

September 16, 2003

MR'S ADVISORY TO SHIPPING No. A-34-2003

TO : ALL STEAMSHIP AGENTS, OWNERS, AND OPERATORS

SUBJECT: CALIBRATION OF MAGNETIC COMPASSES IN PANAMA CANAL WATERS

It has recently come to the attention of the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) that in certain instances, the magnetic compasses of transiting vessels have been calibrated or repaired without following established procedures and internationally accepted practices, which could result in unsatisfactory performance of the equipment during the vessel's transit through the Panama Canal.

The ACP places great importance on a properly adjusted magnetic compass. For this reason, effective immediately, the ACP requires that whenever a magnetic compass is calibrated or repaired in Panama Canal waters, the vessel's master must sign the ACP boarding officer's inspection checklist, corroborating that the magnetic compass was serviced using the appropriate procedures and that the equipment is in proper working order for the transit.

A compass deviation card issued in Panama Canal waters without the corroborating signature of the master will not be accepted as valid and it will be considered as a vessel deficiency.

In order to comply with Panama Canal requirements and assure a safe and expeditious transit, masters of vessels bound for the waterway are encouraged to take all necessary steps to ensure that their navigational equipment is serviced properly by qualified technicians.

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Arcelio H. Hartley
Acting Maritime Operations Director

