
MARPOL Electronic Record Books

Notice to ship owners, managers, Masters, Approved Nautical Inspectors, Recognised Organisations and surveyors

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This Marine Notice (MN) outlines the requirements for the use of electronic record keeping systems for Record Books required by the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as amended (MARPOL).
- 1.2. This Marine Notice also describes the procedure for applying for approval of such systems by the Bahamas Maritime Authority (BMA).
- 1.3. This Marine Notice should be read in conjunction with International Maritime Organization (IMO) Resolutions [A.813\(19\)](#), [A.916\(22\)](#), MEPC.312(74), MEPC.316(74), MEPC.317(74) and IMO Circular [MSC/Circ.982](#).

2. Application

- 2.1. This MN applies to all Companies¹ wishing to use electronic record keeping systems on board Bahamian ships to replace paper MARPOL Record Books.
- 2.2. Please refer to [MN 009](#) for other records being held in electronic record keeping systems.

3. Introduction

- 3.1. MARPOL requires that specific actions, events and operations be recorded in a Record Book, in a prescribed format, on board the ship.
- 3.2. The BMA supports efforts to reduce administrative burdens and recognises the growing use of electronic record keeping systems on ships, including electronic MARPOL Record Books.

¹ For the purposes of this MN, the "Company" is the entity responsible for the management of the ship in accordance with the ISM Code. For ships to which the ISM Code is not applicable, the Company is the Managing Owner in accordance with Section 52 of the Merchant Shipping Act.

- 3.3. Accordingly, the use of electronic record keeping systems for MARPOL Record Books is permitted, subject to compliance with this MN and BMA approval.
- 3.4. There are several electronic record keeping systems available in the market that fully or partially cover these requirements. A number of such electronic record keeping systems have already been approved by the BMA for use on specific Bahamian ships
- 3.5. The following MARPOL Record Books may be maintained in an electronic record keeping system:
- i. MARPOL Annex I – Oil Record Book Part I.
 - ii. MARPOL Annex I – Oil Record Book Part II.
 - iii. MARPOL Annex II – Cargo Record Book for ships carrying noxious liquid substances in bulk.
 - iv. MARPOL Annex V – Garbage Record Book Part I.
 - v. MARPOL annex V – Garbage Record Book Part II.
 - vi. MARPOL Annex VI – Record Book for Fuel Oil and Ozone Depleting Substances².

4. General Requirements for Electronic Record Keeping Systems

- 4.1. This section outlines the requirements for electronic record keeping systems that are intended to replace paper MARPOL Record Books.
- 4.2. All electronic record keeping systems used to record official records are to be approved by the BMA.
- 4.3. Electronic MARPOL Record Books must capture the information required to be recorded in paper Record Books by MARPOL.
- 4.4. The minimum requirements for electronic record keeping systems are as follows:
- 4.4.1. *Electronic Record Keeping System Workstation:***
- i. The workstation should take in to account relevant ergonomic design criteria such as provided for in MSC/Circ.982.
- 4.4.2. *Updating of Software:***
- i. Arrangements for software replacement, update or upgrade should be effectively implemented under a documented system.
 - ii. The Company is responsible for ensuring that electronic record keeping systems are maintained to the latest standards required by the BMA or the relevant international Conventions.

² Note, these records may also be held in the engine room log book – see Information Notice 11.

4.4.3. Client/Server Installation:

- i. Where the system can support a client/server installation, the server should be capable of recording data from clients using multiple workstations simultaneously.

4.4.4. Minimum Data Reporting & Exporting Requirements:

- i. The system must be capable of reproducing records in hard copy (i.e. printed out).
- ii. The system must be capable of producing reports in PDF format.
- iii. Where data export is provided, the system should allow the data to be exported to another system in XML or other internationally standardised format.
- iv. Nothing within the system, or the contractual arrangements between the Company and equipment supplier, shall prohibit the provision of information to duly authorised officers of an Administration, inspectors, surveyors, auditors, investigators, etc. relating to the discharge of their duties.

4.4.5. Recording of Entries:

- i. All users must have a unique username and password for accessing the system, or other form of login that is unique for each user.
- ii. The identity of the user making entries into the system must be clearly identified.
- iii. Where automated recording of navigational and machinery events is featured, the electronic bridge or engine room logbook or data logger must be able to record relevant events, along with the necessary inputs, in real time.
- iv. All entries must have a stamp or input with date and time (UTC and local time on board).
- v. The system must not allow the deletion of any entries. Any subsequent amendments or corrections to an entry must be clearly identifiable (e.g. by crossing through the original entry with a line) and show the identity of the user making the amendment or correction.
- vi. The system must be capable of electronically registering the signature or endorsement of the Master and other responsible Officers on all relevant entries.

4.4.6. Back Up and Recovery of Entries:

- i. The power supply to the system should be fed from both the main and emergency source of power.
- ii. The system should be capable of making secure copies or backups of the entries to ensure that the information will not be lost if the system fails. The system must be able to recover data from the copies or backups.
- iii. The system should be able to export all entries to a standard removable storage device, such as a USB memory stick.
- iv. Official records shall be retained by the system for at least the minimum period specified in the relevant legislation or international Conventions – a guide to retention periods is provided in the Annex.
- v. Unofficial records shall be retained by the system for the period established by the Company.

5. Requirements for MARPOL Record Books

5.1. **MARPOL Annex I – Oil Record Book Parts I & II**

5.1.1. Oil Record Book Parts I & II may be kept in electronic format, provided that:

- i. Entries cannot be deleted;
- ii. Any changes to existing entries are clearly shown, along with the identity or electronic signature of the person that made the change;
- iii. The system is auditable;
- iv. The system is capable of printing records in the Oil Record Book format specified in the Appendix to MARPOL Annex I;
- v. The system is approved by an approved Bahamas Recognised Organisation or a MARPOL contracting Government;
- vi. The vessel has a Document of Approval from the BMA.

