



PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY
MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-161

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To: Owners/Operators of Panamanian Ships, Recognized Organizations and Masters

Subject: Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) and Simplified Voyage Data Recorder (S-VDR) annual test, and its Performance Standards

Reference:

- a) **Decree Law No. 7, SOLAS regulation V/20,**
 - b) **SOLAS regulation V/18.8,**
 - c) **IMO Resolutions MSC.333(90), MSC.214(81), A.861(20), MSC.163(78) and MSC.1/Circ.1222**
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1. Purpose

- 1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to communicate all parties concerned with Panamanian flag ships, of the approved guidelines adopted with the purpose of having a standard method for the annual testing of the VDR and S-VDR and the Performance Standards for Shipborne Voyage Data Recorders (VDRs)

2. Annual Testing

- 1. The requirements for VDR and S-VDR systems to be subject of an annual testing has been approved by the revision of SOLAS Regulation V/20 and established by Regulation V/18.8 as amended.
- 2. The purpose of an annual performance test is to determine that a VDR/S-VDR is operational as defined in the manufacturer's specification.
- 3. The annual test for the VDR and S-VDR will be carried out by the manufacturer or a person authorized by the manufacturer.
- 4. The annual testing of the VDR and S-VDR should include:
- 5. Confirmation that no alarms are present prior to the initiation of the test;
- 6. Confirmation that when the external power is removed, the power supply alarm is activated, the equipment continues to operate for at least 1 hours and 55 minutes

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and automatically stops recording no later than 2 hours 5 minutes after the external power is removed;

7. Confirmation that the acoustic beacon is functional using the appropriate manufacturer's test equipment or by the substitution of a certified fully operational unit;
8. Confirmation that the overall condition of the equipment is satisfactory and that any battery within the equipment (acoustic beacon and power supply) is not expired;
9. Confirmation that accurate maintenance records of the VDR are available;
10. Confirmation that the items to be recorded, specifically those data items available and required to be recorded at the time of original commissioning as defined in resolution A.861(20) and resolution MSC.163(78) for VDR and S-VDR respectively, are satisfactorily stored for the duration of the 12-hour recording period;
11. Confirmation that the capsule float-free arrangements, where required or fitted, are satisfactory as originally accepted at commissioning; and that any battery, release mechanism or other items are within their expiry date; and,
12. Confirmation that the equipment is restored to normal operation mode following completion of the tests.

13. The annual test may be carried out:

- a. Up to 3 months before the due date of the passenger ship and 3 months before or after the due date of a cargo ship. (The maximum period between subsequent checks is, therefore, 15 months for passenger ships and 18 months for cargo ships, unless either certificate has been extended as permitted by SOLAS regulation I/14, in which case a similar extension may be granted.). The manufacturer must complete a review, record any changes and issue the completed test report within 45 days. To accommodate performance checks to align with the appropriate survey under the Harmonized System of Survey and Certification (HSSC).

14. The annual test will be registered on the form from the Model Report about the test that figures on the Appendix of this Circular. A copy of the report from the test will remain on board of the vessel. Also these forms will be available for all Port State Control Inspectors and Panamanian Flag Inspectors.

3. Performance Standards

Owners, Operators of Panamanian Ships, Recognized Organizations and Masters, are urged to ensure that:

1. shipborne Simplified voyage data recorders (S-VDRs) conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution MSC.163(78) as amended by resolution MSC.214(81).
2. Shipborne voyage data recorders VDRs installed before 1 July 2014, conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution A.861(20), as amended by resolution MSC.214(81).

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3. Shipborne voyage data recorders VDRs installed on or after 1 July 2014, conform to performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to resolution MSC.333(90).

April 2014 – renumbering of paragraphs, include new paragraph 3, regarding the performance standards.

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Inquiries concerning the subject of this Circular or any request should be directed to:

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