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## CIRCULAR Panama Flag Annual Safety Inspection for vessels transiting through Panama with destination in the US

Panama has issued MMN-14/2021 to inform on the new requirement on flag state inspections for vessels transiting or visiting ports prior to their arrival to the United States.

[Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors](#)

[C21019 | 19 July 2021](#)

The United States Coast Guard (USCG) implemented an initiative to identify high-quality ships and flags to provide incentives and encourage quality operations. This initiative, called QUALSHIP-21, has a goal to allow high-quality vessels to be recognized and rewarded for their commitment to safety and quality by the USCG.

The Panama Maritime Authority (PMA) is currently striving to belong in the QUALSHIP-21 program; however the Administration has detected an increase of detentions in vessels arriving in the United States in the past months due to easily fixable deficiencies. These detentions are due to lack of preparedness for an examination, general knowledge of the vessel's crew to successfully demonstrate normal shipboard equipment procedures during an inspection and general lifesaving appliances ready for immediate use.

For the aforementioned and in order to attain the QUALSHIP-21 status for the USCG, the PMA has decided that it is compulsory that all Panamanian flag vessels transiting or visiting ports **prior to their arrival to the United States have to conduct a Flag Annual Safety Inspection (ASI) as soon as they arrive at any port or terminal in Panama.**

Non-compliance with the provisions of the above will be subject to the Administration's sanction. **Refusing for the first time carries a penalty of 10,000.00 USD.** The recurrence will be grounds for the cancellation of the Panamanian registry immediately.

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Ship Owners / Managers / Operators of Panama flagged vessels should take into consideration the above notice and ensure preparedness on board their fleet to safeguard the vessel from any possible detention in the United States.