ZANZIBAR MARITIME AUTHORITY

01 MALINDI ROAD,
P.O.BOX 401,
71124 URBAN REGION,
ZANZIBAR - TANZANIA

TEL NO: +255 24 2236795
FAX NO: +255 024 2236796
WEBSITE: www.zma.go.tz
EMAIL: info@zma.go.tz

Marine Safety and Operational Compliance Circular for TZRS-Registered Vessels

TO: *All Shipowners, Ship Operators, Ship Managers, Ship Masters, Crew Members, and Other Interested Parties of Ships Registered under the Tanzania Zanzibar Register of Shipping (TZRS).*

Subject: Restriction on Operating Outside Approved Trading Areas and Requirements for Prior Authorization to Conduct Voyages beyond SEA AREA 2.

Purpose: This Marine Safety and Operational Compliance Circular reminds TZRS-registered vessels of the requirement to operate strictly within their approved trading areas and outlines the procedures for obtaining prior ZMA authorization before undertaking voyages beyond their approved trading limits.

Scope and Applicability: This Circular applies to all ships registered under the Tanzania Zanzibar Register of Shipping (TZRS), including their Owners, Operators, Managers, Masters and Crew Members.

Date: 16 November 2026

1. Legal basis and oversight

Pursuant to the mandate conferred by the Maritime Transport Act No. 5 of 2006 and the Zanzibar Maritime Authority Act No. 3 of 2009, the Zanzibar Maritime Authority and TZRS are entrust to oversee matters of maritime safety and security and the proper enforcing and harmonization of standards of Tanzania Zanzibar Ships registered under Maritime Transport Act No. 5 of 2006, trading in Coastal zones;

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2. Approved Trading Areas and Operational Restrictions

In accordance with the Maritime Transport Act No. 5 of 2006 and the applicable Maritime Transport (Registration and Licensing of Vessels) Regulations, all ships registered under the Tanzania Zanzibar Register of Shipping (TZRS) shall operate strictly within their approved trading areas as specified in their respective registration documents, trading licences and other applicable authorizations.

For the purpose of this Circular, the approved coastal trading areas for TZRS-registered vessels comprise:

a) Tanzania: Ports and coastal waters within the United Republic of Tanzania;
b) Republic of Kenya: Authorized ports and coastal areas within the Republic of Kenya; and
c) Union of the Comoros: The Port of Moroni.

Any voyage or commercial operation beyond these approved coastal trading areas, including voyages to Somalia, Mozambique or any other destination outside the recognized East African Coastal Trading Area, shall be treated as an international voyage and shall require prior written authorization from ZMA.

Accordingly, vessels licensed to operate within Sea Area 1 (A1) and Sea Area 2 (A2) shall not undertake operations beyond their approved geographical limits, including Sea Area 3 (A3), without the prior written approval of the Authority.

Registration under TZRS does not constitute unrestricted authorization to undertake International voyages.

2. Prior Notification and Authorization for Voyages Beyond Approved Trading Areas

Any shipowner, operator or manager intending to deploy a TZRS-registered vessel beyond its approved trading area shall submit a formal application to ZMA sufficiently in advance of the intended voyage.

The application shall include, as applicable:

a) Vessel name, registration number, IMO number (where applicable) and

principal particulars;

b) Intended departure port, destination, proposed route and expected duration of the voyage;
c) Purpose and nature of the proposed operation, including cargo or passenger carriage;
d) Copies of valid registration documents, trading license and statutory certificates;
e) Evidence of seaworthiness, valid safety certification, appropriate manning arrangements and adequate insurance coverage;
f) A voyage-specific risk assessment and proposed safety and security measures; and
g) Any additional documentation or information required by ZMA.

The vessel shall not commence the proposed voyage until written authorization has been granted by ZMA and all applicable conditions have been fulfilled.

Any authorization issued shall be subject to the specified geographical limits, validity period and operational conditions. Such authorization shall apply only to the approved voyage or operation and shall not automatically amend or extend the vessel's existing trading license.

