

NAVIGATION AND VESSEL INSPECTION CIRCULAR NO. 18-82
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Subj: Form B Load Lines; Procedures for Issuance of Certificates

1. **PURPOSE.** The purpose of this Circular is to provide the marine industry and Coast Guard personnel with uniform guidance and instruction on the procedures for obtaining and issuing Form B Load Line Certificates.
2. **APPLICATION.** This Circular is applicable to vessels 79 feet or more in length and existing vessels of 150 gross tons or over, which fly the flag of a State, the government of which is not signatory to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 (ICLL 66), when in U. S. waters. An existing vessel is a vessel, the keel of which was laid, or which was at a similar stage of construction, prior to 21 July 1968.
3. **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This Circular is effective on the date of publication.
4. **BACKGROUND.**
 - a. The only load line certificates recognized by the U.S. on foreign vessels are those required by the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 (ICLL 66), unless a country is still within the maximum two-year grace period set forth in Article 16(4). This Article states that any International Load Line Certificate which is current when the 1966 Convention comes into force, with respect to the government of the state whose flag the ship is flying, shall remain valid for two years or until it expires, whichever is earlier. (46 CFR 42.07-1(f) and 42.07-45(b)(2)) Article 17 of ICLL 66 prohibits the issuance of a 1966 International Load Line Certificate to any vessel which is flying the flag of a State, the government of which is not a contracting government to the Convention. Therefore, each vessel which flies the flag of a country not signatory to the ICLL 66 is subject to U.S. load line regulations when within jurisdictional waters of the U.S. and must obtain a Form B Load Line Certificate. (46 CFR 42.03-10(d)).

Countries signatory to ILLC 66 are listed in Plate 65-7-B2.1 of the Marine Safety Manual, COMDTINST M16000.3.
 - b. Survey, marking and certification requirements for Form B Load Lines are referenced in 46 CFR 42.09-20. Periodic survey specifications are in 46 CFR 42.09-15(c) and those for annual surveys for certificate endorsement are in 46 CFR 42.09-15(d) and 42.09-40.

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- c. The prime load line assigning and issuing authority for the U.S. is the American Bureau of Shipping (46 CFR 42.07-35), but may be any classification society recognized by the Commandant (46 CFR 42.07-40). The appointment of a classification society other than ABS for a specific vessel will be considered by the Commandant upon written request from the vessel's owner or agent.
- d. The strength of the vessel shall be in accordance with the requirements of the assigning and issuing authority (46 CFR 42.13-5). That authority must satisfy itself that the general structural strength of the vessel is sufficient for the draft corresponding to the freeboard assigned.
- e. Information to the master (46 CFR 42.15-1) should include both strength (unless deemed unnecessary for that design or class by the Commandant) and stability. Strength information should be in a form approved by the assigning and issuing authority and should be sufficient for the master to arrange for loading and ballasting of his vessel in such a way as to avoid the creation of any unacceptable stresses in the vessel's structure. Stability information should be in a form approved by the Commandant and should be sufficient to give the master guidance as to the stability of the vessel under varying conditions of service. NOTE: Only the format and general content of stability information are reviewed by the Commandant. No detailed effort to check calculations on behalf of the flag State is contemplated since this is the prerogative of the flag State.
- f. Application for a Form B Load Line Certificate is as specified in 46 CFR 42.11-10. The owner, master or agent of the vessel normally shall apply in writing to the American Bureau of Shipping, or to any other classification society recognized by the Commandant as an assigning and issuing authority, for the assignment, survey and certification of load lines, or for reissue of a load line certificate, as may be necessary for the vessel to clear ports of the U.S., the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the territory of Guam or other U.S. possessions. Normally the same requirements, conditions, procedures, distribution of applicable certificates, etc, shall be applied to such foreign vessels as are applied to U.S. flag vessels receiving International Load Line Certificates.
- g. The format of certificates issued to foreign vessels of countries that have not ratified or acceded to ICLL 66 is mandated in 46 CFR 42.07-45(e)(2) and is as specified in 46 CFR 42.50-10.

