Sjøfartsdirektoratet
Norwegian Maritime Authority

Circular - Series R

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Regulation amending the Regulations on the tonnage measurement of ships and mobile offshore units

The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has laid down amendments to the Regulations of 30 June 2015 No. 823 on the tonnage measurement of ships and mobile offshore units sections 3, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14.

These amendments enter into force immediately.

The consultation

The proposal was circulated for consultation from 11 March 2026 to 12 June 2026. The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) received six consultation responses.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Security had no comments on the proposal.

The Norwegian Pelagic Association supported the amendments. The Norwegian Fishermen's Association expressed support for the introduction of electronic tonnage certificates.

Fjord1 AS asked where the electronic tonnage certificate would be available under the new provisions. The NMA notes that the electronic tonnage certificate will be available on the "My Vessels" portal, together with the vessel's other electronic certificates. Fjord1 AS further emphasised the importance of solutions that take into account lack of internet coverage or lack of access to the NMA's vessel portals in connection with the transition to electronic certificates. The NMA points out that where a vessel is expected to be without internet access or access to the NMA's electronic solutions, the electronic tonnage certificate may be downloaded or printed prior to the voyage.

Fiskebåt submitted a consultation response on the understanding that the transition to electronic tonnage certificates would not result in new or increased fees for the industry. The NMA confirms that the transition will not result in new or increased fees. Fiskebåt further assumes that the NMA maintains robust procedures for safeguarding information in its databases. The NMA processes electronic tonnage certificates through its APS solution and complies with the applicable regulatory requirements governing ICT systems and associated procedures for digital information management. Fiskebåt also emphasised that the company or the master must be able to retrieve a valid tonnage certificate when needed. As stated above, the NMA confirms that where the company or the master does not have access to the internet or to the NMA's electronic services, a valid tonnage certificate may be downloaded or printed prior to the voyage.

Background to the amendments

The purpose of the amendments is to phase out physical tonnage certificates and introduce electronic tonnage certificates for ships and mobile offshore units subject to tonnage measurement requirements. By issuing tonnage certificates in electronic format and making them digitally accessible, the NMA aims to provide forward-looking services to the industry. A digital solution will enable more efficient document management, reduce the risk of loss and duplicate versions, and facilitate access for the supervisory authorities.

Further details of the amendments to the Regulations on the tonnage measurement of ships and mobile offshore units

All ships of 15 metres in overall length and upwards, and all mobile offshore units, are required to hold a tonnage certificate. An exception applies to ships of less than 24 metres in overall length used for non-commercial purposes, or which are only subject to the Regulations of 14 January 2020 No. 63 on vessels of less than 24 metres carrying 12 or fewer passengers.

Where the company makes no changes requiring corrections to the existing tonnage certificate for the ship or mobile offshore unit, the physical tonnage certificate will remain valid. In the event of alterations or modifications, the company must apply for the issue of a new electronic tonnage certificate, unless the certificate is covered by section 5. The NMA will hereafter issue a new electronic tonnage certificate in cases involving amendments or corrections affecting the certificate. Where amendments or corrections are made to an existing certificate, the physical tonnage certificate must be returned.

Amendments previously made as corrections to physical certificates under former section 12 second paragraph

As a result of the adopted amendments, the NMA will no longer issue or amend physical tonnage certificates, except in situations covered by section 5 third paragraph.

Comments on the individual provisions

To section 3 second paragraph

In order to reflect ongoing digitalisation, section 3 second paragraph provides that the tonnage certificate shall be available on board, either in electronic or physical form. The certificate must be capable of being presented on request, for example during port State control. Port States accept electronic tonnage certificates and printouts thereof.

To section 5 third paragraph

Corrections to physical tonnage certificates may still be made in the special cases regulated in section 5, i.e. for ships between 15 and 24 metres laid down before 18 July 1982 and still operating under earlier tonnage rules. This concerns a very limited number of ships. Requiring full recalculation of tonnage, for example in the event of a change of name, is considered disproportionately burdensome for these ships.

Section 5 third paragraph is intended to limit the consequences of changes to the name, port of registry, type of vessel, draught or overall length. If such ships were required to obtain a new electronic tonnage certificate, they might have to carry out calculations they do not currently possess, entailing disproportionately high costs.

