

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-408

- To:** Shipowners/Operators, Recognized Organizations, Classification Societies, Ship Designers, Shipyards, Manufacturers, Legal representatives of Panamanian-flagged ships and Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates
- Subject:** Application and interpretation of Chapter II-1/Reg. 3-13 – “Lifting appliances and anchor handling winches”, MSC.1/Circ.1662 – “Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches” and MSC.1/Circ.1663 – “Guidelines for Lifting appliances.”
- Reference:**
- a)** International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea and its Protocols, adopted through Laws No. 7 of 27 October 1977, No.12 of 9 November 1981 and No.31 of 11 July 2007;
 - b)** Resolution No. 107-OMI-310-DGMM of December 19, 2025 who adopts the MSC.532(107) – “Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974;
 - c)** MSC.1/Circ.1662 – “Guidelines for anchor handling winches”, dated 27 June 2023; **(as a recommendation)**
 - d)** MSC.1/Circ.1663 – “Guidelines for lifting appliances”, dated 28 June 2023. **(as a recommendation)**
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1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to clarify the provisions that are to the satisfaction of the Administration stipulated in Regulation 3-13 – “Lifting appliances and anchor handling winches.” As well as to ensure that lifting appliances and anchor handling winches fitted on Panamanian-flagged ships are designed, constructed, installed, operated, and maintained in accordance with the required standards.

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2. Background

- 2.1.** Casualty and incident reports indicate that mechanical failures of lifting appliances have caused several accidents, resulting in property loss and, most importantly, human life lost on board. For this reason, member states and industry worked together to develop mandatory requirements for lifting appliances to reduce the number of casualties caused by substandard lifting appliances.
- 2.2.** Finally, during the 107th Session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held from May 1 to June 9, 2023, the IMO adopted new mandatory requirements for lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, which were embedded into the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) by the Resolution MSC.532(107). Moreover, Amendment MSC.532(107) includes the addition of regulation 13-13 – “Lifting appliances and anchor handling winches in Chapter II-1, which will entered into force on January 01, 2026.

3. Scope

- 3.1.** This Merchant Marine Circular applies to lifting appliances, anchor handling winches, and loose gear equipped with the lifting appliances and the anchor handling winches fitted onboard Panamanian-flagged ships.
- 3.2.** This Merchant Marine Circular does not apply to:
- Lifting appliances fitted on ships certified as MODUs¹;
 - Integrated mechanical equipment for opening and closing hold hatch covers;
 - Life-saving launching appliances which comply with the LSA Code.
- 3.3.** Lifting appliances used on offshore construction ships that comply with Classification Society Standards of an IACS member Classification Society recognized by the Republic of Panama.

4. Definitions

- 4.1. Lifting appliances** means any load-handling ship's equipment used for:
- Cargo loading, transfer, or discharge;

¹ Ships certified as MODUs are those that comply with the MODU Code and possess a MODU Code Certificate on board issued by a recognized organization. This certificate may include approved electronic copies available on the vessel.



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- Raising and lowering hold hatch covers or moveable bulkheads;
- Engine-room cranes;
- Stores cranes;
- Hose handling cranes;
- Launch and recovery of tender boats and similar applications;
- Personnel handling cranes.

4.2. Anchor handling winch means any winch for the purpose of deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and mooring lines in subsea operations.

4.3. Loose gear means an article of a ship's equipment by means of which a load can be attached to a lifting appliance or an anchor handling winch, but which does not form an integral part of the appliance or load.

4.4. Safe working load (SWL) is the maximum static load at a specified radius which a lifting appliance or item of loose gear is certified to lift for a specified operating condition.

4.5. A thorough examination means a detailed assessment carried out by a *competent person* in order to determine whether or not the lifting appliance, loose gear, anchor handling winches or associated loose gear is in compliance with the requirements established in SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1662 and MSC.1/Circ.1663.

