



FLAG STATE INSPECTION PROGRAMME

Merchant Shipping Notice 2 Rev.1

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

The Directorate would like to draw the attention of all concerned to the Administration's Flag State Inspection (FSI) Programme, established to ensure effective implementation of Malta's obligations as a Flag State.

The FSI Programme was established in accordance with the provisions of the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), Directive 2009/21/EC on compliance with Flag State requirements, the Merchant Shipping Act (Cap.234) and the Merchant Shipping (Flag State Requirements) Regulations.

These instruments require the Administration to effectively discharge its responsibilities as a Flag State by ensuring that Maltese-registered ships comply with the applicable international conventions relating to maritime safety, pollution prevention, maritime security, and the competency, certification, welfare and working conditions of seafarers. Flag State Inspections constitute an independent verification of compliance and are separate from statutory surveys and certification carried out on behalf of the Administration.

Selection of ships for inspection shall primarily be based on procedures and instructions established by the Administration in compliance with the III Code, taking into consideration both ship-specific and company-related risk factors.

The Administration shall conduct routine inspections on selected vessels within the Maltese fleet in order to maintain effective oversight. Particular consideration may be given to vessels of increased age, including ships exceeding ten (10) years of age, and to any other vessels considered appropriate by the Administration.

Where a Flag State Inspection identifies a significant number of deficiencies, or where the inspection results in detention or other serious findings, the Administration may require a follow-up Flag State Inspection within a specified period, normally three (3) or six (6) months. Such follow-up inspections shall be carried out at the expense of the owner.

The Directorate may require the entire fleet managed by companies with repeated detentions, serious deficiencies, or other significant safety concerns to be subject to inspections at six (6) - month intervals at the owner's expense.

Notwithstanding the date of the last Flag State Inspection, any vessel detained by Port State Control may be required to undergo an immediate additional Flag State Inspection at the owner's expense before, during, or following the vessel's release from detention, as determined by the Administration.



Shipowners, managers, masters, officers, owners' representatives and all persons concerned shall provide the attending Flag State Inspector with all necessary assistance to enable the inspection to be carried out efficiently and effectively.

Owners shall ensure that their local representatives and agents fully cooperate with the appointed inspectors and facilitate access to the vessel, relevant documentation, personnel, and shipboard spaces necessary for the completion of the inspection.

The Administration expects the full cooperation of all parties in supporting the effective implementation of the FSI Programme highlighting the commitment to ensuring safety of life at sea, the protection of the marine environment, and compliance with applicable international instruments.

Version	Date	Description of Change
1	31/08/2026	Comprehensive Revision

Merchant Shipping Directorate

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