



Title: Long-Range Identification and Tracking Equipment (LRIT), the Automatic Identification System (AIS), and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) - Compliance Requirements for Belize Flagged Ships

To: Deputy Registrars, Ship Owners, ISM Operators, Recognized Organizations, Recognized Security Organizations, Shipping Agents, General Safety Inspectors

MMN Superseded: [MSN-0036](#) and [MMN-19-005r1](#) (25 July 2008 and 5 June 2020) **Revision No.:** N/A

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REFERENCE

- **SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 19-1** regarding Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT).
- **SOLAS Chapter V Regulation 19.2.4** regarding Automatic Identification System (AIS).
- **Resolution MSC.263(84)** Revised Performance Standards and Functional Requirements for the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships.
- **Resolution A.1106(29)** Revised Guidelines for the Onboard Operational Use of Shipborne Automatic Identification System (AIS).
- **SN/Circ.227** - Guidelines for the installation of a Shipborne Automatic Identification System (AIS).
- **High Seas Fishing Act**, in its latest revision.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The **Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT)** is a maritime domain awareness initiative developed at the IMO as part of broader Maritime Security measures adopted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The LRIT system enables flag states to receive position reports from ships flying their flags worldwide. Additionally, it also allows Governments to obtain similar position reports from vessels near their coastlines and territorial waters, thereby enhancing maritime security.

1.2 The **Automatic identification system (AIS)** is a tool that transmits a vessel's position to increase situational awareness among other vessels. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) and other regulatory bodies require large vessels, including many



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commercial fishing vessels, to broadcast their position using AIS to prevent collisions. This system transmits crucial information, including the vessel's location, identity, course and speed.

- 1.3 The **Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)** is a satellite-based tool used to track the location of fishing vessels and monitor their activities. It is legally required for all Belize-flagged fishing vessels operating in maritime areas beyond national jurisdiction or as designated by Belize. This requirement aligns with international legal standards established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the United Nations Fish Stock Agreement (UNFSA).

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) hereby informs all interested parties of the application of SOLAS V/19-1, SOLAS V/19.2.4, and Section 39 of the High Seas Fishing Act (in its latest revision):
1. All passenger ships, including high-speed passenger crafts, cargo ships, including high-speed craft (300 gross tonnage and above), and mobile offshore drilling units, must be fitted with Long-Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) equipment.
 2. All ships, including commercial yachts of 300 gross tonnage and above engaged in international voyages, and cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and above not engaged in international voyages, and passenger ships irrespective of size shall be fitted with an Automatic Identification System (AIS).
 3. Ships certified solely for operations in GMDSS A1 Sea Area and fitted with AIS are not required to comply with SOLAS V/19-1.
 4. All vessels designated for fishing or fishing related activities, as defined in the High Seas Fishing Act, in its latest revision, must comply with the relevant regulations.

3. BELIZE LRIT DATA CENTER AND FISHERIES MONITORING CENTER

- 3.1 The national data center is managed on behalf of the Belize Administration by Pole Star Space Applications Limited.

Pole Star's Contact details are as follows:

Pole Star Space Applications Limited - "Pole Star", U.K.
Email: lrittesting@polestarglobal.com
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7313 7400



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3.2 The **Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC)** is operated by the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit. The contact details are as follows:

Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit
Fisheries Monitoring Center
Email: fmc@bhsfu.gov.bz
Telephone: +501-223-4918

4. COMPLIANCE

4.1 Every Belize flag vessel subject to SOLAS V/19-1 and SOLAS V/19.2.4 must register its chosen Inmarsat C Mobile Earth Station for testing with an authorized Testing Application Service Provider (Testing ASP).

The following Testing ASPs are authorized to conduct and issue LRIT conformance test reports:

1. Pole Star Space Applications Limited - "Pole Star", U.K.
Email: lrittesting@polestarglobal.com
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7313 7400
2. CLS UK (Formally Fulcrum)
Email: lrit.testing@groupcls.com
Telephone: + 441708 788 400

4.2 Upon Successful registration for LRIT, the Testing ASP will issue a Conformance Test Report (CTR).

4.3 All ships must hold a valid CTR to comply with SOLAS V/19-1.

4.4 A copy of the **CTR must be submitted to the Administration before the vessel can be permanently registered.**

4.5 All vessels engaged in fishing or fishing-related activities must have an approved Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) installed and operational at all times, in accordance with their respective fishing authorizations issued by the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit (BHSFU).

5. VALIDITY AND AMENDMENTS

5.1 A vessel shall initiate a new LRIT Conformance Test Report (CTR) when any of the following criteria are met:

- i. Changes are made to the LRIT shipborne equipment.



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- ii. The LRIT shipborne equipment becomes unserviceable.
- iii. The vessel intends to operate outside the sea areas specified in existing CTR.

5.2 A vessel shall amend its Conformance Test Report (CTR) with the respective Testing Application Service Provider (ASP) if any of the below conditions are met:

- i. The vessel's name has changed.
- ii. The Call Sign has changed.
- iii. The MMSI has changed.

6. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

6.1 The LRIT, AIS, and VMS may only be switched off or deactivated under the following special circumstances:

- 6.1.1 When a vessel is undergoing repairs, modifications, or conversions in dry-dock or in port, or is laid up for an extended period (exceeding 7 days).
- 6.1.2 When the master believes that the continuous operation of AIS might compromise the safety or security of the vessel, or when imminent security incidents are anticipated (Regulation 22 of IMO Resolution A.1106(29) "Revised Guidelines for the Onboard Operational Use of Shipborne Automatic Identification Systems (AIS)).

6.2 Prior to switching off or deactivating the LRIT and AIS, a written application must be submitted by the owner/operator via their Designated Office to IMMARBE's Technical Department (technicalservices@immarbe.com), in accordance with the guidance provided in [MMN-21-001](#) (Change of Status Requirements) and [MMN-19-002](#) (Requirements for the issuance of Technical Certificates) in their latest revisions.

6.3 The application shall include the reasons for and duration of the requested Change in Status, based on which the Administration may grant authorization.

6.4 Before a VMS may be switched off, the vessel owner/operator must submit a completed Letter of Confirmation ([Controlled Document F-023-LOC](#)) to the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC) of the BHSFU at fmc@bhsfu.gov.bz, along with the request to switch off the VMS. The vessel owner/operator may proceed to switch off the VMS once approval has been granted.

6.5 Such actions must always be recorded in the ship's logbook, including the reason for the deactivation.



7. NON-COMPLIANCE and DISPENSATIONS

- 7.1 The Belize Administration routinely monitors all LRIT, AIS, and VMS transmissions. If non-compliance is observed, the vessel operator will be contacted for clarification and rectification. The Administration may offer troubleshooting assistance; however, in some cases, a service technician may be required.
- 7.2 In cases where the vessel's LRIT testing has failed, remains pending, or where the LRIT/AIS cannot report due to a defect, the vessel operator must immediately inform the Flag State, Recognized Organization (RO), and, if applicable, the Port or Coastal State authorities.
- 7.3 The Recognized Organization (RO), after assessing the specific circumstances of the non-compliance, shall submit the details to the Flag State and request authorization to issue a short-term CSSE certificate.
- 7.4 Additionally, the operator must request a Dispensation Certificate from the Administration via their Designated Office. This certificate must be kept on board until the issue prompting the Short-Term certificate is resolved.
- 7.5 If a fishing vessel's VMS fails, the vessel operator must immediately notify the Fisheries Monitoring Center (FMC), which will initiate troubleshooting procedures. If the VMS cannot be restored within 48 hours of failure, the vessel must proceed to port without delay to rectify the issue. The operator is also required to submit manual position reports to the FMC, in line with the hourly reporting requirements set by the BHSFU.
- 7.6 All actions of this nature should be recorded in the ship's logbook, including the reasons for such actions.

8. EXEMPTIONS

- 8.1 Ships which are not typically engaged in international voyages but are required to undertake a single international voyage outside the GMDSS A1 Sea Area may be granted an exemption. Applications for exemption must be submitted in accordance with the provisions outlined in [MMN-19-002](#) (in its latest revision) concerning Requirements for the issuance of Technical Certificates.



9. WARNING AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

9.1 It is affirmed that all ships subject to SOLAS V/19-1 and SOLAS V/19.2.4 must:

- i. Be registered with an Authorized Testing Application Service Provider (Testing ASP).**
- ii. Hold a valid Conformance Test Report (CTR) for LRIT**
- iii. Maintain the LRIT/AIS in operation at all times, except in special circumstances as defined in section 6 of this notice.**

9.2 All Belize-flagged fishing vessels subject to the High Seas Fishing Act, (in its latest revision) and its subsidiary regulations must:

- i. Install a vessel monitoring system designated by the Director of High Seas Fisheries.
- ii. Maintain such equipment in good working order at all times.

9.3 Any Belize Flagged Vessel that intentionally deactivates the Long-Range Identification and Tracking Equipment (LRIT) and/or the Automatic Identification System (AIS) will be subject to disciplinary actions in accordance with regulations 7 (Fines) and 8 (Cancellation of Registration or Documents) of the Statutory Instrument 156 of 1999 – Disciplinary Regulations. Similarly, Belize-flagged fishing vessels that intentionally or recklessly disable their Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) or provide false information to the BHSFU will be sanctioned under the High Seas Fishing (Sanctions) Regulations.

9.4 Failure to adhere to the above requirements may result in disciplinary actions deemed appropriate by IMMARBE, which may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Suspension or revocation of the vessel's certification.
- b. Imposition of fines or penalties.
- c. Restrictions on the vessel's operations or trading activities.
- d. Other legal actions as specified under the Belize Merchant Ships (Registration) Act (in its latest revision) and Statutory Instrument 56 of 1999 (as revised).



10. ACTIONS REQUESTED

10.1 The Administration encourages all Shipowners, Operators, Deputy Registrars, and Recognized Organizations to review and comply with the contents of this Notice and to ensure that its provisions are enforced on vessels registered with IMMARBEL.

It is imperative that all parties adhere fully to the procedures and requirements to ensure proper certification and avoid any regulatory issues.

This notice was issued in Belize City, Belize on 23 September 2024.



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IMMARBE

Any queries related to this Notice shall be directed to technicalservices@immarbe.com