4.6. A load test of lifting appliances is a test in excess of the SWL, carried out *in the presence of a competent person* in order to check the structural integrity of the lifting appliance and its attachment to and the adequacy of its supporting structure.

4.7. A load test of anchor handling winches is a test in excess of the maximum line pull, carried out *in the presence of a competent person* in order to check the structural integrity of the anchor handling winches and their attachment to and adequacy of their supporting structure.

4.8. A competent person is a person possessing the knowledge and experience required for the performance of duties specified in MSC.1/Circ.1662, MSC.1/1663, which acts on behalf of the Classification Society recognized by the Republic of Panama.



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4.9. Certified means that the lifting appliance, loose gear, anchor handling winches, or associated loose gear has been verified and documented as compliant to the satisfaction of the recognized organization acting on behalf of this Administration.

4.10. Certificate of test and thorough examination means a certificate issued by a competent person upon satisfactory completion of the test and thorough examination of the lifting appliance and/or loose gear.

4.11. Maintenance means any activity carried out by a responsible person to keep the lifting appliance, loose gear, anchor handling winches, or associated loose gear in good working condition for continued safe use.

4.12. Responsible person means a person appointed by the master or company as defined in SOLAS regulation IX/1, as appropriate, possessing the knowledge and experience required for the performance of duties specified in the IMO Guidelines.

4.13. The expression “**installed on or after 1 January 2026**” means:

- For ships the keel of which is laid or which is at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2026;
- Any installation date on the ship;
- For ships other than those specified above, including those constructed before 1 January 2009, a contractual delivery date for lifting appliances or anchor handling winches, or in the absence of a contractual delivery date, the actual delivery date of the lifting appliances or anchor handling winches to the ship on or after 1 January 2026.

4.14. When it comes to lifting appliances, **repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character** are those which:

- Change the safe working load (SWL) of the lifting appliance; or
- Affect the strength, stability or service life of the lifting appliance; or
- Affect the primary load-bearing structure of the lifting appliance; or
- Modify the functionality of the lifting appliance or any part thereof which may affect its strength or safety or structural integrity.

4.15. When it comes to anchor handling winches, **repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character** are those which:

- Change the rated wire pull of the anchor handling winch;



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- Affect the strength, stability or service life of the anchor handling winch;
- Affect the primary load-bearing structure of the anchor handling winch; or
- Modify the functionality of the anchor handling winch or any part thereof, which may affect its strength, safety, or structural integrity.

5. Requirements for lifting appliances

5.1. Lifting appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall be:

- 5.1.1. Designed, constructed and installed in accordance with requirements acceptable to a classification society recognized by this Administration;
- 5.1.2. Load tested after installation and before being taken into use for the first time, and after repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character;
- 5.1.3. Retested at least once in every five years;
- 5.1.4. Thoroughly examined upon completion of any load test and annually. Furthermore, any thorough examination conducted outside the renewal or annual survey window (i.e., additional survey due to repairs and modifications) shall be verified during the upcoming renewal survey under SOLAS regulation I/7 or the annual survey under SOLAS regulation I/10, as applicable;
- 5.1.5. If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the lifting appliance unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1663, that lifting appliance must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The lifting appliance shall be distinctly labeled as "not for use," and its condition must be documented in a register of lifting appliances. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational lifting appliances specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;
- 5.1.6. Permanently marked and provided with documentary evidence for the safe working load (SWL). For further guidance, please refer to section 3.4 of MSC.1/Circ.1663;



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- 5.1.7.** Certified as set out in Appendix 1 of MSC.1/Circ.1663 before being put into use for the first time as compliant with regulations II-1/3-13.2.1 and II-1/3-13.2.3.
- 5.1.8.** Recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection, and maintenance according to sections 3.2.3 and 3.5.3. These recordings shall be kept in the *Register of lifting appliances of Ship's Lifting Appliances and Cargo Handling Gear* as set out in Appendix 3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663, with the *Certificate of test and thorough examination* attached to it.
- 5.1.9.** Subject to maintenance, inspection, and operational testing in accordance with section 3.5 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663;
- 5.1.10.** Operated by qualified personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) who are quite familiar with well-planned lifting operations. For further guidance, please refer to section 3.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1663.

