



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 891 of 7th September 2025

To	All Surveyors/Auditors. All flags
Title	Guidance on remote survey, ISM Audit and ISPS Verification
Reference	ISM & ISPS

Guidance on remote survey, ISM Audit and ISPS Verification

Based on experience gained from the increased use of remote surveys and audits as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States have generally recognized the benefits of remote surveys and are seeking to formalize guidelines for such surveys as their use expands.

Following the below road-map for the development of Guidance for remote surveys, ISM Code audits and ISPS Code verification, the Sub-Committee had agreed on draft amendments in relation to remote surveys and remote audits in the first phase, which were adopted at Assembly 33 in December 2023.

At this session, the Sub-Committee finalized the draft Guidance on Assessments and Applications of Remote Surveys, ISM Code audits and ISPS Code Verification and the associated draft MSC-MEPC circular.

The Guidance is structured in four parts to provide guidance for conducting remote surveys under HSSC, ISM audits and ISPS verification:

- 1.Part A: Common guidance (use of remote technology for surveys related to statutory certification under IMO instruments)
- 2.Part B-1: Guidance specific to remote surveys of ships under the HSSC Guidelines
- 3.Part B-II: Guidance specific to remote audits for ships and companies under the ISM Code
- 4.Part B-III: Guidance specific to remote verifications for ships under the ISPS Code

Guidance for ISPS Remote Verification

In considering the eligibility for remote verification under the ISPS Code, the Sub-Committee agreed that due to the highly sensitive nature of the information addressed in ISPS verification, remote verification in lieu of in-person attendance should be limited to extraordinary circumstances, and for interim, intermediate and additional shipboard verification only.

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In-Person and Remote Audits for DoC ISM Audits

The guidance provides that interim, initial, renewal, and additional Document of Compliance (DoC) ISM audits should be conducted in-person, with exceptions for interim DoC audits when adding a new ship type to an existing DoC. The Sub-Committee furthermore agreed that interim audit should not be fully replaced by remote audits.

Guidance for additional remote survey/audit/verification and specific technical requirements

Part A, section 7 of the draft guidance contains Required Technical Objectives on the use of Information and Communication Technology (ITC) in order to achieve an equivalent level of assurance to in-person attendance for any survey/audit/verification item conducted remotely. Part A, section 10 on Use of Remote Survey/Audit/Verification for other than Required Periodic Scheduled Surveys/Audits/Verification limits the use of remote technology for the examination and correction of deficiencies to the correction of items which do not pose an immediate threat to safety, security or the environment. This should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Administration or the RO/RSO, and is subject to approval by the Administration.

Method for developing and assigning a coding system to update the Survey Guidelines under the HSSC

The Sub-Committee considered a sample template to identify whether a survey item is eligible or not for a remote survey, and subsequently agreed to the addition of a new column in the Survey Guidelines under the HSSC as the preferred method, to be further developed and assigned by an intersession correspondence group.

The Sub-Committee recommended to keep the guidance under review, based on the experience gained in conducting remote surveys, audits and verification.

Next Steps: The draft Guidance on Assessments and Applications of Remote Surveys, ISM Code Audits and ISPS Code Verification is to be submitted to MEPC 84 (April 2026) and MSC 111 (May 2026) for approval.

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REFERENCES:

- MEPC 84 (April 2026) and MSC 111

ATTACHMENTS: No

Kindest Regards,
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