



JAAKKO KILPINEN

Registration of a newbuilt commercial vessel into the Finnish ship registry

SEA CAPTAIN

2023

ABSTRACT

Kilpinen Jaakko: Registration of a newbuilt commercial vessel into the Finnish ship registry

Bachelor's thesis

Bachelor of Maritime Management

December 2023

number of pages: 29

In this thesis, I set out to explore the different aspects of ship requirements in terms of registering one for commercial use. Using international online publications and websites the process itself turned out to be relatively simple but the sheer amount of information on different kinds of requirements and the massive number of requirements themselves proved to make the in-depth exploration of the topic seem out of scope for this thesis. In the end the thesis turned out to be a superficial look into the matter and mostly serve as reading material to start looking into the topic itself and perhaps pique an interest in ship ownership and commercial use. In conclusion the matter of ship registration is simple but very in-depth in terms of legal requirements.

Keywords: Ship Registration, Traficom, Vessel, International Maritime Organization, SOLAS, MARPOL.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	4
2 GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY	5
3 NATIONAL LAWS & REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING NEW VESSELS...	6
4 INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW VESSELS	7
4.1 IMO	7
4.1.1 SOLAS	7
4.1.2 MARPOL	13
4.1.3 Documents required to be onboard vessels according to SOLAS.	15
4.2 EU	21
4.3 ILO	21
5 INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH COMMERCIAL VESSELS IN FINLAND	23
5.1 Traficom.....	23
5.2 Aluehallintovirasto – Regional State Administrative Agency	23
6 FINNISH SHIP REGISTRY	24
7 REGISTRATION PROCESS TO THE FINNISH SHIP REGISTRY	25
8 REFERENCES	28

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to open and explain the process of registering a newly built vessel intended for commercial use under the Finnish flag, the laws and regulations which surround the process and the institutions in-charge of it.

The idea for this thesis came from working onboard newly constructed vessels still going through the common stiffness of learning the vessel and how the various systems function. This paired with the evolving maritime field in general due to the stricter regulations pertaining to environmental conservation and lowering CO_2 emissions in accordance with EU & global laws and guidelines, which also brings about new technologies made me interested in what all goes into registering a new vessel specifically for commercial use in Finland. As the resources for environmental aspects are still scarce, the focus will be more on the present requirements from ship construction and stability to various bodies involved in vessel operation in commercial use. The topic in general is very defined with a huge volume of information available so there will be things only briefly touched upon or omitted for the sake of this thesis not being a few hundred pages long full of rather complicated legal terms and mathematical formulas.

That being said I hope this thesis makes for an informative and interesting read which might spark an interest in the topic.

2 GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Finnish flag in terms of this thesis means the nationality of the vessel attached to it, I.e., if the Vessel is Finnish flagged then it sails under the Finnish flag.

Flag state means a country to which a vessel is registered to.

European economic zone is a collection of geographically European states who have agreed to co-operate in trade related matters.

Signal letters are a series of letters and/or digits which act as a quick and easy way to identify a specific ship.

IMO number is a long series of numbers unique to a given registered vessel and is used to identify vessels.

Personal Protective Equipment means safety equipment meant to be carried on-person during work related duties and it is aimed at preventing or lessening the chance of a life-threatening injury.

3 NATIONAL LAWS & REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING NEW VESSELS

As this thesis mainly focuses on Finnish flagged vessels, there are legal definitions for what constitutes a vessel as Finnish. The documentation is found in Finnish Sea law and is translated to English as follows: “The vessel is Finnish and entitled to use the Finnish flag if a Finnish citizen or juridical entity owns more than 60% of the vessel.”. Secondary factors are also considered which include a person or a juridical entity who is based in the European economic zone or the vessel is managed and operated from Finland. If the owner is not managing and operating the vessel from Finland, they can also appoint a representative to do so whose primary residence is in Finland and the vessel is removed from the ship registry of another nation while it is placed either into a traffic matters registry or the ship registry kept by the Åland regional government. (Merilaki 674/1994)

Additionally, the vessel may be accepted as Finnish if from the documentation of the vessel it may deduced that the use of the vessel for seafaring is decisively in the hands of Finnish persons, or the vessel meets the criteria for ship safety for new built vessels and it being registered to Finland is estimated to further Finnish seafaring as a livelihood and positively impacts employment rates. Furthermore, if the vessel does not have even a single Finnish owner, there must be a way for a Finnish citizen to affect the decision making or be represented in the ownership structure. (Merilaki 674/1994)

Registering a vessel under the Finnish flag is also touched upon. The vessel used for commercial maritime activity must be recorded into the Traffic matters registry or the ship registry kept by the Åland regional government. (Laki liikenteen palveluista 320/2017, section 2, chapter 10)

4 INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW VESSELS

This section will focus on the various rules and regulations on vessels which stem from international organizations which are usually incorporated into national level laws and regulations. There will also be a brief overview of the bodies or publications which are involved in the subject. Some international publications play a major role in defining regulations for vessels so the construction portions will also be included here in a rather condensed form factor.

