



Merchant Shipping Directorate



## MANDATORY IMO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR LOST CONTAINERS AT SEA

### *Merchant Shipping Notice 199*

*Notice to Ship-owners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters,  
Owners' Representatives and Recognized Organizations*

The Directorate wishes to draw the attention of all concerned to the mandatory amendments adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to SOLAS Chapter V, Regulations 31 and 32 and MARPOL Protocol I, Article V. These amendments introduce a standardized framework for reporting the loss or observation of freight containers adrift at sea. Their objective is to improve navigational safety, safeguard the marine environment, and enhance the traceability of lost containers.

As from 1 January 2026, Masters are required to report both the loss and observation of drifting containers without delay, including communication with vessels in the vicinity, coastal States, and the flag State.

In the event that a vessel is abandoned or unable to submit the required reports, the ISM company shall assume responsibility for these reporting obligations.

The format and content of 'Danger message(s)' for the loss of freight containers at sea shall comply with the requirements set forth in SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 32.3.1. Furthermore, the format and content of the 'Danger message(s)' for the observation of freight containers at sea shall be in line with the requirements of SOLAS Chapter V, Regulation 32.3.2.

Shipowners, ship operators, and masters are requested to reflect these reporting obligations into the onboard Safety Management System (SMS) and ensure that all relevant crew are familiar and well trained with these procedures and reporting requirements. Furthermore, a system must be established to log and verify container loss data to enable accurate reporting.

For Maltese registered ships, the relevant reporting shall be sent to the Directorate at the following email address: [tech.tm@transport.gov.mt](mailto:tech.tm@transport.gov.mt).

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10 September 2025

Malta Transport Centre  
Hal Lija LJA 2021, Malta

Tel: +356 2125 0360  
Email: [mershipmalta.tm@transport.gov.mt](mailto:mershipmalta.tm@transport.gov.mt)  
[www.transport.gov.mt/ship-registration](http://www.transport.gov.mt/ship-registration)



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