



MARINE SECURITY OPERATIONS BULLETIN

File number: xxx-xx

No: 2026-001

EXPEDITED PROCESS TO MEET MTSR REQUIREMENTS FOR REFLAGGING CANADIAN VESSELS

PURPOSE

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide guidance to regulated Canadian marine stakeholders, specifically vessel owners, operators, Company Security Officers (CSO) and Masters of Canadian registered SOLAS vessels, of an expedited process for recertification under the *Marine Transportation Security Regulations* when flagging back to the Canadian Registry after leaving for a period of less than 12 months or returning from bareboat charter out after a period of less than 12 months.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the implementation of this bulletin, the process for recertifying a vessel reflagging to the Canadian Registry was the same as initial registration, including steps to review and reapprove vessel security documentation, the conduct of a vessel inspection, and administrative procedures related to issuing the International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC).

If a vessel is routinely in and out of Canadian flag, Transport Canada has a simplified process for safety documentation when flagging back to Canada. To increase efficiency, Transport Canada has adopted a similar practice for security documentation.

The expedited reflagging process described herein applies to vessels reflagging to Canada after leaving the Canadian Registry and vessels returning from bareboat charter out (vessel still in Canadian Registry).

For a vessel to be eligible, the following criteria must be met:

- The vessel must be returning directly to the Canadian registry following no more than one period of foreign flag registry lasting no more than 12 months.
- There must be at least 6 months of remaining period of validity on the previous vessel security plan (VSP) approval and ISSC issuance (as if the vessel had remained Canadian flagged).
- There have been no major security threats, breaches, or incidents during the period of foreign flag operations. All security threats, breaches or incidents must be reported and will be reviewed to determine if an inspection is warranted.
- No changes are required for the vessel security assessment or plan due to changes in operations from what was previously approved. Minor changes to operator details are acceptable (ex. contact information) but documents must be updated and will be processed as an amendment.
- The operator indicates that they wish to take advantage of this process 2 weeks prior to leaving Canadian registry.



- An intermediate inspection is conducted within the proper window as if the vessel had been continuously registered in Canada.

GUIDANCE

Prior to leaving the Canadian Registry / bareboating out

To take advantage of the expedited reflagging process, stakeholders must send a formal request to their Transport Canada Regional Security Inspector 2 weeks prior to leaving the Canadian registry, indicating the vessel is leaving the Canadian Registry or bareboating out with the intention to return within 12 months.

The formal request must be dated/signed, sent via e-mail (preferred) or mail, and include:

- acknowledgment that the vessel operator will contact TC Marine Security 14 – 30 calendar days prior to their return to Canada, and
- acknowledgement that failing to contact TC Marine Security 14-30 calendar days prior to returning to Canada may result in the entire certification process being conducted upon return, delays in processing, and the cancellation of their current ISSC.

Annex A provides a template indicating the vessel is leaving the Canadian Registry / bareboating out with the intention to return within 12 months and take advantage of the expedited reflagging process.

Prior to returning to the Canadian Registry / bareboating in

Stakeholders are to contact their Transport Canada Regional Security Inspector 14 – 30 calendar days prior to the return of the vessel and submit a written Certificate Reinstatement Request of the previously issued ISSC.

Information to be included in the letter is as follows:

- the vessel name,
- IMO number,
- Official number,
- a declaration that the vessel's area and type of operation has not changed,
- a declaration that no major changes have been made to the Vessel Security Assessment (VSA) or Vessel Security Plan (VSP). Minor changes to operator details are acceptable (ex. contact information),
- full disclosure of security threats, breaches, or incidents during the previous period of foreign-flagged operations,
- a list of drills and exercises conducted (if any) while under foreign flag, and
- acknowledgement that a SSAS test must be conducted and deemed satisfactory by MARSEC HQ, during the flag change, before the ISSC is reinstated.

The following documents are to be included with the Certificate Reinstatement Request:

- Current VSA and VSP, and
- Records of drills and exercises conducted while under foreign flag (if applicable).

