

**Fishing Vessel Circular Letter No. 058**  
**07 December 2023**  
**Series: GEN-2023**

To: All Ship Owners, Operators, Deputy Registrars, Resident Agents, Representatives, and other Stakeholders

Subject: **IMO NUMBER REQUIREMENT**

Reference: Issued in accordance with Part VIII, Section 50(1)(c) of the High Seas Fishing Act, 2013

Circular Superseded: FVC-009/2014, Issued 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014

**BACKGROUND:**

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) number is a unique identifier for ships, assigned by the IMO through its resolution A.600(15). The IMO number is a seven-digit unique number that remains unchanged upon transfer of the ship from one country to another. It is mandatory for all ships, including fishing vessels, of 100 gross tonnage and above engaged in international voyages.

The mandatory requirement for a fishing vessel to have an IMO number is a critical aspect of maritime safety and security. By ensuring that that fishing vessels are uniquely identified and traceable, the IMO number contributes significantly to enhancing safety and security at sea and enabling effective response during emergencies.

**PROCESS FOR OBTAINING AN IMO NUMBER**

Fishing vessel owners can obtain an IMO number by applying to the IMO or recognized classification societies. The application process involves providing necessary documentation and vessel details to ensure compliance with international regulations. Once issued, the IMO number must be permanently marked in a visible location on the vessel.

**MEASURES ADOPTED BY BELIZE**

Notwithstanding the above, all fishing vessels licensed to operate under the Belize flag shall be required to obtain an IMO number.

## **APPLICABILITY**

Circulars setting out mandatory requirements shall be construed to have the same effect and applicability of rules and policies under the provisions of the HSFA 2013. Each circular is applicable to all Belize flagged fishing vessels engaged in fishing and related activities. The owner, operator and master of every Belize flagged fishing vessel shall be familiar with all applicable Circulars applying to their vessel and it shall be no defense that any person in breach of any Circular was not aware of it or has not been advised of it.

## **MAINTENANCE**

Ship owners, and operators shall ensure that all Circulars are disseminated to their master and crew as well as any other person affected by or having an interest in the subject matter in a language understood by all. A Circular once issued shall be disseminated electronically to all stakeholders and a listing of ALL Circulars shall be published on the BHSFU website [www.bhsfu.gov.bz](http://www.bhsfu.gov.bz) for future reference.

## **COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT**

Failure to comply with any Circular shall result in disciplinary actions taken in accordance with Belize's Sanction Regulations S.I. 32 of 2014

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

This circular shall take effect immediately.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information direct all inquiries about this Circular to the Director of High Seas Fisheries of the Belize High Seas Fisheries Unit, Ministry of Finance, Government of Belize.

---

Issued by

**VALARIE LANZA**  
Director of High Seas Fisheries  
[Director@bhsfu.gov.bz](mailto:Director@bhsfu.gov.bz)  
[Valerie.lanza@bhsfu.gov.bz](mailto:Valerie.lanza@bhsfu.gov.bz)

