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MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY No. 18-21

To: Owners/Operators, Masters, Nautical Inspectors, Recognized Organizations

Subject: ORIGINAL RECORDS ON BOARD SHIPS - REMINDER

Date: 10 November 2021

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has been made aware that original records/documents are being removed from RMI-flagged vessels by port State control (PSC) or other coastal authorities in some ports. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) issued guidance on this under the title of Port State Control Related Matters. Key points from this guidance are highlighted below.

1.0 Document Retention

1.1 Original records/documents should only be removed from the ship under exceptional circumstances and when the Master and all parties concerned agree.

1.2 If original records/documents are removed, they should be replaced by certified copies; a receipt stating the reason for the removal should be left on board by the entity taking the originals.

1.3 When original records/documents are removed, the Master should ensure subsequent PSC authorities are made aware of this action.

1.4 The IMO recommends that where there are exceptional circumstances, the absence of original records/documents on board the ship should not be recorded as a deficiency against the ship.

2.0 Exceptional Circumstances

2.1 Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

.1 when a port or coastal State authority can articulate a legal basis and reasons why it is necessary; and

.2 where a ship’s agent collects original records/documents required for port formalities.

This MSA is evaluated annually by the Administrator and expires one year after its issuance or renewal unless otherwise noted, superseded, or revoked.
3.0 **Records/Documents**

3.1 Records/documents that attest to the compliance of a ship with international conventions and RMI law and regulation include those listed below. Their originals should be retained onboard the ship unless exceptional circumstances exist.

.1 **Ships records**: the ship’s log, the oil record book, and the cargo record book;

.2 **Seafarer’s documents and certificates**: the seafarer’s record book and the seafarer’s identity document (RMI Seafarer Identity and Record Book); and

.3 **Other certificates and documents**: as required to be carried on board ships (see IMO Circular [FAL.2/Circ.131](https://www.imo.org) as may be amended).