



Kiribati Ship Registry

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MARINE CIRCULAR 8/2026

26 February 2026

FOR : Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Ship Masters, Ship Officers, Recognized Organizations

SUBJECT : International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships (AFS CONVENTION)

REFERENCES :

1. The International Convention on the Control of Harmful Anti-fouling Systems on Ships (AFS Convention 2001).
2. IMO Resolution MEPC.331 (76) Amendments to the International Convention on the control of Harmful Anti-Fouling system on ship.2001.
3. IMO Resolution MEPC.358(78) "2022 Guidelines for Survey and Certification of Anti-Fouling Systems on Ships"

DEFINITION :

The following abbreviations and terms stand for:

1. "AFS" – Anti-fouling System
2. "FPSO" – Floating Production, Storage and Offloading
3. "FSU" – Floating Storage Unit
4. "GT" – Gross Tonnage as determined under the provisions of the ITC 69 and shown on the International Tonnage Certificate (based on ITC 69) of the ship
5. "IMO" – International Maritime Organization
6. "International Voyage" – a voyage by a Kiribati-flagged vessel to or from a port, shipyard, or offshore terminal under the jurisdiction of another State.
7. "ITC 69" – International Convention on the Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969
8. "Length" – the length as defined in the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966, as modified by the Protocol of 1988 relating thereto, or any successor Convention.
9. "MEPC" – Marine Environment Protection Committee
10. "PSC" – Port State Control
11. "RO" – Recognized Organization as defined by MSC.349(92) / MEPC.237(65)
12. "Ship" – a vessel of any type whatsoever operating in the marine environment and includes hydrofoil boats, air-cushion vehicles, submersibles, floating craft, fixed or floating platforms, floating storage units (FSUs) and floating production storage and off-loading units (FPSOs).

The term "Administration" shall mean the Kiribati Ship Registry.

APPLICATION:

All ships, including fixed and floating platforms, floating storage units (FSUs), and floating production storage and off-loading units (FPSOs), are prohibited from applying or using harmful anti-fouling systems on their ships or craft.

PURPOSE :

To provide guidance on the implementation of the AFS Convention 2001 with amended 2022 Guidelines for Survey and Certification of Anti-Fouling Systems adopted by IMO under Resolution MEPC.358(78), which supersedes the 2010 guidelines (MEPC.195(61)).

CONTENTS:

1. SURVEY AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- 1.1. Ships of 400 GT and above engaged in international voyages** (excluding fixed or floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs) will be required to undergo an initial survey before the ship is put into service or before the International AFS Certificate is issued for the first time; and a survey when the anti-fouling systems are changed or replaced.
- 1.2. Ships of less than 400 GT but 24 meters or more in length** engaged in international voyages (excluding fixed or floating platforms, FSUs and FPSOs) shall carry a Declaration on AFS in accordance with AFS Convention Annex 4 Appendix 2 signed by the owner or authorized agent. The Declaration will have to be accompanied by appropriate documentation such as a paint receipt or contractor invoice.
- 1.3. Ships of less than 400 GT and less than 24 meters in length** are not subject to formal survey or certification, however, they may be subjected to PSC inspections carried out owners are reminded to maintain appropriate documentation, e.g. paint receipts, on board.
- 1.4.** An Initial Survey for issuance of an AFS certificate shall be carried out before the ship is put into service, or when the anti-fouling system is changed or replaced.

2. RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATION (RO):

In accordance with AFS Convention Annex 4 Regulation 1(4), the survey and certification functions of the AFS Convention are delegated to the ROs to act on behalf of this Administration.

3. CHANGE IN THE AFS OR FLAG:

- 3.1.** An AFS certificate, once issued, ceases to be valid when the associated anti-fouling system is changed or replaced and not properly endorsed accordingly, or when the ship transfers to the flag of another State.
- 3.2.** In the case of the transfer of a ship into Kiribati, a new AFS certificate shall be issued based on the certificate issued by the previous administration, provided the previous administration is a Party to the Convention, the Record of Anti-fouling Systems is up-to-date and the certificate was valid at the time of the transfer. Otherwise, an Initial Survey will be required for the issuance of a new AFS certificate.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF IMO RESOLUTION MEPC.358(78) (2022 GUIDELINES):

- 4.1.** The control of biocides expanded to include cybutryne and other harmful substances to incorporate the AFS Convention 2022 amendments;
- 4.2.** Survey scope includes surveys for all regulated biocides, risk-based evaluation, and verification of compliance with updated biocide regulations;
- 4.3.** Certification is to be updated to the new International AFS Certificate format and AFS declaration of all regulated biocides on board;
- 4.4.** Enhanced guidance on sampling, testing, and reporting procedures for all regulated biocides including cybutryne, as per updated Annex I of AFS Convention;
- 4.5.** Enhanced RO responsibilities, including review of updated declarations, assessment of anti-fouling coating compatibility, and documentation of biocide types used;
- 4.6.** Updated record keeping requirements to include detailed information on all biocides, application methods, and compliance verification steps; and
- 4.7.** Implementation date effective as from 1 January 2023 for new amendments and mandatory for all Kiribati-flagged ships at next renewal survey or earlier if applicable.

For further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the Administration at: technical@kiribaship.com

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar
Kiribati Ship Registry