# PREPAREDNESS FOR PORT STATE CONTROL (PSC) AND FLAG STATE INSPECTIONS (FSI) AND REPORTING OBLIGATIONS FOR NON-CONVENTION VESSELS

***Non-Convention Vessel Notice SLS.1***

*Notice to Shipowners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters, Owners' Representatives, Appointed Government Surveyors, Recognised Organisations and Stakeholders.*

## 1. Purpose & Scope

This Non-Convention Vessel (NCV) Notice outlines the minimum expectations of the Merchant Shipping Directorate regarding the preparedness of Malta-registered vessels certified under the NCV Code for Port State Control (PSC) Inspections and Flag State Inspections (FSI).

While primary emphasis is placed on preparing vessels for PSC inspections, full cooperation and readiness are equally required during Flag State Inspections conducted by authorised Malta Flag State Inspectors. Crucially, this notice underscores the mandatory reporting obligations applicable to NCV vessels when encountering equipment failures, defects, or safety-critical impairments. Prompt reporting to the Administration, Recognised Organisations, Appointed Government Surveyors, and local Port Authorities is essential to ensure seaworthiness, maintain safety standards, and reduce the risk of detentions.

The objective is to ensure that crew maintain high standards of safety and compliance, remain continuously ready for inspections, and properly notify the Administration and relevant authorities of any defects, detentions, or Code 17 deficiencies.

## 2. Responsibilities of Owners, Managers, and Masters

The Owner, Manager, and Master shall, within their respective areas of responsibility, ensure that:

- The vessel remains compliant with all applicable Statutory, NCV Code, and classification requirements;
- Certificates, manuals, records, and supporting documentation are maintained onboard and available for inspection;
- Installed equipment is maintained in an operational condition;
- Deficiencies affecting compliance, seaworthiness, safety, security, or pollution prevention are addressed without undue delay; and
- The vessel and its crew are prepared for inspection (whether PSC or FSI) and be able to demonstrate compliance when requested.

The Master remains responsible for reporting conditions that may affect the safe operation of the vessel and for ensuring that deficiencies are adequately dealt with. Furthermore, Owners, Managers, and Masters are reminded that recurring deficiencies may be considered evidence of ineffective management oversight.

Malta Transport Centre
Ħal Lija LJA 2021, Malta

Tel: +356 2125 0360
Email: ncv.tm@transport.gov.mt
www.transport.gov.mt/ship-registration

## 3. Documentation Onboard

The following shall, where applicable, be maintained onboard, in hard copy or digital format (where applicable), kept valid, and readily available for inspection:

- Statutory certificates and endorsements (including the NCV Certificate, Freeboard Assignment Report/Certificate, and radio licenses);
- Approved plans, manuals, stability booklet, and damage stability documentation;
- Safety management documentation and ISM/ISPS records (where applicable);
- Operational records, logbooks, and drill logs (including MARPOL and SOPEP logs);
- Maintenance, servicing, and testing records (for LSA, firefighting gear, and lifts);
- Crew certification, medical fitness certificates, and minimum safe manning attestations;
- Records required under applicable international conventions, national legislation, and the NCV Code; and
- Any Administration-issued exemptions, equivalences, dispensations, or acceptance supporting non-standard arrangements and/or deviations.

## 4. Self-Assessment and Self-Check Arrangements

Owners and Managers are strongly encouraged to implement documented self-check arrangements for the periodic verification of compliance. It is recommended that verification is carried out at least **every two weeks**.

**Core Areas Covered by Self-Assessment Tools:**

- **Statutory Certificates & Documentation:** Valid crew lists, minimum safe manning documents, oil record books, garbage management plans, and certification validity.
- **Life-Saving & Fire Safety:** Rescue boats, liferafts, hydrostatic release units, emergency lighting, fire detection systems, firefighting gear/systems, and safety/emergency equipment.
- **Bridge & Navigation:** Updated nautical charts and publications, navigational equipment, GMDSS radio installations, steering gear tests, and operational readiness of navigation aids.
- **Engine Room & Pollution Prevention:** MARPOL compliance (Annex I, IV, V, VI), engine room cleanliness, oily water separators, emergency power/pumps, pollution prevention measures, and intact seals on overboard discharge valves, if any.
- **Crew Welfare & MLC:** Rest hours, accommodation standards, sanitary facilities, employment agreements, seafarer certifications, and basic safety training records.
- **Maintenance & Corrective Actions:** Maintenance records and the implementation of corrective actions arising from previous inspections, audits, or surveys.
- **Crew Familiarity:** Crew familiarity and ability to competently demonstrate the operation of key safety, pollution prevention, and navigation equipment (e.g., fire pumps, oily water separators, ECDIS, steering gear override).

