

27TH FORUM OF UN/UNCEFACT

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Ship's electronic certificates: FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2

FAL.5/Circ.39/Rev.2: Guidelines on the use of electronic certificates (ships)

- To facilitate the use and acceptance of electronic certificates
- Signed paper certificates issued by Governments and recognized organizations authorized to act on their behalf have been the traditional means of documenting compliance with IMO requirements.
- Contracting Governments using electronic certificates, including printed versions of electronic certificates, have experienced instances of port State control officers or other stakeholders denying the validity of these certificates, resulting in a burden to the master and crew, shipowner or operator, port State control officers, Administration and other stakeholders.
- Definitions:
 - Unique tracking number means a string of numbers, letters or symbols used as an identifier to distinguish an electronic certificate issued by an Administration or its representative from any other electronic certificate issued by the same Administration or its representative; and
 - Verifying means a reliable, secure and continuously available process to confirm the authenticity and validity of an electronic certificate using the unique tracking number and other data contained on or embedded in the electronic certificate.

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- Administrations that use electronic certificates should ensure that these certificates have the following features:
 - .1 validity and consistency with the format and content required by the relevant international convention or instrument, as applicable;
 - .2 protected from edits, modifications or revisions other than those authorized by the issuer or the Administration;
 - .3 a unique tracking number used for verification; and
 - .4 a printable and visible symbol that confirms the source of issuance.
 - Administrations that use websites for online viewing or verifying electronic certificates should ensure that these sites are constructed and managed in accordance with established information security standards for access control, fraud prevention, resistance to cyberattacks and resilience to man-made and natural disasters

- Instructions for verifying the information contained in the electronic certificate, including confirmation of periodic endorsements, when necessary, should be available on board the ship.
- All stakeholders should accept electronic certificates containing the features identified in section 4. These electronic certificates should be verified, when necessary, following the instructions available on board the ship. Furthermore, port State control officers, in accepting electronic certificates, should follow the *Procedures for Port State Control, 2011* (resolution A.1052(27)).
- FAL 40 approved amendments to resolution A.1052(27) on procedures for port State Control, i.e. to put at the same level a certificate issued electronically or on paper