5.2. Lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026 shall:

- 5.2.1.** Be load tested and thoroughly examined no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026 or after repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character. Furthermore, any thorough examination conducted outside the renewal or annual survey window (i.e., additional survey due to repairs and modifications) shall be verified during the upcoming renewal survey under SOLAS regulation I/7 or the annual survey under SOLAS regulation I/10, as applicable;

If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the lifting appliance unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1663, that lifting appliance must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The lifting appliance shall be distinctly labeled as "not for use," and its condition must be documented in a register of lifting appliances. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational lifting appliances specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;



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- 5.2.2.** Retested at least once in every five years;
- 5.2.3.** Be permanently marked and provided with documentary evidence for the safe working load (SWL) no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026;
- 5.2.4.** Be certified as set out in Appendix 1 of MSC.1/Circ.1663 and as compliant with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4 no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026;
- 5.2.5.** Existing lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026 without valid certificates of the test and thorough examination under another international instrument, namely, ILO Convention concerning Occupational Safety and Health in Dock Work (No. 152), shall demonstrate compliance through a "Factual Statement" as set out in Appendix 4 (commonly referred to as a "statement of fact")², issued by the competent person;
- 5.2.6.** The factual statement shall confirm that the lifting appliance has undergone a load test, with the test load value determined according to table 1 of section 3.2.1.5 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663. It shall also confirm that the appliance has been thoroughly examined by a competent person meeting the requirements of SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4 only. The criteria used for the load test and thorough examination must be explicitly stated in the factual statement. Additionally, the statement must clarify that it does not confirm compliance with SOLAS regulations II-1/3-13.2.1 and II-1/3-13.2.3.
- 5.2.7.** Where, as described in section 3.2.1.6 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663³, the safe working load (SWL) has been nominated by the Company (see definition SOLAS regulation IX/1). The factual statement shall specify that the competent person has confirmed that the load test was calculated based on the SWL nominated by the Company, as established in SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1662 and 1663. Additionally, the factual statement shall clarify that the SWL itself is not confirmed by the competent person.

² A sample form of the "factual statement of the test and thorough examination of non-certified existing lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026" can be found in the Annex 4 of this MMC.

³ Where the safe working load of the lifting appliances is undocumented and design information is not available, e.g., for lifting appliances which are installed on board before 1 January 2026 and the manufacturer no longer exists.



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- 5.2.8.** Existing lifting appliances that possess valid test and thorough examination certificates issued under a different international instrument, such as the ILO Convention concerning Occupational Safety and Health in Dock Work (No. 152), prior to the entry into force of SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13, shall be deemed compliant with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4.
- 5.2.9.** All certification process explained in [paragraph 5.2.4](#) of this MMC is depicted in the following diagram 1 as shown below:

