-conformities raised by the PSC or a Dominica Inspector, the ship operator shall downgrade such major non-conformity prior to the departure of the Dominica Flag Inspector.

Upon satisfactory completion of the Post Detention Inspection and/or an Additional ISM Audit, if the vessel has already on board a Safety Inspection Certificate, the inspector shall endorse the certificate, in order to confirm attendance of the vessel. In the case of completion of an Additional ISM Audit, the relevant section of the certificate shall be endorsed also, irrespective whether recommendations, remarks, observations and nonconformities, etc. have been imposed during that visit.

Post Marine Casualty Inspection

The operator and master of a vessel involved in a reportable accident or casualty is required to notify the DMA immediately. This initial notification is essential for the Maritime Administrator to identify the severity of the casualty or accident, to determine whether to assign an Investigating Officer and to decide if the vessel may continue to proceed on its voyage

Any vessel involved in a reportable accident or marine casualty may be required to undergo a Post Marine Casualty Inspection before departure from port at the discretion of the Maritime Administrator. Should this be required, the ship operator will be informed without undue delay

Special Safety Inspections

In addition to any of the above mentioned inspections and in the interests of quality assurance, a Dominica vessel also may be required by the DMA to undergo a special or unscheduled safety inspection at any time

The DMA may request a Special Safety Inspection on any Dominica flag vessel by giving at least 7 days notice of intended boarding.

Similarly, the ship operator may apply, if it is necessary, for a Special Safety Inspection by contacting the relevant Coordination Office or DMA giving due notice.

ISPS Verification Audit

Each vessel to which the ISPS Code applies shall be subject to the verification of ship's compliance with relevant security requirements. DMA has developed detailed procedures for such verification, which are described in Marine Safety Circular CD-MS-C 05-04 and its revisions.

The verification of vessels are generally carried out by recognized security organizations, which are listed in the Annex to the above mentioned circular, however, owners may request that a Dominica Flag State Inspector complete the verification audit during one of the vessel's Annual Safety Inspections.

The following schedule dates apply for ISPS Verification Audits:-

- .1 Initial Verification, as defined in Regulation 19.1.1.1 of the ISPS Code - within first 6 months of initial registration with Dominica;
- .2 Intermediate verification, as defined in Regulation 19.1.1.3 of the ISPS Code between second and third anniversary date of the ISSC.

3. CONTACT DETAILS

Any inquiry from or raised by a Flag State Inspector and or by an Operator shall be made to:-

DMA

Commonwealth of Dominica Maritime Administration, Office of the Deputy Maritime Administrator

Technical Director: Magdalena Jablonowska

32 Washington Street,
Fairhaven, MA 02719 USA

Tel: +1 508 992 7170

Fax: + 1 508 992 7120

Email: inspection@dominica-registry.com

Website: www.dominica-registry.com

Asia Pacific Coordination Office

AP FSI Coordinator: Michael G. Kay

631 Remuera Road
Remuera, Auckland 1050
New Zealand

Tel:(+ 64) 9 520 3153

Fax:(+ 64) 9 520 3152

e-mail: inspectionAP@dominica-registry.com

Europe Coordination Office

EU FSI Coordinator: Patrick Sellhorn

SURVEY & MARINE AUDITS S.L.
C/ Paseo de la Alameda N° 64, Esc 2, Floor 1, Door 4
46023 Valencia - Spain

Tel: (+34) 961118383

Fax: (+34) 961125797

e-mail: inspectionEU@dominica-registry.com

Annex

Annex I hereto is provided as information for owners/operators and masters, to facilitate the conduct of safety inspections.

ANNEX I**SAFETY INSPECTION OF SHIPS:
GUIDANCE FOR MASTERS**

1. All SOLAS and MARPOL documents, certificates and publications required to be on board must be readily available, preferably in a central location, for examination and verification.
2. Publications obviously not applicable to a particular vessel type need not be produced; e.g., dry cargo vessels need not obtain tanker safety publications.
3. The official Minimum Safe Manning Certificate and the original Dominica license of competence of each officer serving on board must be publicly posted in or near the chart room. Particulars of any foreign licenses held must be readily available. The Dominica Seafarer's Identification and Record Book of each crew member must be presented for examination. In the case of passenger ships the certificates of all survival craft/rescue boat crewmen, in particular, must be available. In all cases the Inspector must be given a copy of the current crew list and, if possible, the ship's emergency station bill.
4. Navigation records, publications, charts, log books, Oil Record Book, Cargo Record Book, Ballast Management documents, training records, including monthly fire and abandon ship drills and weekly safety training exercises and all similar material, must be available for inspection, preferably in one location.
5. Inspectors have the authority, and have been instructed, to make a spot check of lifesaving, fire fighting and general safety conditions covered by the SOLAS and MARPOL Certificates. The Master will be instructed to call in the Classification Society for examination and/or verification as may be necessary to properly establish the conditions as they exist.
6. The Master should have the lifeboats, firefighting equipment and appliances in their normal stowed positions ready for examination. Sufficient crew should be on board and prepared to conduct such emergency drills as circumstances may dictate and permit.
7. The pilot ladder and associated gear such as gunwale steps, lights, manropes, etc. should be accessible and in conformance with Regulation 17 of Chapter V of SOLAS.
8. To facilitate the efficient conduct of safety inspections, one of the ship's deck and engine room officers, as appropriate, should be available to accompany the Inspector.

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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular should be directed to the Deputy Maritime Administrator
Commonwealth of Dominica, 32 Washington Street, Fairhaven, MA 02719 USA
technical@dominica-registry.com