3. Maritime Safety and Security Considerations

Voyages beyond approved trading areas may expose vessels and their crews to maritime safety, security and operational risks for which they may not be adequately equipped, certified, insured or prepared.

Particular concern arises from operations involving areas affected by piracy, armed robbery against ships and other maritime security threats, including waters off Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. Other routes may also expose vessels to risks associated with illicit activities and maritime security threats.

Shipowners, operators and Masters shall therefore ensure that appropriate voyage-specific risk assessments are conducted and that all relevant safety, security, insurance and operational requirements are satisfied before any voyage is undertaken.

Relevant International Maritime Organization (IMO) guidance, including MSC.1/Circ.1601/Rev.2 on Revised Industry Counter-Piracy Guidance, shall be taken into consideration where applicable.

No Master shall knowingly proceed with a voyage beyond the vessel's approved trading area without the required authorization and adequate safety and security arrangements.

4. Responsibilities of Shipowners, Operators, Managers and Masters

Shipowners, operators and managers shall ensure that:

a) Their vessels operate strictly within their approved trading areas;
b) Masters and crew members are fully informed of the vessel's authorized trading limits and the requirements of this Circular;
c) Voyage planning, commercial arrangements and operational instructions comply with the vessel's approved trading limits;
d) No voyage beyond the approved trading area is undertaken based on verbal assurances, commercial instructions or arrangements with third parties without prior written authorization from ZMA; and
e) Any proposed change of voyage that may take the vessel beyond its approved trading limits is reported to ZMA and the necessary authorization obtained before proceeding.

Masters shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the vessel's authorized trading limits and for promptly notifying ZMA of any emergency circumstances requiring deviation from an approved voyage.

5. Non-Compliance and Regulatory Enforcement

Any vessel found operating beyond its approved trading area without the required authorization shall be considered to be in breach of its applicable registration and licensing conditions.

Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, ZMA may take appropriate regulatory and enforcement action in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations. Such action may include:

a) Investigation into the unauthorized operation;
b) Issuance of directions to cease or regularize the unauthorized activity;
c) Suspension, restriction or withdrawal of relevant approvals or licences, where legally authorized;
d) Imposition of fines or administrative penalties where provided for under the applicable legal framework; and
e) Initiation of other appropriate legal proceedings.

The Authority may also review the vessel's continued eligibility to operate under its existing registration and licensing arrangements.

6. Responsibility for Consequences Arising from Unauthorized Voyages

Where a vessel undertakes an unauthorized voyage beyond its approved trading area and subsequently encounters detention, inspection or enforcement action by a foreign Port State or Coastal State, piracy, armed robbery, loss or damage, the shipowner, operator and other responsible parties shall remain accountable for their respective obligations and liabilities under applicable law.

ZMA shall not be deemed to have authorized, endorsed or assumed responsibility for the consequences of an unauthorized voyage. Any assistance or regulatory response by the Authority shall be determined in accordance with its statutory mandate and applicable legal obligations.

Shipowners and operators are therefore strongly urged to ensure that their vessels do not undertake operations beyond their approved trading limits without obtaining the requisite authorization.

7. Effective Date and Compliance

This Circular shall take effect immediately upon issuance on 09 November 2026 and shall remain in force until amended, replaced or withdrawn by ZMA.

All shipowners, operators, managers, Masters and crew members of TZRS-registered vessels are required to familiarize themselves with and comply fully

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with the requirements of this Circular.

For further clarification or enquiries regarding this Circular, please contact:

Director General and the Registrar of Ships
Zanzibar Maritime Authority (ZMA)
P.O. Box 401
Zanzibar, Tanzania
Tel: +255 24 2236795
Website: www.zma.go.tz
Email: dgzma@zma.go.tz

(Mtumwa Said Sandal)
DIRECTOR GENERAL & REGISTRAR OF SHIPS

Navigate responsibly. Comply fully. Return Safe!!