



**MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE  
SHIPPING CIRCULAR  
NO. 5 OF 2024**

MPA Shipping Division  
460 Alexandra Road  
21<sup>st</sup> Storey mTower  
Singapore 119963  
<http://www.mpa.gov.sg>

31 May 2024

**Applicable to:** Ship owners, ship managers, ship operators, shipping agents, surveyors, Master and officers of Singapore registered ships.

**VOYAGE DATA RECORDER (VDR/S-VDR) AND CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS**

This Shipping Circular supersedes, Shipping Circulars No. 14 of 2021.

2 The installation of VDR/S-VDR is made mandatory through SOLAS V/20 to aid in safety investigation to identify the cause(s) of a casualty. The VDR/S-VDR installed on board ships shall conform to the following performance standards:

- a) VDR installed on or after 1 July 2014 shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the Resolution MSC.333(90), as amended.
- b) VDR installed before 1 July 2014 shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to IMO Resolution A.861(20), as amended by Resolution MSC.214(81).
- c) If a Simplified Voyage Data Recorder (S-VDR) is installed, it shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the IMO Resolution MSC.163(78).

3 In the event of a marine casualty or incident, collection and analysis of the ship's VDR/S-VDR may provide evidence critical to a casualty investigation.

4 Therefore, the applicable parties shall ensure that steps are taken to preserve and collect VDR/S-VDR data as soon as possible after a casualty and to provide this Administration with a copy of this data.

5 The attached MSC/Circ.1024 (Annex A) provides guidelines on the ownership and recovery of VDR/S-VDR data. The Master is responsible to ensure timely preservation and collection of the VDR/S-VDR data.

6 The procedures for preservation of the VDR/S-VDR data should be included in the vessel's Safety Management System (SMS). Masters and officers must be familiar with the operation and retrieval of data of the VDR/S-VDR model installed on their vessel.

7 Master must refer and conform to the manufacturer's instructions for procedures relating to VDR/S-VDR data recovery. If necessary, a manufacturer's authorised technician shall be engaged to recover the said data for analysis and to avoid loss or corruption of data.

8 When a vessel must be abandoned following a casualty; and where time and situation permit, the vessel's Master (or officer) shall retrieve the VDR/S-VDR module containing the data before abandoning the vessel.

9 It is a requirement that a complete copy of the VDR/S-VDR data, including the audio recording, be saved to digital media, such as a DVD or flash drive, with relevant instructions and required software to access the data, and send to the following as soon as possible:

MPA Shipping Division  
Marine Investigation Department  
460 Alexandra Road  
#21-00 mTower  
Singapore 119963

Alternately, the above complete copy of VDR/S-VDR data can be shared with MPA using cloud drive with access rights.

10 It is a requirement to report marine casualties and marine incidents. Please refer to the relevant Shipping Circular pertaining to 'REPORTING OF MARINE CASUALTIES AND MARINE INCIDENTS' for guidance. At the time of enforcing this circular, the latest report of a Marine Casualties and Marine Incidents is Shipping Circular No. 2 of 2024.

11 Knowledge of data saving and/or data retrieval of the VDR/S-VDR procedure shall form part of Emergency and Abandon Ship training and drills.

12 When the VDR/S-VDR malfunction, prompt actions must be taken, i.e., arrange for a maker approved service provider at the current port of call, or next arrival port if the ship is underway. The malfunction shall be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Administration, if the ship is in a port of another Contracting Government, the master or owner shall also report immediately to the appropriate

authorities of the port state. The defective equipment must be rectified before departing the above port.

13 VDR/S-VDR maker should be consulted regarding the required critical spare(s) to be kept on board e.g., microphones to ensure continuous function of this equipment. The procedures for preservation of spares should be part of the vessel's Safety Management System (SMS).

14 Please direct your queries relating to this shipping circular to [shipping@mpa.gov.sg](mailto:shipping@mpa.gov.sg) and [ivd@mpa.gov.sg](mailto:ivd@mpa.gov.sg).