4.1 IMO

The International Maritime organization, from now on referred to as “IMO”, is an institution under the United Nations which is responsible for creating rules and regulations for the maritime sector. The regulations are not legally binding as they are, however 175 countries are IMO member states meaning that they usually accredit the IMO resolutions and guides as national laws. This essentially makes the IMO a governing body in the maritime field and as such they set several requirements for newbuilt ships in form of various publications that detail requirements for safety and structural integrity. (Website of the International Maritime Organization 2019)

4.1.1 SOLAS

The International Convention for the Safety of life at sea, abbreviated as SOLAS, is an IMO convention put forth in 1914 in wake of the loss of the Titanic. The aim of the convention is to make the maritime sector safer by enacting safety standards such as the number and make of lifeboats & liferafts, which then become legal requirements imposed by the various IMO member states. The convention has since been updated several times in 1929, 1948, 1960 and most recently in 1974 which is currently in use but often referred to

as SOLAS, 1974, as amended. As of the latest amended version of the convention it includes 14 chapters in total which specify the requirements for all vessels as per the convention. I will give an overview of the portions in the convention which cover construction below (Website of the International Maritime Organization 2019)

Chapter 1 covers the general provisions of the convention and includes regulations pertaining to the surveying of different vessels and the documents, which signify that the ship in question meets the requirements set out in the convention. Surveying covers life-saving appliances e.g., Life buoys, radio installations onboard, structure, machinery and equipment onboard cargo vessels. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

The chapter also specifies the issuing or endorsing documentation as well as their duration of validity; for passenger vessel safety certificate the maximum duration is 12 months and for cargo vessels the period for safety construction-, safety equipment- and safety radio certificate is no more than five years. However, if there is a renewal survey within three months of the expiry dates for either a passenger vessel certificate or a cargo vessel certificate, the new certificate cannot exceed the 12 months and five years respectively from the renewal survey. In other words, the ship cannot receive “extra” months of validity if done relatively early before expiry. Alternatively, if the renewal survey is done after the expiry date of the certificate, the new document will not “lose” months, the new expiry date cannot exceed the 12 months or 5 years, but it will not have any negative consequences in terms of duration. The ship may also not be in port when a certificate expires, in these cases the relevant authority can extend the duration of the certificate to allow the vessel to make it to a port to be surveyed, if it is reasonable and even in such cases the maximum allowed extension is three months. In the case that the extension is not granted, the ship can leave port without a certificate to a port where it is to be surveyed. When a ship is transferred to another flag state, the ship must fulfill satisfactorily the conditions laid out in the Chapter regulations 7, 8, 9 and 10. These being surveys of passenger ships, surveys of Life-saving appliances

and other equipment of cargo ships, surveys of radio installations of cargo ships and surveys of structure, machinery and equipment of cargo ships respectively. After which the former flag state should transfer all relevant documents and the available survey reports. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

Chapter II is split into two parts: Chapter II-1 and II-2. The chapter covers the construction of the vessel, and the first of the two chapters specifically covers the structure, subdivisions, stability and machinery as well as electrical installations onboard. All in all, the chapter contains 57 regulations. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

Part A of the chapter contains structural definitions with 13 regulations in total. First of the regulations is in Part A-1, Regulation 3-1 which covers the structural, mechanical and electrical requirements and contains the following: “In addition to the requirements contained elsewhere in the present regulations, ships shall be designed, constructed and maintained in compliance with the structural, mechanical and electrical requirements of a classification society which is recognized by the Administration in accordance with the provisions of regulation XI-1/1, or with applicable national standards of the Administration which provide an equivalent level of safety.”. This basically means that the ship must be approved by a classification society which then grants a classification certificate, approving the vessel for admission to a ship register and the ability to obtain marine insurance on the vessel which may be required for the vessel to enter certain areas or ports. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