Annex B provides a template for use by stakeholders to formally request the reinstatement of their previously issued ISSC after returning to the Canadian Registry / bareboating in.



Important Notes:

- An additional inspection may be required by TC Marine Security.
- A SSAS test must be scheduled during the flag change and deemed satisfactory by TC Marine Security (HQ).
- The vessel must complete re-registration with TC Marine Safety. TC Marine Security will check in the TC Vessel Registration Query System to ensure that the vessel has a valid Certificate of Registry prior to completing the reflagging process.

Any comments, suggestions or concerns can be addressed to the Director of Marine Security Operations at: dirops.marsec-sumar@tc.gc.ca.

Aiden Ryan

Aiden Ryan
Director
Marine Security Operations

January 2026



Annex A

This is a template for use by stakeholders indicating the vessel is leaving the Canadian Registry / bareboating out with the intention to return within 12 months and take advantage of the expedited reflagging process. This formal written request must be sent 2 weeks prior to leaving the Canadian registry.

Date: **DD/MM/YYYY**

Subject: **Vessel Name** is **Leaving Canadian Registry / Departing on Bareboat Charter** for Less than 12 Months with Intent to Return and Reflag

Good day,

This letter is to serve as a notification that the **Vessel Name**, IMO No. **XXXXXXXX**, Official Number **XXXXX** is **departing the Canadian Registry / departing on bareboat charter** on **date** with the intent to return to Canada on **estimated return date**.

I/name of Authorized Representative will contact TC Marine Security 14 – 30 calendar days prior to the vessel's return date to Canada to request reinstatement of the TC issued International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC), ISSC number **XXXXXXXXXX**. I understand that failing to do so may result in the entire certification process being conducted upon return.

Regards,

Signature

Name

Title(s)

Company Name



Annex B

This is a template for use by stakeholders to formally request the reinstatement of their previously issued ISSC (for vessels returning to the Canadian Registry / bareboating in).

Date: **DD/MM/YYYY**

Subject: Certification Reinstatement Request for **Vessel Name**

Good day,

This letter is to serve as a request for the reinstatement of the previously issued International Ship Security Certificate (ISSC), number **XXXXXXXXXX** for **vessel name**, IMO Number **XXXXXXXX**, Official Number **XXXXXX**, which is returning to Canada on **return date**.

I confirm that the vessel’s physical structure and type of operation have not changed since the last revision of the Vessel Security Plan (VSP) and Vessel Security Assessment (VSA) which were approved by Transport Canada Marine Security, thus no alterations or amendments to the documents are required at this time.

Note that if there have been minor changes, ex. contact information, list as follows: **The following minor change(s) have been made to the Vessel Security Plan (VSP) / Vessel Security Assessment (VSA) :**

- 1. **List change**
- 2. **List change**
- 3. **...**

There have been no major security breaches, threats or security related incidents since the issuance of the above ISSC certificate related to the vessel.

Note that if there have been security breaches, threats or security related incidents, list as follows: **The following security breaches, threats or security related incidents since the issuance of the above ISSC certificate have occurred:**

- 1. **List security breach / threat / security related incident here.**
- 2. **List security breach / threat / security related incident here.**
- 3. **...**

A list of drills and exercises conducted while under foreign flag is attached. *Note that if no drills/exercises were completed, state:* No drills or exercises have been conducted while under foreign flag.

The current VSP and VSA are submitted to Marine Security accompanying this request.

I understand that a SSAS test must be arranged with the TC Situation Centre during the vessel’s reflagging back to Canadian Registry to ensure that all requirements of the MTSR are met and that this test must be deemed satisfactory by TC Marine Security HQ before the ISSC is reinstated.

Regards,

Signature



Transport
Canada

Transports
Canada

Name

Title(s)

Company Name

*Attach current VSP and VSA

*Attach a list of drills and exercises conducted while under foreign flag