



Maritime Circular No.31

To:

Ship – Owners / Managers / Operators, Registration Officers (RegOffs), Recognised Organisations (ROs), Flag Safety Inspectors (FSIs), SLMARAD Departments (All)

Subject:

Flag Safety Inspections

Date:

18th March 2026

References:

IMO Resolution A.1070(28) IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code)

SLMARAD Maritime Circular No.9

SLMARAD Maritime Circular No.11

Purpose

To outline the procedure, scope and requirements for Flag Safety Inspections of Sierra Leonean vessels.

Application

1. The aim of Flag Safety Inspections (FSIs) is to enhance the safety standards of Sierra Leonean vessels and decrease the number of deficiencies that may result in the detention of the ship from Port State Control Authorities.
2. The Flag Safety Inspections (FSIs) apply to all vessels registered with the Sierra Leone Flag.
3. There are four types of Flag Safety Inspections as follows:
 - a. **Pre-registration FSI:** To be conducted prior to the provisional registration of a vessel under Sierra Leone Flag. This type of inspection is applicable when deemed necessary by the Administration.
 - b. **Initial FSI:** To be conducted within 3 months from the date of provisional registration.
 - c. **Annual FSI:** To be conducted within the 12-month period from the due date of Annual Taxes / Renewal of Registry.
 - d. **Special FSI:** To be carried out in special cases such as when the vessel has been detained by Port State Control or any other case as deemed necessary (ref. Maritime Circular No.9 & 11).
 - e. **Periodic FSI:** To be conducted at regular intervals, as deemed necessary by the Administration.

- f. **Follow-up FSI:** To be conducted after the completion of a pre-registration, initial, annual, special, or periodic FSI, if deemed necessary by the Administration. During a follow-up FSI, the Flag Safety Inspector may conduct a full inspection in accordance with the Administration's requirements and is not limited to verifying only the items identified during the previous FSI.
4. Pre-registration and Special Inspection fees and travelling/accommodation expenses (if applicable) shall be covered by the shipowners. Special Inspections required after a ship's detention are subject to additional surcharges, as per Maritime Circular No.11.
5. The authorized Flag State Inspectors can monitor Sierra Leonean vessel arrivals at ports within their operational area and request authorization from the Administration to initiate a Flag State Inspection as set by Paragraph 3 above. Upon confirming that the vessel is eligible for FSI, the Technical Manager will authorize the attendance of the inspector on-board.
6. Any deficiencies imposed by the Flag State Inspector shall be clearly outlined in the report and submitted to the Master of the inspected vessel. Both the Master and the Flag State Inspector must sign the inspection report acknowledging the results.
7. In the case where the Flag State Inspector detects any serious / detainable deficiencies on board the vessel, then:
 - a. The deficiencies shall be rectified prior departure of the vessel. In case the rectifications are done in the presence of the inspector, then this shall be marked accordingly in the FSI report and Rectification Report. In case the rectifications are not done in the presence of the inspector, then supporting evidences of rectifications shall be submitted to the Administration for verification and to allow the vessel to sail.
 - b. In case it is not possible to rectify any serious /detainable deficiencies prior departure, then the Administration shall be immediately informed to assess the situation and provide further instructions.
8. In the event that a vessel proceeds to sea without rectifying any serious / detainable deficiency imposed during a FSI without the prior authorization of the Administration, relevant fines will be imposed (*ref.:* Maritime Circular No.11).
9. Deficiencies (excluding serious / detainable) shall be rectified within 10 days upon completion of the inspection, unless agreed otherwise with the administration. The Owner(s)/Manager(s) must submit the "*TE-DOC-08 – Remarks Rectification Report*" to the administration, duly filled and signed together with supporting evidences, upon rectification. The responsible Recognized Organization may be requested by the administration to carry out Occasional Attendance to verify rectifications of imposed deficiencies, if deemed necessary.
10. It is the responsibility of the shipowners and/or managers and/or operators to present their vessels timely for inspections required in Paragraph 3 above. Non-compliance of shipowners and/or managers and/or operators and/or masters with the above requirements or refusal to accept the attendance of the authorized Flag Safety Inspector onboard may result to the imposition of a penalty and/or any other measures as deemed necessary by the administration (*ref.:* Maritime Circular No.11).

11. All Flag State Inspection related correspondence shall be communicated via technical@slmarad.com.

For additional information please contact SLMARAD at info@slmarad.com

Revision Status

Date	Revision	Comments - Changes
12/01/2017	0	Initial – Adopted
19/11/2018	1	Amended paragraphs 3, 4, 8, 9, 10
18/03/2026	2	Amended paragraph 3 and 11