Part B details the requirements for the stability of the vessel as well as the subdivisions and water- & weathertightness. The stability portion of the requirements are in essence the calculations required to deem a ship stable and the stability management required to be considered when designing a

vessel. This part of the convention consists of nine regulations with two of them being especially for passenger ships and they expand upon the requirements for system functionality after a flooding casualty, with casualty being a nautical term for a vessel suffering from flooding. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

Stability of vessels is of great importance and as such there exists another code which covers stability by itself and is referred to in SOLAS, the code is called the “International Code on Intact Stability, 2008” or “2008 IS Code”. the code includes mandatory criteria for ship stability as well as recommendations and additional guidelines for specific types of vessels. The types of vessels covered are as follows: Cargo ships, Cargo ships carrying timber deck cargoes, passenger ships, fishing vessels, special purpose ships, offshore supply vessels, mobile offshore drilling units, pontoons and cargo ships carrying containers on deck and containerships. Since the code is rather technical and mostly comprises of calculations and graphs, I have the general purpose of the code itself here. The code is meant to have the mandatory and recommended stability criteria in a single document to make ship operation and working onboard safer as well as ultimately more environmentally friendly. (International code on intact stability, 2008. MSC 85/26/Add. 1, ANNEX 2, Page 6)

The following regulations after stability in general are a major part of ship design so explanation is in order. The regulations cover as mentioned in the previous chapter, subdivisions, which mean a section of a ship which can be closed off from one another by means of watertight compartments, usually in the form a watertight door or a watertight bulkhead. The number of subdivisions depend on the length of the vessel and its intended purpose, with the most stringent regulations concerning passenger vessels. Watertightness is also defined in the chapter, and it is as follows: “Watertight means having scantlings and arrangements capable of preventing the passage of water in any direction under the head of water likely to occur in intact and damaged

conditions. In the damaged condition, the head of water is to be considered in the worst situation at equilibrium, including intermediate stages of flooding.” (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

The technical specification in layman’s terms just means that the space must be able to contain the water within itself, below the top of water level in said space. This means the water can flow from one watertight compartment to another, provided the space fills up to the ceiling and flows over to the next compartment. However, the space itself must not allow water to exit it through the walls, any passthroughs such as electrical, and the doorways. An example would be a storage room being filled with water and above the room is a mess hall, the mess hall might have multiple watertight compartments below it. The water can trickle through the ceiling of the storage room into the mess hall where it can flow, for example, across the space and then find its way into the adjacent compartments to the storage room. Scantlings are a technical term which just means the frames on which hull plating is attached to, excluding the keel of the ship. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