CHEAH AUN AUN  
DIRECTOR OF MARINE  
MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE

## Annex A of Shipping Circular No. 5 of 2024

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION  
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT  
LONDON SE1 7SR

Telephone: 020 7735 7611  
Fax: 020 7587 3210  
Telex: 23588 IMOLDN G



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Ref. T1/2.02

MSC/Circ.1024  
29 May 2002

### GUIDELINES ON VOYAGE DATA RECORDER (VDR) OWNERSHIP AND RECOVERY

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-fifth session (15 to 24 May 2002), approved the annexed Guidelines on voyage data recorder (VDR) ownership and recovery which have been developed to support provisions of the revised SOLAS regulation V/15, as amended by resolution MSC.99(73), and, in particular, to support the carriage requirements for voyage data recorders contained in the revised SOLAS regulation V/20, which are expected to enter into force on 1 July 2002.

2 These Guidelines reflect the five basic issues relevant to VDR ownership and recovery, which are ownership, custody, recovery, read-out and access to the VDR information, as envisaged by the revised SOLAS chapter V.

3 In view of the complexity of the matter, close co-ordination and co-operation among interested parties, as appropriate, in any recovery operation of a VDR is encouraged.

4 Member Governments are invited to bring the annexed Guidelines to the attention of all parties concerned.

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ANNEX

GUIDELINES ON VOYAGE DATA RECORDER (VDR)  
OWNERSHIP AND RECOVERY

**Ownership of VDR information**

1 The ship owner will, in all circumstances and at all times, own the VDR and its information. However, in the event of an accident the following guidelines would apply. The owner of the ship should make available and maintain all decoding instructions necessary to recover the recorded information.

**Recovery of VDR and relevant information**

2 Recovery of the VDR is conditional on the accessibility of the VDR or the information contained therein.

- .1 Recovery of the VDR information should be undertaken as soon as possible after an accident to best preserve the relevant evidence for use by both the investigator<sup>1</sup> and the ship owner. As the investigator is very unlikely to be in a position to instigate this action soon enough after the accident, the owner must be responsible, through its on-board standing orders, for ensuring the timely preservation of this evidence.
- .2 In the case of abandonment of a vessel during an emergency, masters should, where time and other responsibilities permit, take the necessary steps to preserve the VDR information until it can be passed to the investigator.
- .3 Where the VDR is inaccessible and the information has not been retrieved prior to abandonment, a decision will need to be taken by the flag State in co-operation with any other substantially interested States<sup>2</sup> on the viability and cost of recovering the VDR balanced against the potential use of the information. If it is decided to recover the VDR the investigator should be responsible for co-ordinating its recovery. The possibility of the capsule having sustained damage must be considered and specialist expertise will be required to ensure the best chance of recovering and preserving the evidence. In addition, the assistance and co-operation of the owners, insurers and the manufacturers of the VDR and those of the protective capsule may be required.

**Custody of VDR information:**

3 In all circumstances, during the course of an investigation, the investigator should have custody of the original VDR information in the same way that the investigator would have custody of other records or evidence under the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *investigator* refers to the Marine Casualty Investigator as per the terms of the Code for Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to paragraph 4.11 of the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents, as adopted by resolution A.849(20).

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### **Read-out of VDR information:**

4 In all circumstances the investigator is responsible to arrange down loading and read-out of the information and should keep the ship owner fully informed. In some cases, the assistance of specialist expertise may be required.

### **Access to the VDR information:**

5 A copy of the VDR information must be provided to the ship owner at an early stage in all circumstances.

6 Further access to the information will be governed by the applicable domestic legislation of the flag State, coastal State and other substantially interested States as appropriate and the guidelines given in the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents.

7 Any disclosure of VDR information should be in accordance with section 10 of the Code for the Investigation of Marine Casualties and Incidents.

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