



# ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

### CIRCULAR N° GEN 029

#### SEA TRIALS

**TO:** **SHIP OWNERS/SHIP OPERATORS/MANAGERS,  
MASTERS, RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS, FLAG  
STATE INSPECTORS**

**APPLICABLE TO:** All ships

**EFFECTIVE AS FROM:** 08 March 2024

Date: 08 March 2024

#### **I. Introduction**

These guidelines are dedicated to the sea trials that vessels must undergo during the initial survey process to comply with mandatory class and statutory requirements. They also cover sea trials for vessels following repairs or the installation of new equipment. For newly constructed vessels, specific requirements for sea trials should be included in the contractual agreement between the shipbuilder and the buyer.

In addition to the guidelines provided in this circular, the vessel must also comply with the sea trial requirements of local authorities.

Sea trials are crucial for verifying the functionality of vital safety systems aboard vessels, including those for navigation, steering, alarms, and fire safety. A tailored checklist, specific to the vessel's type and purpose, is essential for conducting sea trials effectively.

Testing all essential safety systems on board before the commencement of the sea trials is required.

Detailed records of the sea trials, including the date, personnel involved in the inspection, observations, and conclusions drawn during the commissioning phase, must be documented and retained.

#### **II. Requirements**

##### **1. Confirmation from Classification Society**

Confirmation from the Classification Society that the vessel is fit for the intended sea trials must be submitted prior to undertaking the sea trials. Upon receipt of the confirmation, this Administration may grant authorization for sea trials and issue the relevant Certificate of Registry and Minimum Safe Manning (MSM) Document exclusively for the intended sea trials.

## **2. Sea Trial Area**

The designated sea trial area should be restricted to a specific zone or sector. The Master is responsible for considering sea and weather conditions in accordance with any ship stability data or other navigational restrictions. The vessel must comply with the local authorities' requirements, including additional certificates/documents, which may be required for the intended sea trials.

## **III. Manning**

During sea trials, the number of persons on board should be limited to those directly involved in tasks related to the trials. All other personnel should disembark before the sea trials commence. Minimum manning levels should align with the MSM Document, and the owner must apply for this document based on a completed risk assessment and the local authorities' manning requirements.

All crew members stipulated by the MSM Document should possess valid STCW certificates, including Flag Endorsement of Recognition or Confirmation of Receipt, along with valid Medical Certificates. The Master is responsible for watch keeping arrangements and compliance with the rest hours.

## **IV. Stability**

Approval of preliminary intact and damage stability booklets, as well as inclining tests, is required to ensure the necessary stability conditions for sea trials. The Master is responsible for ensuring compliance with the required stability/loading conditions before departure. Additionally, it is essential that any loose, heavy equipment is secured to prevent shifting. Relevant safety information must be communicated to all persons on board prior to departure.

## **V. Life-Saving Appliances, Fire Fighting Appliances, Navigation, and Radio Equipment**

Life-saving appliances, including life jackets, liferafts, and lifeboats where applicable, must be provided for all persons on board. Additional life-saving appliances should be made accessible if not installed and tested. Internal and external emergency lighting, fire detection and extinguishing equipment, charts, approved ECDIS (if any), and sufficient navigation equipment must be in place and tested.

Radio equipment, including emergency radio equipment adequate for the operational area, should be inspected and tested.

## **VI. Other Considerations**

Public address and intercom systems, emergency ladders, pilot ladders, escape routes, corridors, exits, emergency exits, first aid equipment, personal protective equipment, and other integral components must be inspected and tested before the commencement of the sea trials.

1. International Convention on Civil Liability for Bunker Oil Pollution Damage, 2001 (BUNKER Convention); ships over 1,000 gross tonnage should carry a Certificate of Insurance (Bunker CLC (BCLC) Certificate).
2. The Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks, 2007; ships of 300 gross tonnage and over should carry a wreck removal certificate.

Shipowners, Ship Operators/Managers, and Masters intending to undertake sea trials are strongly advised to observe the above guidelines.