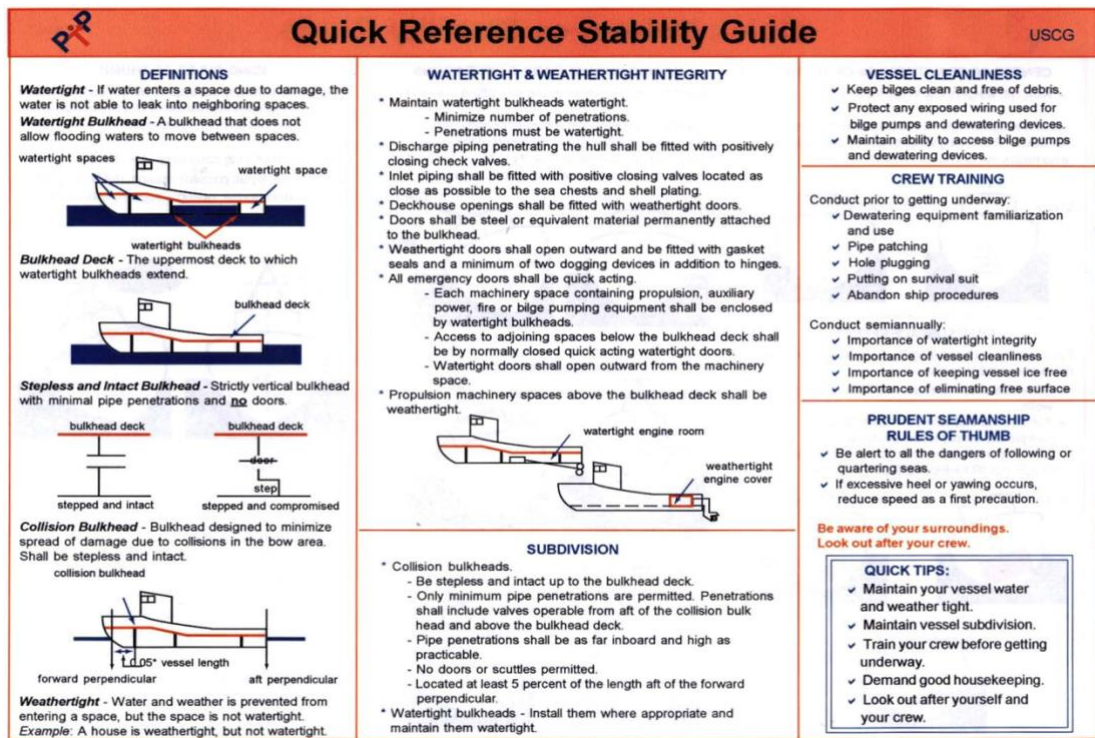


Figure 1 – An example from the United States Coast Guard on water- and weathertightness. Source: USCG.mil

Figure 1. Quick Reference Stability guide (United States Coast Guard website 2023.) is a reference image from the United States coast guard for bulkheads, watertight and weathertight integrity, subdivisions and other related miscellaneous points with concise definitions aimed at fishing vessels but the idea of it is present in larger commercial vessels as well. These basically make up the stability and seaworthiness aspects of SOLAS in consideration of the topic of a new vessel being registered. In addition, they must be marked on the technical drawings of the ship which should also be visible to everyone onboard. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

Next parts of the chapter include machinery and electrical installations but covering them in same detail as stability would get very technical and outside the area of study, but briefly put the chapter touches the machinery itself and associated systems such as steering gear, machinery controls, boilers and their systems, steam systems, air systems and ventilation. Electrical side of the requirements have things such as emergency power for lighting and other critical systems as well as the precautions to be taken against electrical shock

and fires. Important to note is that periodically unmanned engine rooms have some additional regulations associated with them such as alarm systems and the special requirements for all machinery installations contained within the space. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

The second part of the chapter 2, titled Chapter II-2, contains regulations about fire protection, detection and extinction measures. The basics of it are the regulations about the make and type of fire detectors and their placement throughout the ship as well as their marking signs onboard. There are also regulations about fire detection systems and their placement and markings. One type of system consists of several detectors across the ship, and they all connect to a master panel which then can indicate the location of the fire remotely, or if needed disable the singular sensor if it happens to malfunction or fire work must be done in the space. Third largest aspect would be the fire doors and walls which control the spread of fire, smoke and heat. They are classified into different categories which basically indicate their performance, for example A60 rated door is rated to protect people for 60 minutes from fire. The designation A60 comes from SOLAS and can cover doors, decks, windows or walls. From my own experiences these are important factors to be taken into consideration and are also looked at during inspections and surveys in detail such as the condition of doors, meaning they aren't modified in any way and that they aren't held permanently open by means of latches or hooks. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea, 1974, as amended 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

4.1.2 MARPOL

MARPOL is a convention set out to lessen the environmental impact from ships conducting trade across oceans, this has gained more attention as of late with

the discussion of plastic waste littering the ocean. The convention was established in 1973 and covers aspects such as oil pollution, noxious liquids or harmful substances being carried in bulk or packaged form, sewage pollution, garbage pollution or air pollution. For most mariners the most familiar aspect of this code would be the garbage pollution poster found onboard the vast majority of vessels. (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, Amended 2023 (Resolutions MEPC.344(78))

Simplified overview of the discharge provisions of the revised MARPOL Annex V which entered into force on 1 March 2018

DISCLAIMER: Additional requirements may apply.

(Note: The table below is intended as a summary reference. The provisions in MARPOL Annex V and the Polar Code, not the table below, prevail.)

Garbage type ¹	All ships except platforms ⁴		Regulation 5 Offshore platforms located more than 12 nm from nearest land and ships when alongside or within 500 metres of such platforms ⁴
	Regulation 4 Outside special areas and Arctic waters (Distances are from the nearest land)	Regulation 6 Within special areas and Arctic waters (Distances are from nearest land, nearest ice-shelf or nearest fast ice)	
Food waste comminuted or ground ²	≥3 nm, en route and as far as practicable	≥12 nm, en route and as far as practicable ³	Discharge permitted
Food waste not comminuted or ground	≥12 nm, en route and as far as practicable	Discharge prohibited	Discharge prohibited
Cargo residues ^{5, 6} not contained in washwater		Discharge prohibited	
Cargo residues ^{5, 6} contained in washwater	≥ 12 nm, en route and as far as practicable	≥ 12 nm, en route and as far as practicable (subject to conditions in regulation 6.1.2 and paragraph 5.2.1.5 of part II-A of the Polar Code)	Discharge prohibited
Cleaning agents and additives ⁶ contained in cargo hold washwater	Discharge permitted	≥ 12 nm, en route and as far as practicable (subject to conditions in regulation 6.1.2 and paragraph 5.2.1.5 of part II-A of the Polar Code)	Discharge prohibited
Cleaning agents and additives ⁶ in deck and external surfaces washwater		Discharge permitted	
Animal Carcasses (should be split or otherwise treated to ensure the carcasses will sink immediately)	Must be en route and as far from the nearest land as possible. Should be >100 nm and maximum water depth	Discharge prohibited	Discharge prohibited
All other garbage including plastics, synthetic ropes, fishing gear, plastic garbage bags, incinerator ashes, clinkers, cooking oil, floating dunnage, lining and packing materials, paper, rags, glass, metal, bottles, crockery and similar refuse	Discharge prohibited	Discharge prohibited	Discharge prohibited

