Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Swiss Maritime Navigation Office SMNO

Reference: 421-05 -02-01-6

Basel, 28 August 2026

Circular N^0 CH 76

To: Shipowners, Operators and Master of all Swiss flagged Vessels and Recognized Organizations,

Sub.: Flag State Documents: Digital from February 2026

With effect from February 2026, the Swiss Maritime Navigation Office (SMNO) will begin issuing electronic maritime flag state documents (for seagoing vessels, yachts and coastal boats), including certificates and endorsements.

The new electronic flag state documents are issued in a secure digital format. They can be verified online through our official verification portal by entering the unique certificate number or scanning the QR-code printed on the document.

The transition to electronic flag state documents issued by the SMNO is made in accordance with all applicable features outlined in the FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2 – Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates, MSC.1/Circ.1665 – Guidelines for the Use of Electronic Certificates of Seafarers, MSC.540 (107) – 2023 Amendments to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978 and MSC 541 (107) 2023 Amendments to Part of a Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code, international standards and conventions for maritime certification and digital documentation and aligns with current practices being adopted by other flag states, supporting ease of use and global acceptance.

During the transition phase, both paper-based flag state documents and electronic flag state documents issued by the SMNO remain valid.

The following types of documents will be issued electronically by the SMNO:

- Certificate of Registry
- Authorization of Maritime Navigation
- Minimum Safe Manning Document
- Continuous Synopsis Record (Please note that there is no requirement for the Master to countersign the digital CSR. If correct, the CSR should be added to the ship's CSR file)
- Endorsements (STCW II/1, II/2, III/1, III/2, III/3, III/ 6, IV/2)
- CLC Bunker Oil Certificate
- CLC Certificate
- Nairobi Wreck Removal Certificate
- DMLC Part I
- Dispensations

Every document issued by the SMNO includes the name of the issuing person and an official stamp, but no signature of the issuing person. Endorsements and Certificate of Receipt of Application (CRA) are issued without photograph and signature of the seafarer according to regulation I/2 para. 10 STCW and Section A-I/2 para. 4.4 STCW Code according to MSC 541 (107). All previously issued Swiss endorsements remain valid until its expiry date.

This document serves as official notice and proof of compliance for vessels and seafarers holding SMNO-issued electronic flag state documents.

Swiss Maritime Navigation Office SMNO

Elisabethenstrasse 33, P.O.Box, CH-4010 Basel
Ph +41 58 467 11 20
dv.ssa@eda.admin.ch