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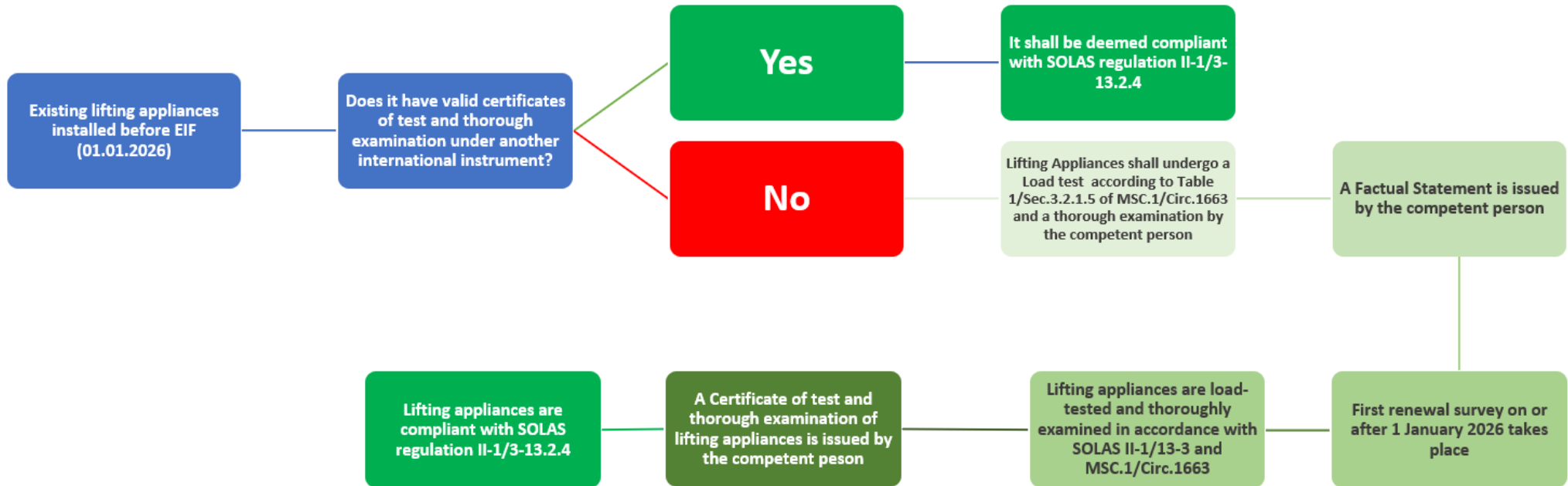


Diagram 1: Existing lifting appliances installed before EIF 01.01.2026 certification and compliance process.

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- 5.2.10.** Recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection, and maintenance according to sections 3.2.3 and 3.5.3. These recordings shall be kept in the *Register of lifting appliances of Ship's Lifting Appliances and Cargo Handling Gear* as set out in Appendix 3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663, with the Certificate of test and thorough examination attached to it.

In addition, the "*Factual Statement of the test and thorough examination of non-certified existing lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026*" shall be attached to the form "*Register of lifting appliances and cargo handling gear*" set out in Appendix 3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663, as long as the factual statement clearly refers to documenting the compliance with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4 only.

- 5.2.11.** Subject to maintenance, inspection, and operational testing in accordance with section 3.5 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663;

- 5.2.12.** Operated by qualified personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) who are quite familiar with well-planned lifting operations. For further guidance, please refer to section 3.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1663.

6. Requirements for Loose gear in use with lifting appliances

6.1. Loose gear in use with lifting appliances, regardless of the date of installation, shall:

- 6.1.1.** Be designed and manufactured in accordance with requirements acceptable to a classification society recognized by this Administration;
- 6.1.2.** Have documentary evidence⁴ of a proof test and be retested after repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character as required in the SOLAS II-1/3-13 and the MSC.1/Circ.1662 and MSC.1/Circ.1663. Where an item of loose gear is tested, minimum test loads shall be based on Table 2 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663;
- 6.1.3.** Be thoroughly examined upon completion of any proof test and annually. Furthermore, any thorough examination conducted outside the renewal or

⁴ Evidence of proof testing of loose gear shall be maintained in a register of lifting appliances and kept on board.



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annual survey window (i.e., additional survey due to repairs and modifications) shall be verified during the upcoming renewal survey under SOLAS regulation I/7 or the annual survey under SOLAS regulation I/10, as applicable;

If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the item(s) of loose gear unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1663, that loose gear must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The loose gear shall be distinctly labeled as "not for use," and its condition must be documented in a register of lifting appliances. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational lifting appliances specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;