## 5. Mandatory Reporting Obligations, Defects, and Port Notifications

The Administration shall be notified without undue delay whenever a defect, failure, damage, casualty, or occurrence may:

- Affect the seaworthiness of the vessel;
- Affect compliance with statutory requirements;
- Impair the effectiveness of life-saving appliances, fire-fighting systems, navigation equipment, machinery, or other safety-critical systems; or
- Present a risk to life, the environment, or property.

Corrective actions undertaken by the Owner or Manager shall not prejudice the obligation to report such matters to the Administration.

**Step-by-Step Reporting Procedure:**

1. **Internal Company Reporting:** The Master and crew shall report all defective and/or inoperable equipment, systems, and installations to the owner/company and ensure the initiation of appropriate corrective actions.
2. **Recognised Organisation / Appointed Government Surveyor Notification:** The Recognised Organisation and/or the Appointed Government Surveyor shall be informed immediately, and, if deemed necessary or if required by the Administration, arrangements for the earliest possible attendance by the Surveyor shall be made.
3. **Flag State Administration Notification:** The Merchant Shipping Directorate as the Flag State Administration is to be duly notified by e-mail on: **ncv.tm@transport.gov.mt** The latest revision of MS Notice 99 provides after-office hours contacts. Advance reporting of pre-existing deficiencies and initiating corrective actions can effectively help prevent avoidable Port State Control or Flag State Control detentions.
4. **Port Authority / PSC Contact:** It is of paramount importance that the correct Port State Control section of the Port Authority is also notified in such cases. Masters are encouraged to maintain an updated worldwide list of such contacts, obtainable from IMO's Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) via the Contact Points Module: https://gisis.imo.org/Public/ It is recommended that these contact points be confirmed also via the vessel's local agents for the relevant port(s).

## 6. Common Recurring Deficiencies and Detainable Items

Without prejudice to specific findings, recurring deficiencies identified during NCV, Flag State, and PSC inspections commonly relate to:

- Expired or incomplete statutory certification;
- Inadequate record keeping or missing logbook entries;
- Ineffective implementation of safety management and operational procedures;
- Overdue maintenance, testing, or servicing of safety equipment;
- Deficiencies in life-saving appliances or firefighting gear (e.g., inoperable emergency fire pumps, expired extinguishers, blocked escape routes);
- Crew certification, manning, and medical fitness discrepancies;

- Deficiencies previously identified during audits or surveys but not effectively dealt with;
- Lack of crew familiarity and inability to competently demonstrate the operation of key safety, pollution prevention, and navigation equipment (e.g., fire pumps, oily water separators, ECDIS, steering gear override).

## 7. Actions by the Administration and Detentions

- **Flag State Inspections (FSI):** From time to time, the Administration may carry out Flag State Inspections onboard vessels in any port as part of its monitoring framework. Ship masters, owners, and managers shall give full cooperation and assistance to any attending Flag State Inspector.
- Where an inspection, survey, or compliance verification identifies deficiencies, the Administration may require corrective actions within a specified timeframe.
- The Administration may impose additional measures where the nature or extent of the deficiencies indicate that the vessel is not being maintained in accordance with applicable requirements, including:
    - Follow-up inspections;
    - Additional surveys or verifications;
    - Operational restrictions;
    - Suspension of certificates or endorsements; or
    - Any other action considered necessary to safeguard life, property, or the marine environment.
- **Detentions and Code 17 Deficiencies:** The Administration shall be immediately advised whenever a vessel is detained, or a PSC inspection report includes Code 17 deficiencies which have to be rectified before departure.
- **Corrective Action Report (CAR):** Where deficiencies are identified during a PSC or Flag State inspection, the Company shall submit a Corrective Action Report (CAR) within **30 days**. The CAR should include:
    - Immediate corrective action;
    - Root cause analysis; and
    - Preventive measures.

Reports submitted to the Administration shall, where practicable, be accompanied by before-and-after-state photographs and documentary evidence demonstrating rectification. The Administration reserves the right to request a CAR even when a vessel is not detained and deficiencies are identified that do not warrant rectification prior to departure.

Merchant Shipping Directorate 19 November 2026