



ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION

CIRCULAR N° YAT 007- Rev.1

YACHTS OPERATING IN POLAR REGIONS

TO: **YACHTS' OWNERS AND MASTERS, SURVEYORS TO FLAG STATE, ADMINISTRATION AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS**

APPLICABLE TO: All yachts

EFFECTIVE AS FROM 26 February 2025

1. General

All yachts operating either in the Arctic or Antarctica waters, as defined in Polar Code [IMO Resolution A.1024(26)] shall notify this Administration and to comply with the below requirements.

PLEASURE YACHTS AND PLEASURE YACHTS WITH LIMITED CHARTER ALLOWANCE

2. Purpose

This section provides guidance for pleasure yacht owners and operators regarding compliance with MSC.1/Circ.1642 for safe operations in polar waters. Additionally, it defines the role of **Recognized Organizations (ROs)** in assessing compliance and issuing a Statement of Compliance (SoC) on behalf of this Administration.

3. Applicability

This circular applies to:

- Pleasure yachts, ranging from 10 meters in length* up to 500 GT, operating in Arctic or Antarctic waters as defined by the Polar Code, and
- Pleasure Yachts with Limited Charter Allowance ranging from 18 meters in length* up to 500 GT, operating in Arctic or Antarctic waters as defined by the Polar Code.

**Length is defined in the SVG Safety code of practice for Pleasure Yachts, Section 2*

4. Compliance Requirements

4.1. Polar Water Operational Manual (PWOM)

Yachts must carry a Polar Water Operational Manual (PWOM) as recommended by MSC.1/Circ.1642.

- The PWOM must be reviewed by an RO authorized by this Administration to ensure it includes:
 - Voyage-specific risk assessments (**ice, weather, emergency preparedness**).
 - Operational limitations and equipment suitability.
 - Search and Rescue (SAR) coordination plans.
 - Cold-weather emergency procedures.
- The PWOM must be kept onboard and made available for inspections.

4.2 Pre-Voyage Reporting to this Administration

- Yacht owners/operators must notify this Administration at least 15 days before departure to polar waters.
- The notification should include:
 - The approved PWOM.
 - A statement of compliance issued by RO.
 - Details of the yacht's intended route, ice navigation capabilities, and emergency procedures.

4.3 Safety & Environmental Protection Requirements

- Structural & Equipment Readiness:
 - Hull must be suitable for intended ice conditions (ice-strengthened if required).
 - Adequate lifesaving and survival equipment for cold environments.
- Crew Training:
 - Basic Polar Waters Training (STCW A-V/4-1): Required for deck officers operating in polar waters.
 - Advanced Polar Waters Training (STCW A-V/4-2): Required for Masters and Chief Officers in ice-covered waters.
- Environmental Compliance:
 - Strict adherence to MARPOL Annex I (oil), Annex IV (sewage), and Annex V (garbage).
 - Prohibited discharge of untreated sewage, garbage, and pollutants in polar waters.

5. Role of Recognized Organizations (ROs)

To assist this Administration in enforcing compliance with MSC.1/Circ.1642, Recognized Organizations (ROs) are authorized to:

5.1 Verification & Inspections

ROs shall conduct documentary reviews and physical inspections of yachts intending to operate in polar regions, covering:

- Polar Water Operational Manual (PWOM) Review:
 - Verify completeness and compliance with MSC.1/Circ.1642.
 - Ensure it contains voyage risk assessments, SAR procedures, and operational limits.
- Onboard Inspection
 - Check compliance with structural, operational, and environmental requirements.
 - Confirm the yacht has suitable cold-weather survival equipment.
 - Verify that lifeboats and life rafts are Polar Code-compliant.
- Crew Readiness & Training Verification
 - Review crew qualifications and polar-specific training records.

5.2 Issuance of Statement of Compliance (SoC)

Upon successful verification, an RO may issue a Statement of Compliance (SoC) on behalf of this Administration.

- The SoC confirms that the yacht meets the recommendations of MSC.1/Circ.1642 for operating in polar waters.
- The SoC is valid for a specific voyage or for a maximum period of 12 months
- The SoC must be kept onboard for Port State and Flag State verification.

5.3 Reporting to the Flag Administration

The RO must submit a copy of the SoC and relevant inspection reports to this Administration. Any non-conformities found during inspections should be reported immediately, and corrective actions must be implemented subject to Flag's agreement.

6. Flag Administration Oversight & Enforcement

The Flag Administration reserves the right to conduct audits of both yacht operators and ROs to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Failure to comply with MSC.1/Circ.1642 and this instruction may result in:

- Denial of permission to operate in polar waters.
- Additional inspections at the owner's expense.
- Suspension or withdrawal of the yacht's registration for safety violations.

This Administration requires compliance MSC.1/Circ.1642 to promote safe and environmentally responsible yacht operations in polar waters.

For any inquiries, document submissions, or compliance verification, please contact: technical@svg-marad.com or qualtech@svg-marad.com

7. COMMERCIAL YACHTS OF LESS THAN 500 GT

For yachts of less than 500 gt; extent of applicability of Polar Code should be evaluated by the RO. Based on such an evaluation this Administration will decide on the requirements.

Yachts that are certified according to the MARPOL Convention need to comply with the relevant requirements of the Polar Code Part II-A.

8. COMMERCIAL YACHTS OF MORE THAN 500 GT

Yachts of 500 gt and above, which intend to operate in Polar Regions, should obtain the Polar Ship Certificate and should meet requirements of the all mandatory International Conventions for ships as well as those of the Classification Society of the vessel appropriate to the intended area of operation. Stability conditions shall include those for icing. Exemptions, supported by RO, may be considered by the Administration. Polar Code Certificate should be issued by RO to this Administration.

All commercial yachts, operating in polar waters, for which the Minimum Safe Manning Document is required by Pleasure and Commercial Yachts Codes: Masters, Chief Mates and Officers in Charge of Navigational Watches should hold basic training certificates in accordance with A-V/4, paragraph 1. In addition, Masters and Chief Mates should also hold advanced training certificates in accordance with A-V/4, paragraph 2.

Annex to this Circular:

IMO MSC.1/Circ.1642