5. DISCUSSION.

- a. There are provisional (temporary) and full term (permanent) Form B certificates. A permanent certificate is issued by the assigning authority if the vessel has been found to meet all Form B load line safety requirements and has stability information to the master which has been reviewed and accepted by the Commandant. The temporary certificate (46 CFR 42.07-45(e)) is issued when a minor discrepancy to the Form B load line requirements exists which does not immediately jeopardize the safe operation of the vessel. The discrepancy most often found is the lack of stability information for the master in the proper form on board the vessel. Temporary certificates are authorized by the Coast Guard for a validation period not exceeding six (6) months. This period is considered sufficient time to obtain approved stability information or to correct any other minor discrepancies.
- b. Those classification societies (other than the American Bureau of Shipping) that to date have been recognized by the Commandant as assigning and issuing authorities for Form B

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certificates have maintained fully qualified surveyors in the U.S. and a principal surveyor's office in North America.

- c. The American Bureau of Shipping has been delegated authority to issue provisional (temporary) Form B certificates without the authorization of the Commandant. With this exception, all classification societies should receive prior authorization from the Commandant before issuing either provisional or permanent Form B certificates (46 CFR 42.07-40).
- d. Form B load line requirements as applied to foreign vessels of countries not signatory to ICLL 66 are normally the same as those applied to U.S. flag vessels receiving International Load Line certificates (46 CFR 42.11-10). Those requirements are specified in all of 46 CFR Part 42 and include surveys (Subpart 42.09), application for load line assignment (Subpart 42.11), structural strength, freeboard assignment, and marking (Subpart 42.13), and information to the master, watertight integrity, and crew protection (Subpart 42.15).
- e. The assigning and issuing authority shall satisfy itself that the general structural strength of the vessel is sufficient for the draft corresponding to the freeboard assigned (46 CFR 42.13-5). The assigning authority should report to the Commandant the specific matters in which the vessel is deficient (46 CFR 42.13-10(f)).
- f. All vessels should have stability information on board according to 46 CFR 42.15-1. In order for this information to give guidance to the master as to the stability of his vessel under varying conditions of service, the information should be in the language of the flag State. If the language of the master and officers differ from that of the flag State, then a translated copy of the stability information in that language should be on board the vessel for the use of the master and officers.
- g. The form of stability information (46 CFR 42.15-1(b)) as generally approved by the Commandant for authorization of permanent certificates should include:
 - (1) instructions for using the included stability data to calculate the varying loading conditions;
 - (2) lightship condition (displacement, longitudinal and vertical centers of gravity, draft and trim) (46 CFR 42.09-1(a)(1));
 - (3) typical loading conditions (covering the normal range of operation) and;
 - (4) sufficient information to calculate other loading conditions such as -
 - (a) hydrostatic data;
 - (b) tank and cargo capacity information (weights and centers of gravity);
 - (c) free surface information for all tanks;
 - (d) minimum GM, maximum KG curves or data necessary to plot righting arm curves; and

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- (e) one or more loading condition calculation sheets (blanks).

The above information should be included in one booklet. The stability data should be applicable to the specific vessel and the cover should indicate the current vessel name. It is not necessary to submit inclining experiment information other than the resulting lightship data above.

If a vessel is loading grain, as defined in Chapter VI of SOLAS, 1974, in U.S. waters, a document of authorization and certificate of loading will be required as per 46 CFR 93.20- "Bulk Grain Cargoes." Grain loading stability data should be submitted separately to the National Cargo Bureau for approval in conjunction with the issuance of the document of authorization.

Stability information provided under an international convention for the safety of life at sea in force will not be accepted without review and approval of form by the Commandant.

Commandant review of stability information does not imply approval of the content on behalf of this or any other administration. This review is conducted solely to establish compliance with United States regulations applicable to voyages on the navigable waters of the U.S. and its territories and possessions.

- h. Form B Load Line markings (plimsol, seasonal and draft) on steel hulls should be permanently placed on the sides of the vessel (46 CFR 42.13-40). The use of conventional weld beading for outlining and paints which contrast with the color of the hull are encouraged. Markings that are only painted or painted and outlined with punching or gouging into steel are discouraged.
- i. Requests for authorization of classification societies to issue Form B certificates should be addressed to:

Commandant (G-MTH-5)
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 2nd St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20593

The letter (or telex) should include the following vessel particulars:

- (1) vessel name (present and former name if applicable);
 - (2) port of registry and flag State;
 - (3) classification society with which the vessel is classed;
 - (4) classification society which is to issue the certificate;
 - (5) address and phone number of the owner or agent.
- j. The validity of a Form B certificate is naturally affected by changes in vessel status, particularly the following:

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- (1) vessel name.
- (2) port of registry and flag State.
- (3) assigning and issuing authority.
- (4) structural configuration (46 CFR 42.13-5 and 42.15).
- (5) stability (lightship change or change to the stability information).

