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JUA/OAW/VRR
NHQ-PCG/CG-8
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MEMORANDUM

To : All Philippine Coast Guard Districts
From : Commandant, Philippine Coast Guard
Subj : Clarification on the Conduct of Salvage Operations of Shipowners to their Own Vessels
Date : 05 May 2025

1. Reference: HPCG/CG-10 Memorandum Circular 06-96 entitled "Salvage Regulations" dated 30 July 1996

2. Above reference pertains to the guidelines on the salvage of vessels, including cargoes thereof, wrecks, derelicts, and other hazards to navigation.

3. As background, there are reports of shipowners applying for salvage permits to recover their own vessels from navigable waters. However, certain Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Districts require these shipowners to first secure a Salvor Certificate of Registration (SCR) as a prerequisite to the issuance of a salvage permit. Clarification is needed to ensure the uniform application of existing guidelines on salvage operations.

4. Para V(F) of the cited Memorandum Circular provides:

"Nothing herein contained shall be deemed to prohibit any vessel owner from salvaging his own vessel provided that ownership of such vessel shall be reckoned at the time the vessel became the object of salvage."

5. The above provision clearly allows vessel owners to salvage their own vessels, provided they were the legal owners at the time the vessel became the subject of salvage. This ensures that owners retain the right to recover their property without the need to secure accreditation as a salvor through an SCR.

6. However, while the requirement for an SCR does not apply to the vessel owner salvaging their own property, the owner remains obligated to secure a salvage permit. This permit serves as a means for the PCG to ensure compliance with safety and procedural standards during the salvage operation.



7. The requirements for obtaining a salvage permit are delineated in Para VIII(A)(1) of the same Memorandum Circular. These include:

- a. *Certificate/proof of ownership*
- b. *Two 5" x 7" size pictures of different projected views of object to be salvaged, if available.*
- c. *Specific description, gross tonnage, and identification of the object to be salvaged.*
- d. *Statement of inventory of vessels, equipment, tools and paraphernalia that will be used in the salvage operations.*
- e. *Official Receipt of payment of the application fee*
- f. *Detailed plan of salvage work to be conducted and the approximate date of completion.*
- g. *Clearance from the Firearms and explosives Unit, PNP (if salvor uses explosives).*

8. It is important to differentiate between a "salvage operation" and a "wreck removal operation." Salvage operation refers to actions undertaken to assist a vessel or property in danger in navigable waters.¹ The rationale for allowing vessel owners to salvage their own property lies in the inherent control they have over the situation.

9. Conversely, wreck removal operations involve preventing, mitigating, or eliminating hazards posed by a wreck.² These operations necessitate a broader scope, including specialized equipment and personnel, and, therefore, require the owner to secure the necessary SCR.

10. The PCG retains the authority to intervene or direct salvage operations to accredited salvors in cases where the subject vessel is deemed abandoned or constitutes a hazard, threat, or obstruction to safe navigation. Such actions fall squarely within the jurisdiction and mandate of the PCG. This oversight ensures the safety and integrity of maritime navigation and the effective mitigation of potential risks posed by abandoned or hazardous vessels.

11. To ensure uniformity in the implementation of the guidelines, PCG Districts should recognize and uphold the provision allowing vessel owners to conduct salvage operations on their own vessels without requiring an SCR. Strict compliance with the requirements for a salvage permit, as outlined in Para VIII(A)(1), should nonetheless be enforced. For cases that escalate into wreck removal operations, the requirement for a Salvage Certificate of Registration should be strictly observed to ensure adequate oversight and compliance.

¹ International Convention on Salvage 1989

² Nairobi International Convention on the Removal of Wrecks 2007

12. For guidance and strict implementation.

FOR THE COMMANDANT, PCG:


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