¹ When garbage is mixed with or contaminated by other harmful substances prohibited from discharge or having different discharge requirements, the more stringent requirements shall apply.

² Comminuted or ground food wastes must be able to pass through a screen with mesh no larger than 25 mm.

Figure 2 - A simplified MARPOL Annex V Poster

Figure 2. MARPOL annex V poster (International Maritime Organization 2019) is an IMO poster depicting the rules of garbage disposal while at sea and it is great at covering the most important factors and rules at a glance. From the poster already it is apparent that the rules are rather strict on disposal at sea and the focus has been shifting to disposal at ports. For vessels conducting long voyages this is rather impractical, so vessels usually possess an incinerator for waste disposal. The VI annex of the convention sets out regulations on what can be burned and prohibited items for example are PCB plastics, heavy metals, halogen compounds in petroleum products, sewage sludge and exhaust gas cleaning residues. (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, Amended 2023 (Resolutions MEPC.344(78))

In terms of newbuilt vessels the most important aspect of this convention would be the air pollution control. Most modern ships are fitted with an exhaust gas purifier, either in open or closed loop format and the requirements for such devices are set out in this convention. The various aspects are detailed in depth and opening them up further would be out the scope of this thesis but further reading on the topic can be found on IMO websites. (International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, Amended 2023 (Resolutions MEPC.344(78))

4.1.3 Documents required to be onboard vessels according to SOLAS

SOLAS also lays out the list of documentation which must be carried on board, I will list them out here in order they're presented with their exact names and a brief overview of what they meant or contain. References to the relevant documents can be found in SOLAS. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

All ships must carry the following documentation:

International Tonnage certificate, indicates the gross and net tonnage which are calculated according to the tonnage convention

International Load Line Certificate, which means the ship has independently surveyed load line markings (Plimsoll line).

International Load Line Exemption Certificate, this shows the ship has been granted an exception to load lines if applicable.

Intact Stability Booklet, which contains the stability calculations to the vessel in question and acts as a rapid read guide to the ship in all conditions.

Damage control plans and booklets, which mean plans permanently on display which show each deck and cargo holds with their respective watertight compartments, openings and means to close them.

Minimum safe manning document, which shows the minimum safe manning as approved by the governing authority.

Fire safety training manual, this must be written in the working language of the ship and be available in both the crew mess room and recreational room or in each cabin.

Fire Control plan or booklet, same as the damage control plan, shows the various firefighting systems and fire sections across the ship. Can also be in a booklet form which has to be supplied to all officers and one copy available to everyone in a place where everyone can access it.

On board training and drills record, which is a document visible onboard with drills and trainings and their dates.

Fire safety operational booklet, which describes the working practices onboard the ship and with the cargo in relation to fire safety. This document must be accessible to everyone and is in the working language of the ship, similarly to the fire safety training manual and can be combined with it.

Certificates for masters, officers or ratings which means the original STCW certificates must be kept onboard the ship on which the individual holding it is working on

International Oil Pollution Prevention Certificate is a document granted after a survey to a vessel when it meets the MARPOL regulation requirements

Oil Record Book is a book in which all oils onboard is marked upon and is required for vessels above 400 GT or oil tankers above 150 GT

Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency plan must be carried by all vessels above 400 GT and tankers above 150 GT, it details the actions step by step to be taken in case of an oil spill or an accident and it must be approved by the administrative government to which the vessel is flagged to.

