



PSCircular 107

1 JULY 2025

Fraudulent registration and certification

Introduction

- 1 This Circular provides guidance on the verification of validity of registration or statutory certificates on board ships.
- 2 At PSCC58, the Committee expressed its concerns in relation to an apparent growing number of ships using fraudulent registrations and/or false or falsified statutory certificates. Within the entire scope of the above, specific concerns were raised regarding the financial liability certificates, particularly on oil tankers.

Fraudulent registration

- 3 Though carriage of a Certificate of Registry or other document of nationality is not a mandatory requirement under the Paris MoU relevant instruments, such evidence of registration forms the basis of the issuance or endorsement of statutory certificates and of other document and plan approvals by, or on behalf of the flag under which the ship is registered.
- 4 Several reports of suspected fraudulent ship registrations have been received. In some cases, unauthorized parties have issued Certificates of Registry without the proper approval from the flag State they claim to represent. In others, the certificates were obtained through questionable means, sometimes even appearing to follow legal procedures carried out by the flag State or groups acting in its name.

- 5 IMO GISIS (public part) contains a module with [Ship and Company Particulars](#). This list includes ships reported under "False flag". Reported fraudulent registration **may** provide evidence that the ship carries false or falsified documentation. It is noted that in particular suddenly emerging flag States are listed in this section of the GISIS module.

Ships	
Ship IMO Number:	IMO <input type="text"/>
Ship name:	<input type="text"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Search former name
	<input type="checkbox"/> Exact name
Flag Administration:	[Show all] <input type="text"/>
Call sign:	<input type="text"/>
MMSI:	<input type="text"/>
Ship Status:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> False Flag <input type="checkbox"/> Ship under UN sanction <input type="checkbox"/> Owning/operating entity under UN Sanction
<input type="button" value="Search"/> Advanced search >	

- 6 GISIS also contains a [module](#) reporting on ROs being recognized and authorized to act on behalf of flag States. Non-inclusion of an RO for a certain flag State **may** indicate evidence that the RO is actually not a Recognized Organization for that flag State, though possible reporting and publication backlogs should be considered. In these cases the flag State should be consulted.

Verification of validity of certificates

- 7 [PSCircular81](#) establishes a set of features for the use of electronic certificates, based on [FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2](#). It should be noted that the FAL convention is not a relevant instrument and thus non-compliance with the guidelines by itself is not a deficiency. It could however indicate issues related to the veracity of such e-certificates.
- 8 In THETIS, under section “ship data” → “statutory certificates”, e-certificate verification is available for those flags and ROs submitting information on certification and surveys conducted directly through THETIS [1], and/or having provided a link to their verification websites [2].

Statutory Certificates

	Name	Issuing Authority	Issuing Date	Expiry Date	Surveying Authority	Last Survey Date	Last Survey Place	Unique Tracking Number
<input type="checkbox"/>	International Sewage Pollution Prevention							
<input type="checkbox"/>	International Oil Pollution Prevention (IOPP)							
<input type="checkbox"/>	International Air Pollution Prevention							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Load Line							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tonnage							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Safety Management Certificate							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Maritime Labour Certificate							
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cargo Ship Safety							
<input type="checkbox"/>	International Air Pollution Prevention							

E-Certificate Verification Websites

Search: Search Reset

Flag Administrations

Recognised Organizations

[Alpha Ship Classification](#)

[American Bureau of Shipping](#)

[Biro Klasifikasi Indonesia](#)

[Bureau Veritas](#)

[CR Classification Society](#)

[China Classification Society](#)

[DNV AS](#)

[DNV GL AS](#)

[DUTCH LLOYD](#)

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E-Certificate Verification

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- 9 GISIS also contains a module on “[Survey and Certification](#)”, providing specimens of certificates and references to verification websites of Flag Administrations and Recognized Organizations for e-certificates.
- 10 It should be noted that fraudulent entities may deploy verification websites that do not fulfill the instructions for verifying the information contained in the electronic certificate in accordance with paragraph 3.6 of the FAL circular, by e.g. only depicting the document to be verified as a photocopy. Lack of familiarity by the crew and failure to have instructions on board for verification of the information contained in the electronic certificate may also indicate the use of fraudulent certificates. It has also been noted that QR codes may redirect to falsified copycat verification websites, with the intent to deceive users. These websites may apply a single difference of letters in the URL internet link as the original website.
- 11 Through [International Group of P&I Clubs \(IGP&I\)](#), the validity of the insurance may be checked for those vessels that maintain insurance under the financial liability conventions with one of the associated P&I Clubs of this group. Further information is made available through the websites of the individual associated P&I Clubs.

Additional issues

- 12 In general falsified (electronic) documents contain misspellings, incorrect or very recent issue dates, inconsistencies in font and spacing and data integrity issues, such as inconsistent numbering.

- 13 Conflicting identification details of the same ship across maritime databases and rapid consecutive changes of registrations, may be noted before commencement of the inspection and could indicate fraudulent practices. In addition, Paris MoU members confronted with ships using fraudulent registration and certification have reported the following practices:
 - .1 apparent double registrations;
 - .2 antedated (de)registrations;
 - .3 AIS spoofing and manipulation.
- 14 Another "red flag", possibly signaling potential issues, may be on organizations involved or linked to abandonment of seafarers. Current reported cases are accessible through the [ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers](#). An overview of historical cases, including the Financial Security Providers, can be found on the Paris MoU website, [relevant notices](#). A P&I Club's solvency may be checked through the national prudential authority of the country where the insurer/guarantor is based.
- 15 This section also contains an [overview of communications received](#) regarding fraudulent registration and certification.
- 16 Verification of the validity of certificates and documents may require consulting the flag State and responses may only be received after completion of the inspection. Some flag States, in particular those allegedly involved in fraudulent practices, are notoriously slow in responding or do not respond at all. Member authorities are urged to take appropriate follow-up action in case of suspicion of fraudulent practices and consider to enter an overriding or unexpected factor message in THETIS. For more general, non-urgent information an internal message could be added to the ship's file.
- 17 Member authorities are invited to inform the Secretariat of noted fraudulent practices including follow-up actions taken.
