MANDATORY IMO REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR LOST CONTAINERS AT SEA

Merchant Shipping Notice 199 Rev.1

Notice to Shipowners, 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 introduced 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.

Masters are required to communicate the particulars of such events, without delay and to the fullest extent possible, to vessels in the vicinity and the nearest coastal State, and to report the loss of containers to the flag State.

In the event that a vessel is abandoned or is 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. The templates set out in Annex 1 (loss of freight containers) and Annex 2 (observation of freight containers drifting at sea) to CCC.1/Circ.7/Rev.1, of 3rd July 2026, facilitate compliance with these requirements.

Masters and / or the ISM Companies are hereby requested to use the aforementioned templates when reporting the loss of freight containers, or the observation of adrift freight containers, to the nearest coastal State and, in addition, when reporting the loss of freight containers to the flag State.

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

Merchant Shipping Directorate

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