International Sewage Pollution Prevention Certificate is a similar document as the oil pollution prevention certificate with similar requirements

Garbage management plan is a document required onboard every vessel above 400 GT or is rated to carry over 15 people which details the handling of garbage and that the crew will follow

Garbage Record Book is a document which details the amount of garbage offloaded by the vessel in ports

Voyage data recorder system certificate of compliance is a certificate issued by a testing facility which annually inspects the vessel's voyage data recorder for any faults or performance issues

Cargo Securing Manual covers cargo other than solid or liquid bulk cargo and is the document the ship must follow and fulfill before leaving port

Document of Compliance is issued to a company which follows and complies the ISM code requirements and a copy of the document is to be kept onboard

Safety Management Certificate shows that the ship and the company follow an approved safety management system and a copy is to be kept onboard.

International Ship Security Certificate or Interim International Ship Security Certificate is issued by the administrative government showing that the ship follows SOLAS chapter XI-2 and ISPS code part A

Ship Security Plan and associated records means that the ship carries an approved ship security plan and has considered the three security levels defined in the ISPS code. the following needs to be recorded:

1. training, drills and exercises
2. security threats and security incidents
3. breaches of security
4. changes in security level
5. communications concerning the ship such as direct threats against it or the ports it has visited
6. internal audits and reviews of security activities
7. periodic reviews of the ship security assessment
8. periodic reviews of the ship security plan
9. implementation of any possible amendments to the plan
10. maintenance, calibration or testing of any security equipment onboard, including the alert system

Continuous synopsis record or CSR is a system which provides an on-board record of the ship's history in terms of the information stored within it.

These are required by all vessels however passenger ships have more documents required and I will be listing them below:

Passenger Ship Safety Certificate is issued to a ship after an inspection and a survey to find if the ship complies with the SOLAS chapters II-1, II-2, III and IV.

Exemption Certificate is granted to vessel if it has been granted an exemption to the SOLAS requirements

Special Trade Passenger Ship Safety Certificate and the Special Trade Passenger Ship Space Certificate is given to the ship if it fulfills the conditions set out in the Special Trade Ships agreement of 1971

Search and Rescue co-operation plan is required onboard vessels for co-operation with search and rescue services in case of an emergency

List of operational limitations is a document listing the various conditions the ship cannot operate in

Decision support system for masters is found on all passenger ships to support the master of the vessel in emergency situations

These were the passenger ship specific documents and the requirements for cargo vessels can be found after them in the following order:

Cargo Ship safety Construction Certificate which is issued to a cargo ship over 500 GT after it passes a survey to find out whether the ship fulfills the SOLAS requirements laid out for it

Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate is a similar document to the construction certificate, but this document focuses on surveys to safety equipment fulfilling SOLAS requirements

Cargo Ship Safety Radio Certificate is for vessels of 300 GT and over with radio installations, including life-saving appliances, and is granted after a similar survey as the two previous documents

Exemption Certificate shows if the ship has exceptions to the documents listed above

Document of authorization for the carriage of grain which is issued to the ship when it is loaded with grain cargo for the master to be able to determine stability

Certificate of insurance or other financial security in respect of civil liability for oil pollution damage means a certificate that the ship is either

insured or has alternative arrangements in place if it carries more than 2000 tons of oil cargo in bulk form

Enhanced survey report file is a document needed onboard bulk carriers and oil tankers to show that it has passed enhanced inspections to meet SOLAS guidelines

Record of oil discharge monitoring and control system for the last ballast voyage which is record kept by an oil discharge monitoring system. the system is mandatory on all oil tankers 150GT and above and the records associated with it must be kept for at least 3 years

Cargo Information is supplied to the master of the vessel or an agent in advance of loading which includes all relevant information to the cargo

Bulk Carrier Booklet is a document meant for the ship to load and unload cargoes in a safe manner and without causing too much stress to the hull. This can be included in the intact stability booklet.

Dedicated Clean Ballast Tank Operation Manual is required on all oil tankers with separate dedicated clean water ballast tanks, and it specifies the details of the system and the operations connected to it.

Crude Oil Washing Operation and equipment manual (COW Manual) is found onboard crude oil wash capable oil tankers and it is a guide to the crude oil wash system and procedures associated with it

Condition Assessment Scheme (CAS) is a document required on oil tankers and is granted after a survey and found to be in compliance of it.