Reapplication for a new certificate reflecting such changes will ensure that no obstacles to entry into U.S. waters exists with regard to these items.

Certain causes for automatic cancellation of Form B certificates are specified in 46 CFR 42.07-55(b).

6. ACTION.

- a. Owners, masters, or agents of vessels which are classed by American Bureau of Shipping and which require Form B certificates should apply to that society in writing (46 CFR 42.11-10(b)).
- b. Owners, masters, or agents of vessels which are -
 - (1) classed by a recognized society other than the American Bureau of Shipping;
 - (2) classed but desire an assigning and issuing authority other than the society with which it is classed; or
 - (3) unclassified,should apply to the Commandant for authorization of a Form B certificate and/or permission to use the assigning and issuing authority of their choice. Application should be made to the address in paragraph 5.i, including the listed vessel particulars (46 CFR 42.11-10(b)).
- c. Owners, masters, or agents of vessels requiring Form B certificates should submit two (2) copies of the vessel's stability information to the Commandant (G-MTH-5) along with the information identified in paragraph 5.i, if not previously provided. The stability information should contain the information identified in paragraphs 5.f and 5.g (46 CFR 42.07-25).
- d. The master and/or owner is responsible for ensuring that both the Form B certificate and approved stability information are on board the vessel when in U.S. waters (46 CFR 42.07-50 and 42.09-1(c)).
- e. Classification societies may issue a provisional Form B certificate to each vessel subject to the following conditions:

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- (1) Commandant authorization;
 - (2) completed on board surveys in accordance with 46 CFR Subpart 42.09 in particular 46 CFR 42.09-20;
 - (3) structural strength as per 46 CFR 42.13-5;
 - (4) vessel stability information on board as per 46 CFR 42.15-1; and
 - (5) watertight integrity as per 46 CFR Subpart 42.15 in general.
- f. Classification societies may issue permanent Form B certificates to each vessel subject to the following conditions:
- (1) receipt of Commandant authorization; and
 - (2) the same structural strength and watertight integrity standards as for the provisional certificate above.

Classification societies should attach the copy of the approved stability information, received from the Commandant with the authorization letter, to the Form B certificate being sent to the owner or agent. This will help to ensure that the stability information is placed on board the vessel.

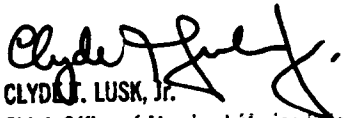
- g. Classification societies should conduct annual surveys in accordance with the requirements in 46 CFR 42.09(d) and 42.09-40.
- h. Classification societies may renew permanent Form B certificates to each vessel for a period not to exceed five (5) years from the date of the previous periodic survey, subject to the same conditions of assignment (46 CFR 42.09-15(c)).
- i. Classification societies should issue Form B certificates using the form specified in 46 CFR 42.50-10. The word, "PROVISIONAL", should be included in the heading of all provisional Form B certificates issued. On the face of all provisional certificates, the issuing agency should include the following statement:

"This certificate is issued under the authority of the U.S. Coast Guard dated (date of authorization letter)."

Copies of all provisional and permanent Form B certificates issued should be sent to the Commandant (G-MTH-5) at the address in paragraph 5.i.

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- j. Classification societies should, when issuing provisional certificates, include a statement in their letters to the owner or agent as per Enclosure (1).
- k. Guidelines for Coast Guard personnel regarding the issuance and enforcement of Form B certificates are in Section 65-7-D-6 of the Marine Safety Manual.


CLYDE J. LUSK, Jr.
Chief, Office of Merchant Marine Safety

End: (1) Statement in Classification Society Letter to Vessel Owner or Agent for Provisional Certificates.

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STATEMENT IN CLASSIFICATION SOCIETY LETTER TO VESSEL OWNER OR AGENT FOR
PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATES

"In order to satisfy United States regulations, stability information in accordance with 46 CFR 42.15-1 must be submitted to the Coast Guard at the following address:

Commandant (G-MTH-5)
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 2nd St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20593

After satisfactory Coast Guard review of this stability information, a full term Form B Load Line Certificate, valid only on the navigable waters of the United States and its territories and possessions, may be issued. Your attention is directed to the Form B Load Line procedures contained in the U.S. Coast Guard Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular No. 18-82 .”