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**AQUATIC RESOURCES AUTHORITY OF PANAMA**



**TECHNICAL NOTICES**

**N° 071-2023**

**FOR:** Shipowners, Operator, Masters and Resident Agents

**ON BEHALF:** Directorate of Technical Cooperation and International Fisheries Affairs

**SUBJECT:** *Best Practices for the marking and identification of fishing vessels.*

**DATE:** December 14, 2023

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The Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama (ARAP) reiterates to Shipowners, Operators, Masters and Resident Agents, the best practices for the marking and identification of fishing vessels, based on the Standard Specifications of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Therefore, the Authority will ensure that all of its authorized Panamanian international service vessels comply with the marking in accordance with international standards, so that they can be easily identified, allowing the vessel to be linked to its identity, as recorded in the registries, as well as related operational and/or historical information, including fishing authorizations, among others.

Best practices for the marking and identification of fishing vessels include:

**Marking**

*Fishing vessels shall be marked with:*

- *IRCS or call sign, the vessel name or identification mark, the IMO number and the port of registry should be the only vessel identifiers consisting of letters and numbers to be painted on the hull or superstructure.*
- *The number 1 and 0 should be avoided in license or registration numbers to prevent confusion with the letters I and O.*
- *Any fishing craft carried onboard another fishing vessel and used for fishing operations should bear the same markings as the vessel they are carried on.*

**DISPLAY**

*The vessel marking should always be prominently displayed on:*

- *The port and starboard side of the vessel's hull or superstructure so that the marking can be sighted from another vessel or from the air.*

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- A deck (any horizontal surface, including the top of the bridge) with the top of the writing pointing towards the bow, or if the vessel is undecked on a board which can be seen clearly from the air.
- If the vessel markings are ever obscured by an awning or vessel cover, this should also carry the vessel markings.

**PLACEMENT**

The vessel marking must be placed:

- On the vessel's side or superstructure, as high as possible above the waterline and avoid areas such as the flare of the bow and stern.
- Where they are not obscured by fishing gear, either when stowed or in use.
- Away from areas which are prone to damage or discoloration, such as scuppers or outlets.

**LEGIBILITY**

The vessel marking should be:

- Painted using marine paint,
- White on a black background or black on a white background,
- Always maintained in good condition,
- Block letters and numbers should be used.

**PROPORTIONALITY**

The vessel markings should be:

- Proportional in their width to height
- Proportional in height to the size of the vessel
- At least 0.3 m in height for all vessels of 5 m length and over for markings on the deck
- Placed on the hull/superstructure in the following proportions:

Length Overall (LOA)	Height of letters/ numbers should be not less than:
25m and over	1.0 m
20 ≥ 25 m	0.8 m
15 ≥ 20 m	0.6 m
12 ≥ 15 m	0.4 m
5 ≥ 12 m	0.3 m
< 5 m	0.1 m

*It is necessary that all international service fishing vessels that include additional markings must be compatible with the principles described in the FAO standard, ensuring that they are clearly visible, well maintained, and not obscured by fishing gear or discoloration.*

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*It should be noted, that flag states, coastal states, as well as RFMOs may also have standards for the marking of fishing vessels, outlined in their fisheries legislation, regulations, resolutions or conditions for registration and fishing authorizations. These may include:*

- **Vessel name** – on the side of the hull, the superstructure and the stern of the vessel.
- **Port of registry** – under the vessel name on the stern, and often on the side of the hull for vessels such as trawlers and purse seiners that use the stern for fishing operations.
- **IMO number** – on the stern or on the hull or superstructure as well as internally.
- **National registration number** – on the hull of the vessel or the superstructure.
- **Fishing authorisation numbers** – on the side of the bridge.

### ✓ Important and Mandatory

All Panamanian flag vessels involved in fishing operations, which include fishing vessels (catches), supply vessels and fish transport vessels, must comply with these minimum standards of Marking and Identification of vessels of the FAO and described in this circular.

Vessels that are detected in activities in violation of national and international standards, will be subject to the application of the current regulations established by this Authority in terms of sanction, as established by Law No. 204 of March 18, 2021.

*For more information about this Technical Notices, please contact:*

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