Hydrostatically Balanced Loading (HBL) Operational Manual is required onboard oil tankers if they are operating with hydrostatically balanced loading

Oil Discharge Monitoring and Control (ODMC) Operational Manual is similar to the HBL Operational Manual and is required if the oil tanker is fitted with the oil discharge monitoring and control system

Subdivision and Stability information is a form provided to the ship in an approved form to enable the ship to comply with damaged stability criteria set out in MARPOL

These documents are generally required onboard every vessel and them being in order is a requirement to pass Port State Control inspections which happen during set intervals. Important to note is the fact that the PSC inspection will be conducted by a different state than the one the vessel is registered to. In addition to the previous list of documents, ships carrying liquid bulk cargoes such as chemicals, oil products or gasses require certificates of fitness to carry such goods and they are granted after the ship is surveyed. (International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea 2020. Resolution MSC.436(99))

4.2 EU

The European Union or the EU mainly focuses on implementing IMO conventions and issuing regulations & directives concerning the maritime field in the European region. The EU also is focusing on lowering emissions with EU Emissions Trading System or the EU ETS. the system works on the principle of allocating emissions allowances for shipping companies to purchase and then use up. The amount of ETS allowances is lowered on a set interval to incentivize shipping companies to adopt more environmentally friendly fuels and systems which is an important factor to keep in mind when it comes to newbuilt vessels as such systems can be costly and at times unreliable to operate due to the new nature of the technologies involved. (Website of the European Commission of the European Union 2023)

4.3 ILO

ILO or the International Labour Organization is jointly with local authorities, responsible for the enforcement and standardization of minimum working and

living standards onboard ships and the most important document from the organization in regard to maritime is the Maritime Labour convention of 2006, referred to as the MLC 2006 from hereon in, which has been amended in 2018 and 2022. It acts as the overall rulebook of sorts on maritime work and worker rights onboard. The MLC touches upon subjects such as the minimum requirements for working on a ship, conditions of the employment, the accommodation and recreational opportunities, food, health protection, medical care and the compliance and enforcement of the code. (ILO Maritime Labour Convention MLC 2006, As Amended by the 2018 Amendment)

Onboard Finnish vessels and shipping companies, the work contracts follow Seafarers' Employment Contracts act and the rest hours follow the MLC 2006. The contract form shows things such as the working hours, the type of the contract (Permanent or fixed term), payment of wages and the pay period and health and social security protection. Each company of course has their own employment forms and associated terms along with them. (ILO Maritime Labour Convention MLC 2006, As Amended by the 2018 Amendment)

5 INSTITUTIONS DEALING WITH COMMERCIAL VESSELS IN FINLAND

The following agencies are the main bodies which deal with commercial vessels in Finland on a regular basis and which govern major aspects of commercial vessels such as the registration, certification and workplace safety. Below there will be a rather brief overview of the two in the biggest role in Finnish maritime affairs.

5.1 Traficom

Traficom or the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency is the government body responsible for ship registration in Finland and they also grant certificates of competence for seafarers. Traficom also keeps the ship registry for both commercial and private vessels alike as well as up to date nautical publications. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

5.2 Aluehallintovirasto – Regional State Administrative Agency

Most often shortened to Avi the Finnish Regional State Administrative Agency is mainly responsible for workplace safety, however the agency also handles various kinds of work permits, investigates serious workplace accidents and work-related illnesses and ensures the compliance of machinery, tools and personal protective equipment (shortened as PPE) which is intended for workplaces for professional usage. Most vessels are inspected by Avi on a set interval for things such as proper structural safety measures or PPE types and if they meet requirements. (Website of the Finnish Regional State Administrative Agency 2023)

6 FINNISH SHIP REGISTRY

Here I will give a brief overview of the Finnish ship registry which is based on the law on ship registry. The contents of the law specify that vessels under the Finnish flag with a length of more than 15 meters and are used for commercial purposes must be recorded within a registry kept by the Finnish traffic and telecommunications agency, abbreviated as Traficom. The registry also includes vessels under construction and the past details of vessels being marked into it. In the context of the law, floating platforms and other floating structures are considered as vessels as well. (Alusrekisterilaki 512/1993, section 1)

What is to be included in the registry in respect to the vessel being registered:

- Time of registration, registration number, name, previous names, home port, identifying letters and the IMO number.
- Type of vessels, gross tonnage, dimensions, builder, time of building and time as well as the purpose the vessel is to be used for.
- The name of the owner, nationality and place of residence as well as the share of ownership. if the owner is Finnish the social security number and the company number is also to be recorded.
- If the vessel is the property of a ship management company the previous information is to be recorded for the main company and the size of shares of all the other parties.

There also exists a history registry which is a collection of the vessel's entire history with no interruptions, and it is to be recorded in English, French or Spanish. It is forbidden to erase, change, expunge or make illegible any previous information about the ship in the registry. (Alusrekisterilaki 512/1993, section 1).

