



TUVALU SHIP REGISTRY

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MARINE CIRCULAR

MC-2/2011/1

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FOR: Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Masters, and Watch Keeping Officers

SUBJECT: MAGNETIC COMPASS ADJUSTMENT & RECORDS OF DEVIATIONS

PURPOSE: This Marine Circular serves to provide guidance on requirements and periodical intervals of adjusting the magnetic compass.

REFERENCES: SOLAS 74 Chapter V Regulation 19

The Regulations require that a magnetic compass be carried as an item under the scope of the Cargo Ship Safety Equipment survey, or the Passenger Ship Safety survey.

This is subjected to inspection by Port State Control (PSC) which verifies that the compass is correctly adjusted and a record of deviations in the form of a deviation curve or similar is available on board.

It is the responsibility of the Ship Owner / Ship Manager and the Master to ensure that magnetic compasses on their ships are maintained in good working order. The compass deviation should be checked very regularly and recorded, and the record should be available at any time to show the measured deviations over a range of magnetic headings.

Masters are advised to check the performance of magnetic compasses particularly when:

1. carrying cargoes which have magnetic properties;
2. using electromagnetic lifting appliances to load or discharge;
3. a casualty in which the has been subject to severe contact or electrical charges; or
4. the ship has laid up or has been lying idle – even a short period of idleness can lead to serious deviations, especially for small vessels.

Every effort should be made to monitor the compass performance by recording deviations in a compasses deviation book which may show whether the records have been carried out correctly and also whether there is a need for repair, testing or adjustment.

The Tuvalu Ship Registry recommends, but does not mandate that the adjustment of the magnetic compass be done on an annual basis calculated from the date of the last adjustment, although there has been cases where an annual adjustment is requested by PSC.

However, adjustment of the magnetic compass is mandatory when:

1. they are installed or replaced,
2. the compass shows physical defects and becomes unreliable,
3. the record of compass deviations are found to be not properly maintained,
4. the ship undergoes structural repairs or alterations that could affect its permanent and induced magnetism,
5. electrical magnetic equipment close to the compasses is added, removed or altered,
6. the deviation exceeds **five (5) degrees** taking into account the variation of the place and the method used.

Adjustment must be carried out by a duly authorized compass adjuster. If a qualified and certified compass adjuster is unavailable and the master considers it necessary, then adjustments may be made by the Master, who should also have expertise as a compass adjuster.

After adjustment, a vessel should be provided with a deviation table which is valid for two years and this document should include the following minimum information:

- Name of the vessel
- IMO Number
- Call Sign
- Flag
- Place where the adjustment is carried out
- Name of the Master or certified adjuster / stamp / sign
- Maker of the compass
- Sea and weather conditions
- Method used
- Numerical and graphical results of deviation after correction

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar
Tuvalu Ship Registry