5.1.2. Printed Pages are to be maintained onboard for the period(s) required by MARPOL Annex I (see Annex to this MN).

5.2. **MARPOL Annex II – Cargo Record Book for Ships Carrying Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk**

5.2.1. The Cargo Record Book for Ships Carrying Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk may be kept in electronic format, provided that it meets the following requirements:

- i. The record follows the recording requirements of MARPOL Annex II;
- ii. Entries cannot be deleted;
- iii. Any changes to existing entries are clearly shown, along with the identity or electronic signature of the person that made the change;
- iv. The system is auditable;
- v. The system is capable of printing records in the Cargo Record Book format specified in the Appendix to MARPOL Annex II;
- vi. The system is approved by an approved Bahamas Recognised Organisation or a MARPOL contracting Government;
- vii. The vessel has a Document of Approval from the BMA.

5.3. **MARPOL Annex V – Garbage Record Book Parts I & II**

5.3.1. Garbage Record Books Part I & II may be kept in electronic format, provided that they meet the following requirements:

- i. The record follows the recording requirements of MARPOL Annex V;
- ii. Entries cannot be deleted;
- iii. Any changes to existing entries are clearly shown, along with the identity or electronic signature of the person that made the change;
- iv. The system is auditable;

- v. The system is capable of printing records in the Garbage Record Book format specified in the Appendix to MARPOL Annex V;
- vi. The system is approved by an approved Bahamas Recognised Organisation or a MARPOL contracting Government;
- vii. The vessel has a Document of Approval from the BMA.

5.4. **MARPOL Annex VI Record Book**

- 5.4.1. Records required under MARPOL Annex VI may be kept in electronic format, provided that the system meets the requirements specified in this MN.

6. **BMA Acceptance of Electronic MARPOL Record Books**

- 6.1. The BMA will accept electronic MARPOL Record Books produced commercially that comply with the following:
- i. The electronic Record Book has been provided by a commercial company previously approved by the BMA; or,
 - ii. The electronic Record Book has been produced by, or approved by, a Bahamas Recognised Organisation; or,
 - iii. Have been produced or approved by a MARPOL contracting Government.
- 6.2. The BMA will not accept any other form of electronic MARPOL Record Books for review or approval by the BMA
- 6.3. When a Company selects a MARPOL electronic record keeping system for use on a ship registered in The Bahamas and as described in 6.1 above, the Company shall apply to the BMA for approval of its use on board the company vessels.
- 6.4. The Company shall provide the following information when applying for approval:
- i. Name and Official Number of all ships that will have the system installed.
 - ii. A statement from the Company confirming the following:
 - The installed system complies with the specific requirements set out in this MN.
 - The crew has been appropriately trained in the management, use and operation of the system, in compliance with Regulation I/14.1.4 of the STCW Convention.
 - The routines and processes for the conservation and maintenance of the entries in the system comply with relevant requirements and guidance and procedures for data entry, extraction and retention are incorporated in the Safety Management System.
 - iii. A list of MARPOL Record Books that will have their entries captured in the electronic record keeping system;
 - iv. System manufacturer's declaration specifying that the system is installed according to approved existing requirements and that the installed system has been tested and is operating correctly.

- 6.5. On satisfactory review of the information in paragraph 6.4 and payment of the appropriate fee, the BMA will issue a *Document of Approval for Electronic Record Keeping Systems* along with an annex that will list the records that may be maintained for each ship using the system.
- 6.6. The annex to the Document of Approval will list the MARPOL Record Books permitted to be stored by the system. The Document of Approval and annex must be kept together on board each ship using the system, for presentation to duly authorised officials when requested.
- 6.7. Each Document of Approval is valid for five (5) years from the date of issue, subject to the ship being managed by the Company noted on the Document of Approval.
- 6.8. The Company is to notify the BMA of any changes to the system or the procedures related to its use in the Safety Management System that affects the Document of Approval.
- 6.9. The availability of the Document of Approval will be verified at Bahamas annual inspections.

7. Provision of Data to New Managers or Owners

- 7.1. MARPOL requires certain records to be retained by the ship for specified periods, as summarised in the Annex to this MN.
- 7.2. Accordingly, Companies using electronic MARPOL Record Books must provide the relevant records to the new Company, to cover the required minimum retention period.
- 7.3. The records may be provided as:
 - i. a PDF or XML file; or
 - ii. printed out; or
 - iii. in a data format that can be used by the new Company's system.
- 7.4. In all cases, the ability to present the records to duly authorised officers upon request must be available on board the ship.

8. Fees

- 8.1. The fees for the issue of a Document of Approval for electronic MARPOL Record Books are as follows:
 - i. Issue of initial Document of Approval - \$300
 - ii. Renewal of Document of Approval - \$300

- 8.2. Companies that use electronic record keeping systems as defined in MN009 and electronic MARPOL Record Books defined in this MN, in a combined system, will only be charged a single fee as shown in 8.1 above.

Annex – Minimum Retention Periods for MARPOL Records

Record Type	Minimum Retention Period	Reference
Oil Record Book Part I	3 years	MARPOL Annex I Reg.17.6
Oil Record Book Part II	3 years	MARPOL Annex I Reg.36.7
Noxious Liquid Substances Record Book	3 years	MARPOL Annex II Reg.15.5
Garbage Record Book Part I	2 years	MARPOL Annex V Reg.10.3.5
Garbage Record Book Part II	2 years	MARPOL Annex V reg.10.3.5