7 REGISTRATION PROCESS TO THE FINNISH SHIP REGISTRY

Now that some of the requirements for a commercial vessel have been laid out, from SOLAS requirements to actual documentation and the institutions dealing with them, this section will clarify the registration procedure itself. The process is clearly laid out on the Traficom.fi website and that is where this information is referred to from. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

In the first case of registration there is the ship which is purchased in Finland and intended to use in merchant shipping. One will need the original or a notarized copies of the ship's documents of title from the time of its completion and the Builders certificate. The document of title can be found on the bill of sale or protocol of delivery and acceptance for example. In the event these documents do not clearly mark the transfer of the title, the receipt for the payment for the vessel or the deed of transfer are required, these must be signed by the buyer, seller and two witnesses. The documents of title can be copies if the transfer happened within the last two months, however the originals will still have to be delivered to the register to be checked within those said two months. Lastly for the documentation, you will need the international tonnage certificate, which was listed earlier in the thesis on the list of documents needed onboard, the certificate must be international if the length of the vessel is greater than 12 meters. Do note that if you do not have the right to sign for the shipowner, you will need the power of attorney for the process. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

Next up you will need to fill out the provided registration form on the traficom.fi website and noteworthy is to ensure that the name of the vessel and home port are the same both on the form and in the previously mentioned international tonnage certificate. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

After the previous steps the last thing to do is to send the documents to the address provided in the application form and wait the usual 10 business days for the process to be handled. In case the vessel has a gross tonnage of more than 500 and it conducts business in international waters, it must possess a Continuous synopsis record, the details of which were listed in the needed documents section of this thesis as well as a call sign which can also be requested from Traficom. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

These were the requirements for a vessel bought from Finland so next up is the process if the vessel was bought from outside Finland, which is also a bit more intricate. First thing to do is to fill out a form to flag your vessel to Finland and send it to Traficom. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

Secondly, in case the ship was purchased used, the original or a notarized copy of the bill of sale is needed. In some cases when needed the memorandum of agreement and the protocol of delivery and acceptance. If the ship was purchased as a newbuilt, one can submit the original or the notarized copy of the builder's certificate and the protocol of delivery and acceptance. and like with the vessel bought from Finland the documents of title can be submitted as copies if the ownership was transferred within the last two months, but you must deliver the originals or notarized copies to the register to be checked within the said two months. In case the final transfer of the title is not clear from said documents, the receipt of payment or the deed of transfer will still be required, and they must be signed by the buyer, seller and two witnesses. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

Differing from the vessel bought from Finland, the original deletion certificate or the certificate of non-registration are needed from the country where the vessel was purchased from. These documents serve to prove that the vessel was removed from the ship registry of the country of sale and that the vessel

is free from encumbrances. The international tonnage certificate is also required if the vessel is longer than 12 meters. Likewise, as before if one does not have the right to sign on behalf of the ship owner, they will need the power of attorney. (Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency 2023)

After these steps comes the registration form for a vessel brought to Finland from abroad and sending of the documents to the address provided in the form. If the ship has a continuous synopsis record, it must also be submitted alongside those documents as well as the signal letter application if the vessel is used in international traffic. (Website of the Finnish Transportation and Communications Agency 2023)

These two are the most common scenarios for registering a vessel and they serve as great examples to clarify the process, for further reading on the topic there are great resources available on the internet. While the registration process itself is the culmination of the various parts of this thesis even if the process doesn't seem to be that complex, the various agencies and requirements come into play when getting insurance for the vessel, so knowing about them in the process of purchasing and registering a vessel is valuable. This concludes the Thesis.

8 REFERENCES

Website of the International Maritime organization. Referred 24.11.2023

www.imo.org

Merilaki. 1994. A 674/1994.

Laki liikenteen palveluista. 2017. A 320/2017.

Alusrekisterilaki. 1993. A 512/1993.

Website of the European Commission of the European Union. Referred 20.11.2023

https://commission.europa.eu/index_en

Website of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency. Referred 3.12.2023

Traficom.fi

Website of the Finnish Regional State Administrative Agency. Referred 3.12.2023

Avi.fi

Website of the United States Coast Guard. Referred 22.11.2023

USCG.mil

International Convention for the Safety Of Life At Sea 1974. (As amended 2020. (Resolution MSC.436(99))) Referred 20.10.2023

International Code on Intact Stability 2008. Referred 19.10.2023

ILO Maritime Labour Convention MLC 2006. (As Amended by the 2018 Amendment) Referred 12.12.2023

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978. (As Amended 2023 (Resolutions MEPC.344(78))) Referred 5.12.2023