- 6.1.4. Be clearly and permanently marked with its unique identification (serial no.), the SWL and any additional marks required for safe use. For further guidance, please refer to section 4.4 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663;
- 6.1.5. Be certified as set out in [Appendix 2 of MSC.1/Circ.1663](#) before being put into service for the first time. Furthermore, certificates of test and thorough examination of certified loose gear shall be attached to the "*Register of ship's lifting appliances and cargo handling gear.*"
- 6.1.6. Be recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection, and maintenance according to section 4.7 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663. These Recordings shall be kept in the *Register of lifting appliances of Ship's Lifting Appliances and Cargo Handling Gear* as set out in [Appendix 3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1663](#), with the *Certificate of test and thorough examination of loose gear* attached to it.
- 6.1.7. Be maintained, operated, inspected and tested according to sections 4.5 and 4.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1663;

7. Requirements for anchor handling winches and associated equipment

7.1. Anchor handling winches and associated equipment installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall:



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- 7.1.1.** Be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the requirements of a classification society recognized by this Administration. Additionally, anchor handling winches shall comply with the guidelines specified under sections 3.1.2 to 3.1.8 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;
- 7.1.2.** Be subject to commissioning test according to the manufacturer's instructions and the requirements of a classification society recognized by this Administration. The commissioning test shall include the following:
- 7.1.2.1.** Function tests at light load;
 - 7.1.2.2.** Overload test;
 - 7.1.2.3.** Test of emergency release and residual holding force in the wire;
 - 7.1.2.4.** Verification of residual brake holding force after emergency release by test;
 - 7.1.2.5.** Function test of the whole winch system, including static bollard pull test and brake holding capacity test⁵;
- 7.1.3.** Be subject to a function test, overload test, and function test of the whole winch system, including a static bollard pull test and brake holding capacity test after repairs, modifications, or alterations of a major character are undergone. However, if the emergency release system is affected by these repairs, a test of the emergency release and residual holding force in the wire and verification of residual brake holding force after emergency release by test shall be carried out;
- 7.1.4.** Be operationally tested annually and five-yearly according to the manufacturer's recommendation and the requirements or recommendations of a classification society which is recognized by this Administration. Furthermore, all equipment shall undergo functional tests during the annual test, and the recognized organization authorized by this administration shall witness the five-yearly test;
- 7.1.5.** Be thoroughly examined during annual surveys required by Regulation 7 of Chapter I for Passenger ships and Regulation 10 of Chapter I for Cargo ships of the SOLAS Convention, before re-entering service after any structural

⁵ Anchor handling winches that are not designed for towing do not need to undergo the bollard pull test. Functional testing other than the static bollard pull test is still required.



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repairs or modifications of a major character and after load testing, which shall be held;

If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the anchor handling winch unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1662, the anchor handling winch must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The anchor handling winch shall be clearly labeled "not for use," and its condition shall be documented as specified in section 3.2.4 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational anchor handling winches specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;

- 7.1.6.** Be certified before being put into use for the first time by a classification society which is recognized by this Administration as compliant with SOLAS regulations II-1/3-13.2.2 and section 3.3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;
- 7.1.7.** Be recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection and maintenance according to sections 3.2.4 and 3.5.3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;
- 7.1.8.** Be provided with a permanently affixed name plate according to section 4 of MSC.1/Circ.1662;
- 7.1.9.** Be subject to maintenance, inspection, and operational testing in accordance with sections 3.5 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;
- 7.1.10.** Be operated by qualified personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) who are quite familiar with well-planned anchor handling winch operations. For further guidance, please refer to section 3.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1662.

