

Isle of Man Ship Registry Registry Advice Notice



Small Ships Register

Ref. RAN 09 (Rev. 2)
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1. Introduction

The Merchant Shipping (Small Ships Register) Regulations 1991 allow for registration of qualifying vessels on the Small Ships Register (Part II of the Register). The register is a domestic register for locally owned ships (excluding fishing vessels) of less than 24 metres in overall length.

The Small Ships Register (SSR) provides an easier alternative to registration under [Part I](#) of the register for owners and provides owners with a Certificate of Registry that can be used to provide evidence of a ship's British Nationality when it is taken abroad. However, the SSR does not enable the ownership of title to a ship to be established or allow maritime mortgages to be registered against the vessel. Owners who require this facility should register under Part I of the register.

The primary contact for the Registry Team is registry.marine@gov.im and any further guidance or clarification of procedure may be obtained from the team as required. All Forms can be submitted electronically except for title documents (Bill of Sale / Builders Certificate).

All postal correspondence should be addressed to:

Registrar of Ships
Isle of Man Ship Registry
St Georges Court
Upper Church Street
Douglas
Isle of Man
IM1 1EX

2. Eligibility to Register

A ship is eligible for registration on the small ships register if it is under 24 metres in overall length, is not a fishing vessel or submersible and meets the following criteria for both legal title and beneficial ownership:

a. Legal Title to the Ship

The legal title to the ship must be vested wholly in one or more qualified persons or qualified companies.

For the SSR, a Qualified Person means:

- A person who is a British citizen resident and domiciled in the Isle of Man; or
- An Isle of Man Government Department.



A Qualified Company means:

- A company which is incorporated in the Isle of Man AND has its principal place of business in the Isle of Man; and
- A company with at least 75% of its shares (taken as a whole), and of each class of its shares is legally and beneficially owned by one or more qualified persons or companies; and
- A company which has at least 75% of its directors as qualified persons.

b. Beneficial Ownership

The vessel must be beneficially owned:

- Not less than 75% of the interest in the vessel to be beneficially owned by one or more qualified persons; or
- Wholly by a qualified company or companies; or
- By one or more qualified companies and, as to not less than 75% of the remainder of the property in the vessel, by one or more qualified persons.

3. Registration Procedure

Applicants wishing to register a vessel on the Small Ships Register should complete and return to the Registry Team:

- [SSR 01](#) for an individual applicant
- [SSR 01A](#) for a body corporate

The application must be accompanied by a [Bill of Sale](#) and [Builder's Certificate](#) (as appropriate) and in the case of:

- An Individual – A copy of their Passport and a recent Utility Bill
- A Body Corporate – A Certificate of Incorporation

Where a vessel has been previously registered with a different administration, please include a Deletion Certificate.

The Ship Registry retains the right not to register a ship bearing an undesirable name. These include names that may cause confusion in an emergency such as "Lifeboat" or "Mayday", prefixes such as "FV" or "HMS" and names that could be regarded as offensive. Where the owner wishes to submit a request to change a ship's name please refer to Form [REG 02](#).

If a vessel is currently registered under Part I of the register, under the United Kingdom Shipping Register or the Register of the Channel Islands; at a port in the Isle of Man, United Kingdom or Channel Islands, that registration may be closed and the ship registered on the SSR provided that no mortgage or certificate of mortgage or sale are recorded as affecting the ship or the shares of the ship. Please contact the Registry team where this facility is required.

Where the applicant's name and the name of the owner on the Part I register differ, the applicant must provide a Statement of Entitlement (Form SSR 02) signed by the present beneficial owner(s), and satisfactory evidence of ownership (e.g. Bill of Sale).

4. Measurement

As part of the application on Form SSR 01 the overall length of the vessel must be measured. It is acceptable for the owner to take this measurement themselves. The overall length is measured as the distance between the foreside of the foremost fixed permanent structure and the aftside of the aftermost fixed permanent structure.



If an owner has difficulty in obtaining the overall length or requires advice on taking the measurement, please contact the Ship Registry.

Where the vessel is found to be 24 metres (or a little more) in overall length it may still qualify. In this case, the owner should arrange for a qualified naval architect or ship surveyor to certify in Section F on Form SSR 01 that the ship is less than 24 metres in length when measured in accordance with the formula contained in the International Convention on the Tonnage Measurement of Ships 1969.

5. Marking

Following verification of application and completion of registration, the Registrar will issue the owner of the ship with a Certificate of Registry and Form SSR 04 denoting the Registration Number of the ship

Within one month of the date on which registration takes effect the owner must ensure that the registration number preceded by the letters 'SSR' is permanently marked on the ship. The form of the letters is left to the discretion of the owner, but it is suggested they take the form of self-adhesive PVC letters/numbers, self-adhesive white vinyl stickers or a number plate carved into hardwood/engraved in metal. Stickers or plates can be made up on application to any engraver or sign manufacturer. Once marked, the owner must make a declaration to the Ship Registry to the effect that the vessel is properly marked using Form SSR 04.

6. Renewal of Registration

The initial period of registration will be for five years from the date of issue of the Certificate of Registry. The registration can be renewed during the six month period prior to the date of expiry using form [SSR 1B](#) providing that no changes have occurred to the details included on the Certificate of Registry. Where changes occur to these details, the registration will terminate immediately. The registration number of the ship can be retained provided that application for re-registration is made within three months after the expiry or termination.

7. Fees

All fees applicable to the Small Ships Register are available on our [website](#).

Please note - The Isle of Man Ship Registry cannot give legal advice. Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel. You should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

