



MPA
SINGAPORE

MARITIME AND PORT AUTHORITY OF SINGAPORE
SHIPPING CIRCULAR
NO. 14 OF 2021

MPA Shipping Division
460 Alexandra Road
21st Storey mTower
Singapore 119963
Fax: 6375 6231
<http://www.mpa.gov.sg>

8 December 2021

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

VOYAGE DATA RECORDER (VDR / SVDR) AND CASUALTY INVESTIGATIONS

This Shipping Circular supplements Shipping Circulars No. 9 of 2006, No. 6 of 2007 and No. 17 of 2008.

2 All shipowners, ship managers, ship operators, Masters and officers of Singapore registered ships are reminded that in the event of a marine casualty or incident, collection and analysis of the vessel's VDR/SVDR may provide evidence critical to a casualty investigation.

3 The VDR/SVDR fitted on board, if installed on or after 1 July 2014, shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the Resolution MSC.333(90). If installed before 1 July 2014, the VDR/SVDR shall conform to the performance standards not inferior to those specified in the annex to Resolution A.861(20), as amended by Resolution MSC.214(81).

4 Ship owners, ship managers, ship operators, Masters and officers of Singapore registered ships must therefore ensure that steps are taken to preserve and collect VDR/SVDR 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/SVDR data. The Master is responsible to ensure timely preservation and collection of the VDR/SVDR data.

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

7 This Administration advises Masters to refer to the manufacturer's instructions for procedures specific to each model of the VDR/SVDR; and if necessary, engage a manufacturer's authorised technician to recover the VDR/SVDR data for analysis in order to avoid loss or corruption of data.

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

9 This Administration requires that a complete copy of the VDR/SVDR data, including the audio recording, be saved to digital media, such as a DVD or flash drive, with the relevant instructions or required software to access the data, and send to this Administration as soon as possible: -

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

10 In addition, this Administration requires every marine casualty be reported. An initial report may be in the form of a simple notification, so that a preliminary inquiry may be commenced promptly. The official notification of a marine casualty or incident must be made using the MPA Report of a Marine Casualty or Marine Incident as per Shipping Circular No. 8 of 2021.

11 To further enhance familiarity on VDR/SVDR usage, Master, ship managers and ship operators shall additionally consider including the data saving and/or retrieval of the VDR/SVDR as part of Emergency and Abandon Ship training and drills.

12 Queries relating to this circular should be directed to ivd@mpa.gov.sg .

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

Annex A of Shipping Circular No. 14 of 2021

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR

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



IMO

E

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 investigator¹ 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 States² 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.

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

² 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.
