



**PANAMA MARITIME AUTHORITY**  
**MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-229**

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**To:** Ship-owners/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organizations (ROs).

**Subject:** Bridge Navigation Watch Alarm System (BNWAS)

**Reference:**

- a) Resolution MSC.282(86), adopted by Resolution 106-OMI-85-DGMM.
- b) International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS 74), Chapter V, Regulations 19.2.2.3, 19.2.2.4.
- c) IMO Maritime Safety Committee Resolution MSC. 128(75).
- d) MSC.1/Circ.1474 - Guidance on the Bridge Navigational Watch Alarm System (BNWAS) auto function, adopted on May 23, 2014.
- e) Merchant Marine Circular 161, point 3 - Performance Standards of VDR.

1. The purpose of this Merchant Marine Circular is to inform all users that the SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 19, as amended by Resolution MSC. 282(86), has introduced carriage requirements for BNWAS for the following ships:

- .1 cargo ships of 150 gross tonnage and upwards and passenger ships irrespective of size constructed on or after 1 July 2011;
- .2 passenger ships irrespective of size constructed before 1 July 2011, not later than the first survey after 1 July 2012;
- .3 cargo ships of 3,000 gross tonnage and upwards constructed before 1 July 2011, not later than the first survey after 1 July 2012;
- .4 cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 3,000 gross tonnage constructed before 1 July 2011, not later than the first survey after 1 July 2013; and
- .5 cargo ships of 150 gross tonnage and upwards but less than 500 gross tonnage constructed before 1 July 2011, not later than the first survey after 1 July 2014.

2. The shipping industry has installed such systems on board several years ago and even before any performance standards had been adopted as defined in MSC. 128(75); becoming necessary to check such systems on board existing ships in regard to their extend of compliance to the latest IMO performance standards and taking into account SOLAS requirements which provide for:

a bridge navigational watch alarm system (BNWAS) installed prior to 1 July 2011 may subsequently be exempted from full compliance with the standards adopted by the Organization, at the discretion of the Administration.

3. In order to avoid any problem with ships fitted with functioning BNWAS systems, this Administration provides guidance to surveyors in order to evaluate existing systems and their functionalities as well as the requirements for performance standards.

Prepared by: Translator	<b>Revised by: Compliance and Enforcement Deputy Chief</b>	Aproved by: Compliance and Enforcement Chief	
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4. Generally, all BNWAS already installed on vessels shall conform to MSC. 128 (75), and can be accepted without additional testing when a type approval has been granted.
5. This Administration may consider exemptions in cases where a BNWAS installed prior to 1 July 2011 does not comply with MSC. 128 (75), as long as the minimum requirements listed in the attached [checklist](#) are fulfilled, additional recommendations from the RO shall be included on the checklist.
6. Applications for BNWAS exemption certificates shall include the checklist listed above.
7. As an interim measure and pending a revision of the Performance standards for a bridge navigational watch alarm system (BNWAS) – (resolution MSC.128 (75), it is not mandatory for BNWAS to interface with ship's heading or track control system (HCS/TCS) (Auto pilot). Therefore, this Administration may issue an Acceptance letter on a case by case basis. Also, when an application for the renewal of a BNWAS Exemption certificate is requested this Administration will issue an Acceptance letter. However, exemptions certificates already issued due to non-interface of BNWAS with ship's heading or track control system (HCS/TCS) shall be valid until its expiry date.
8. In case of non-interface of BNWAS with VDR complying with Res. A.861(20) as amended by Res.MSC.214(81) (refer to our MMC.161), , this Administration will issue an Acceptance letter (Existing Exemption Certificates will remain valid until the expiry date).

**August, 2014** - Add points 7, 8, 9, reference d) and e), modification of point 5 and checklist of hyperlink..

**December, 2012** – modification in checklist of hyperlink

**August, 2011**

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