7.2. Anchor handling winches and associated equipment installed before 1 January 2026 shall:

- 7.2.1.** Be operationally tested annually and five-yearly according to the manufacturer's recommendation and the requirements or recommendations of a classification society which is recognized by this Administration. Furthermore, all equipment shall undergo functional tests during the annual test, and the recognized organization authorized by this administration shall witness the five-yearly test;



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7.2.2. Be thoroughly examined during annual surveys required by Regulation 7 of Chapter I for Passenger ships and Regulation 10 of Chapter I for Cargo ships of the SOLAS Convention, before re-entering service after any structural repairs or modifications of a major character and after load testing, which shall be held;

If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the anchor handling winch unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1662, the anchor handling winch must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The anchor handling winch shall be clearly labeled "not for use," and its condition shall be documented as specified in section 3.2.4 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational anchor handling winches specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;

7.2.3. Be certified by a classification society which is recognized by the Administration as compliant with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.5 no later than the date of the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026;

7.2.4. Be recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection and maintenance according to sections 3.2.4 and 3.5.3 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;

7.2.5. Be provided with a permanently affixed name plate according to section 4 of MSC.1/Circ.1662;

7.2.6. Be subject to maintenance, inspection, and operational testing in accordance with sections 3.5 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;

7.2.7. Be operated by qualified personnel with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) who are quite familiar with well-planned anchor handling winch operations. For further guidance, please refer to section 3.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1662.



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8. Loose gear in use with anchor handling winches and associated equipment, regardless of the date of installation, shall:

8.1.1. Be designed and manufactured in accordance with requirements acceptable to a classification society recognized by this Administration;

8.1.2. Have documentary evidence of a proof test and be retested after repairs, modifications or alterations of a major character as established in the SOLAS II-1/3-13 and the MSC.1/Circ.1662 and MSC.1/Circ.1663;

8.1.3. Be thoroughly examined upon completion of any proof test and annually.

If, following a thorough examination, the responsible person deems the item(s) of loose gear unsafe for use or in contravention of the requirements of SOLAS II-1/3-13 and MSC.1/Circ.1662, that loose gear must be removed from service until all deficiencies are rectified to the satisfaction of a competent person. The loose gear shall be distinctly labeled as "not for use," and its condition must be documented in a register of lifting appliances. While out of service, the appropriate procedures for non-operational lifting appliances specified in [paragraph 9](#) of this MMC shall be followed;

8.1.4. Be clearly and permanently marked with its unique identification (serial no.), the SWL and any additional marks required for safe use. For further guidance, please refer to section 4.4 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662;

8.1.5. Be certified before being put into service for the first time.

8.1.6. Be recorded upon completion of any thorough examination, testing, inspection, and maintenance according to section 4.7 of the MSC.1/Circ.1662. These Recordings shall be documented in any convenient format, as long as each entry contains the required information, is legible, and is authenticated by a competent person. Consider using forms issued by the relevant classification society recognized by this Administration, or equivalent forms, for recording thorough examinations and tests.

8.1.7. Be maintained, operated, inspected and tested according to sections 4.5 and 4.6 of MSC.1/Circ.1663.



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9. Inoperative lifting appliances, handling winches and associated equipment and loose gear.

9.1. Unless regulation I/11(c) – “Maintenance of conditions after survey” states otherwise, all lifting appliances, anchor winches, and loose gear shall be properly maintained. However, if this equipment fails due to a malfunction, the ship is not automatically considered unsafe or as a reason for delaying the ship in ports, provided the captain has accounted for the malfunction when planning and conducting the voyage.

9.2. While out of service, Masters of Panamanian-flagged ships shall take action according to sections 5 of [MSC.1/Circ.1662](#) and [MSC.1/Circ.1663](#) in order to mitigate any risk that may be involved in inoperative lifting appliances, loose gear, handling winches and associated equipment. Therefore, a request shall be sent to the SEGUMAR Office (conditionals@segumar.com) or the nearest International SEGUMAR Office, which can be found [\[HERE\]](#), for the authorization of the issuance of the conditional Cargo Ship Safety Construction Certificate, if required. Kindly refer to the MMC-156 for further information.

April, 2026 – New.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forwarded to:

SEGUMAR-Panama
Recognized Organizations Oversight Department
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Panama Maritime Authority

Phone: (507) 501-5361/5362/5363/5350/5348/5351

E-mail: segumar.headoffice@segumar.com / ro-monitoring@segumar.com

Website: <https://panamashipregistry.com/circulars/>