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# AMENDMENTS TO THE MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT 1995 OF SINGAPORE: REMOVAL OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR BILL OF SALE ENDORSEMENT

Following amendments made to the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (“MSA”) of Singapore, there is no longer a requirement for bills of sale to be endorsed under section 18(3) of the MSA. This article highlights the practical implications for vessel owners and stakeholders liaising with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (“MPA”) as a result of these changes.

## THE KEY CHANGE

With effect from 1 February 2026, the MPA will no longer endorse (i.e. sign or stamp) physical bills of sale submitted to it regardless of the format or template used. Owners therefore no longer need to produce hardcopy bills of sale to the MPA. Where submission of a copy of a bill of sale is required, a scanned copy would suffice.

The registration fee of S\$50 still applies because the MPA will continue to register the bill of sale by recording the relevant information at the Singapore Registry of Ships (the “**Registry**”). This remains a requirement under section 18(3) of the MSA whenever a Singapore vessel or any share of that Singapore vessel is transferred.

## DELETIONS FROM THE REGISTRY

In contrast to a change of ownership, registration of a bill of sale is not mandatory when deleting a vessel from the Registry. Deletion can proceed without the submission of a copy of the bill of sale.

However, if parties wish to have the bill of sale recorded with the Registry before the deletion of the vessel then an executed softcopy scan of the bill of sale should be sent to the MPA via email in advance. Once a vessel has been deleted, the MPA will no longer be able to register the bill of sale since the vessel’s registration would have been closed.

If a buyer of a vessel or the receiving registry requires proof of deletion of a vessel from the Registry, this may be evidenced via (i) the vessel’s transcript after deletion, or (ii) a confirmation email from the MPA (which should be requested from [marine@mpa.gov.sg](mailto:marine@mpa.gov.sg) before deletion).



## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Parties in financing transactions should no longer expect to receive physically endorsed bills of sale from the MPA. Where endorsed bills of sale were previously requested by buyers or the vessel's receiving registry as evidence of deletion from the Singapore Registry, this requirement should now be replaced with either the vessel transcript or an email confirmation from the MPA.

In summary, the removal of the requirement for MPA to endorse bills of sale marks a positive step towards streamlining the vessel registration process with the Singapore Registry of Ships. The change is set to enhance efficiency and reduce administrative requirements and it is important for all stakeholders to understand and align their practices accordingly.

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