

CIRCULAR	Circular No. 037
SUBJECT	Extension of Mandatory Electronic Certificate Migration Deadline and Clarification on Electronic Replacement of Existing Waivers and Exemptions
FROM	Office of the Maritime Administrator, Vanuatu International Shipping Registry
TO	All shipowners, managers, operators, masters, Special Agents, Recognized Organizations, Flag State Inspectors and document-control personnel
ISSUE DATE	31 August 2026
EFFECTIVE DATE	31 August 2026
STATUS	Version 1.0 - Original issue

Authority and legal status. This Circular is issued by the Maritime Administrator under the functions and powers conferred by the Maritime Act [CAP 131], as amended, and any additional written authority lawfully applicable to the subject. It shall be read together with applicable mandatory IMO instruments, controlled VISR policies, Circular No. 026 (Amended), Circular No. 033 (Amended), Circular No. 034 (Amended), and the Addendum to Circular No. 33 dated 24 March 2026.

Related controlled policies: VISR-QMS-POL-REC-005 - Document and Records Control, Retention and IMSAS Evidence Management Policy; VISR-QMS-POL-REG-003 - Regulatory Monitoring, Legislative Change and Administrative Decisions Policy; and applicable VISR digital-certification, certificate-integrity and registry-record policies.

1. Purpose

Further to Circular No. 033 (Amended), concerning mandatory migration to VISR electronic certificates, Circular No. 034 (Amended), concerning replacement and implementation of electronic certification, and the Addendum to Circular No. 33 dated 24 March 2026, the Administration provides additional clarification and extends the implementation period for completion of the fleet-wide electronic certificate migration.

This Circular supports an orderly transition to electronic Registry documentation, preserves certificate integrity, avoids unnecessary operational disruption, and clarifies the treatment of existing waivers, exemptions, dispensations, equivalency approvals and similar Administration-issued approvals during migration.

2. Revised Migration Deadline

The mandatory migration deadline established under Circular No. 033 (Amended) is hereby extended from 31 August 2026 to 30 September 2026.

All vessels and responsible companies shall complete migration to the applicable VISR electronic certificates no later than 30 September 2026.

Until that date, an existing hardcopy certificate that has not already been superseded, cancelled, revoked or replaced may continue to be relied upon, provided that it otherwise remains valid and current.

Effective 1 October 2026, any superseded hardcopy certificate falling within the mandatory electronic migration process shall be considered invalid, unless VISR has issued a written vessel-specific exception or the applicable mandatory instrument requires the original paper form.

3. Certificates Already Replaced

Where an electronic replacement certificate has already been issued by VISR, the corresponding previous hardcopy certificate remains superseded and shall not regain validity as a result of this extension.

All superseded hardcopy documents shall continue to be handled in accordance with the cancellation, disposal and recordkeeping requirements established under Circular No. 033 (Amended) and applicable VISR document-control requirements.

4. Electronic Replacement of Existing Waivers and Exemptions

The Administration clarifies that existing valid waivers, exemptions, dispensations, equivalency approvals and similar Administration-issued approvals may also be converted into the current VISR electronic format incorporating electronic signature and QR-code verification.

Where reissuance is carried out solely for electronic migration, it shall be treated as an administrative replacement process in the same manner as the certificates identified in the Addendum to Circular No. 33 dated 24 March 2026. Accordingly:

- the replacement document shall retain the validity, expiry date, conditions and limitations of the original approval;
- the electronic replacement shall not constitute a renewal, extension, revalidation or substantive reassessment of the approval;
- where the original approval was issued without a fixed expiry date based upon the vessel's design, permanent arrangement or other continuing technical basis, the electronic replacement shall retain the same status, subject to the original basis remaining unchanged; and
- no additional fee shall be charged for such electronic replacement.

5. Limitation of Free-of-Charge Replacement

The free-of-charge arrangement applies only where an existing valid document is reissued solely for conversion into the VISR electronic / QR-code format.

Any new waiver, exemption, dispensation or approval; renewal or extension; amendment resulting from a change in vessel particulars, equipment, arrangement or operational condition; or application requiring substantive technical or regulatory review remains subject to the applicable Administration fees and approval process.

6. No Extension of Substantive Validity

The extension provided by this Circular relates solely to the administrative deadline for completion of the electronic migration process. It does not extend, renew or revalidate the substantive validity of any certificate, survey, audit, endorsement, waiver, exemption or other approval.

7. Continued Implementation and Reporting

Shipowners, managers and operators shall continue the electronic migration process without unnecessary delay and shall not defer outstanding conversions until the revised deadline.

Any missing, inaccurate, duplicate, inconsistent or unverifiable electronic document shall be reported to VISR through the official channels. Electronic certificates must be verified using the QR-code / official VISR verification process and retained in the vessel and Registry records.

8. Relationship with Existing Circulars and Addenda

This Circular shall be read together with Circular Nos. 026, 033 and 034 (Amended) and the Addendum to Circular No. 33 dated 24 March 2026.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- all references to the 31 August 2026 mandatory migration deadline shall be read as 30 September 2026;
- all corresponding references to invalidity commencing on 1 September 2026 shall be read as commencing on 1 October 2026;
- Circular No. 034 (Amended), to the extent that it states that the 31 August 2026 migration deadline is not postponed, is superseded by this Circular; and
- the free-of-charge administrative replacement principle established under the Addendum dated 24 March 2026 is extended to existing valid waivers, exemptions, dispensations, equivalency approvals and similar Administration-issued approvals when reissued solely for electronic migration.

All other provisions of the applicable Circulars and Addenda remain unchanged and in full effect.

9. Compliance Records and Communications

All applications, replacement documents, approvals, acknowledgements, notices, cancellations, disposal evidence and communications relating to this Circular must be transmitted through an official VISR channel and retained in the controlled Registry file in accordance with VISR document-control and recordkeeping requirements.

Official contact: technical@register-vu.com and info@register-vu.com. Matters involving certificate authenticity, fraud, PSC, safety, security, detention or urgent operational risk must be reported without delay.

10. Effective Application

This Circular enters into effect upon publication. It extends only the migration deadline and the administrative electronic-replacement treatment described above. It does not waive compliance obligations, fees applicable to substantive applications, sanctions requirements, PSC requirements, statutory certification requirements, or any condition imposed by the Administration.



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