Only a small group of ships operate under tonnage certificates issued pursuant to section 5 first paragraph and are therefore covered by section 5 third paragraph. There is already a provision in section 12 stating that "[t]o replace a lost tonnage certificate issued in accordance with the 1947

Tonnage Convention, the company may request a copy of the measurement document in lieu of the Norwegian National Tonnage Certificate (1982)". This arrangement is maintained. Where a copy of the measurement certificate may be requested, it is also considered appropriate that corrections as referred to in section 5 third paragraph may be made for these ships. This has therefore been reflected in section 12 second paragraph (e).

The former third paragraph becomes the new fourth paragraph.

Section 9 second and third paragraphs
The adopted amendment to section 9 second paragraph means that, in the case of newbuildings, the company is no longer required to submit an application no later than three months before the ship or mobile offshore unit is put into service. The NMA nevertheless recommends that applications be submitted in good time, as some processing time must be expected.

Previously, the company could request corrections to an existing physical tonnage certificate. From now on, any change will require the issue of a new electronic tonnage certificate, unless the certificate is covered by section 5 third paragraph. Section 9 third paragraph has therefore been amended so that the issue of a new tonnage certificate is the only option.

To section 10 third paragraph
Former section 10 third paragraph is repealed. The NMA considers that the company may be required to submit additional documentation necessary to process applications for the issue of tonnage certificates or endorsements of foreign tonnage certificates pursuant to section 17 of the Public Administration Act.

To section 11
In section 11, the wording has been amended to reflect the transition from physical to electronic tonnage certificates, so that the certificate is issued rather than delivered.

Section 12 second and fourth paragraphs
Section 12 second paragraph is amended, in line with section 9 third paragraph, so that the possibility of making corrections to tonnage certificates is no longer an option. Section 12 second paragraph (e) is new and refers to cases where, under current law, corrections to the tonnage certificate have been permitted. The provision has been included to clarify that such cases will in future require the issue of a new electronic tonnage certificate, although the issue of a new certificate under section 12 second paragraph (e) will not trigger any additional fee beyond what is already payable to the NMA in connection with changes of name, port of registry, etc.

It is specified in the final paragraph of section 12 that the physical tonnage certificate must be returned when a new certificate is issued. The requirement to return physical certificates reflects the principle that a ship or mobile offshore unit may only hold one valid tonnage certificate. The NMA will delete any existing electronic tonnage certificate.

To section 14
Section 14 has been amended to clarify that it is the physical tonnage certificate which must be returned in the situations covered by the provision. The NMA will delete any existing electronic tonnage certificate if such a situation arises.

Administrative and financial implications

Consequences for the industry

The adopted amendments do not entail any increase in costs for the industry compared with the current fee level. The transition from physical to electronic tonnage certificates does not trigger new fees.

For transfers to the Norwegian flag and for newbuildings, the tonnage certificate is included in the initial fee. In the case of conversions or modifications, the NMA charges fees according to fixed rates based on the size of the ship when a new tonnage certificate is issued.

For vessels covered by the exemption in section 5, third paragraph, endorsements in existing physical tonnage certificates will remain possible and will be carried out free of charge. For other vessels, the NMA has decided that the possibility of making corrections to physical tonnage certificates will be discontinued. Changes that would previously have been recorded as endorsements will now require the issue of a new electronic tonnage certificate. However, the issue of a new certificate in such cases (cf. section 12 second paragraph (e)) will remain free of charge, in the same way as endorsements have been under the current rules. Companies will therefore not incur additional costs as a result of such changes.

Corrections to physical tonnage certificates under the current section 12 second paragraph have been free of charge and will continue not to give rise to any fee, even though the NMA will henceforth issue a new electronic tonnage certificate for the vessel in such cases. The issue of a new tonnage certificate under section 12 second paragraph (e) will not give rise to any additional fee beyond those already payable to the NMA in connection with changes of name, port of registry, etc.

The NMA considers that electronic tonnage certificates provide a more efficient and appropriate solution than physical documents, particularly with regard to accessibility and onboard storage. The NMA has found that companies often request a new tonnage certificate rather than an endorsement in connection with, for example, changes of name, and that issuing a new electronic certificate provides a clearer document history – particularly where there are frequent changes of ownership or numerous successive amendments, which is also advantageous for port State control purposes.

Consequences for the Norwegian Maritime Authority

The discontinuation of manual endorsements and the dispatch of physical certificates is expected to improve administrative efficiency and contribute to shorter processing times for the issue of new tonnage certificates.

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This document has been electronically approved and therefore does not contain handwritten signatures.

Attachments: Regulation amending the Regulations of 30 June 2015 No. 823 on the tonnage measurement of ships and mobile offshore units.