

TONNAGE MEASUREMENT RECORDS



TONNAGE GUIDE 3

CH-4

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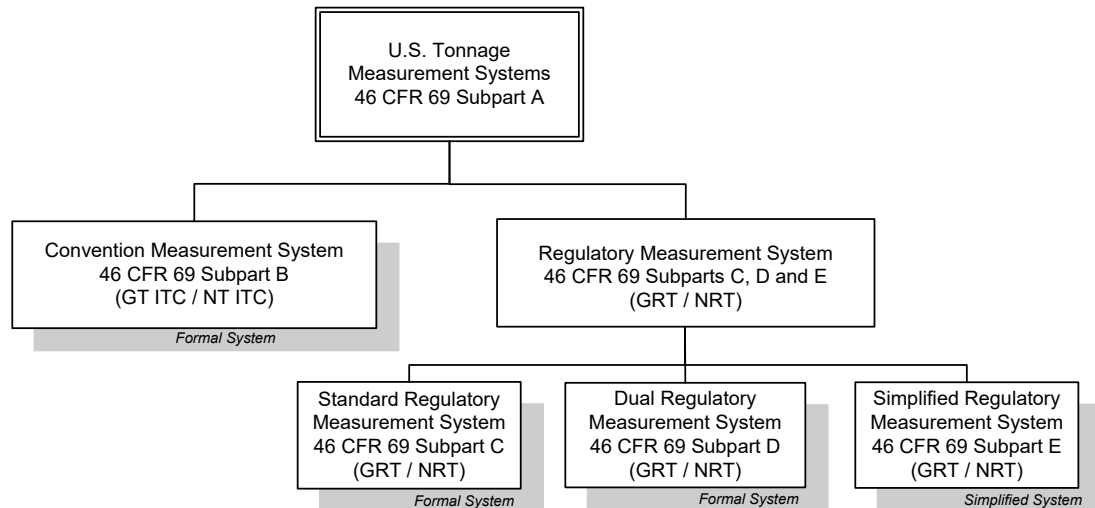
TONNAGE GUIDE 3

1. PURPOSE

This Guide provides general information on records associated with the tonnage measurement of United States flag vessels, including how members of the public may obtain copies of such records.

2. TONNAGE MEASUREMENT PROCESS

A vessel to which the application of a law of the United States depends on its gross or net tonnage must undergo a process referred to as "tonnage measurement", during which gross and net tonnages, as well as registered length, breadth, and depth dimensions, are assigned under one or more of four tonnage measurement systems. As illustrated in the figure below, three of the four systems are Formal Measurement Systems, for which tonnages are calculated based on detailed measurements of individual spaces associated with the vessel, as verified during an onboard survey. The fourth is a "simplified" system, for which tonnages are calculated using a simple formula having as its inputs certain principal dimensions and other vessel characteristics provided, in most cases, by the vessel's owner or builder. Refer to Title 46, United States Code, Subtitle II, Part J and Title 46, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 69 (46 CFR 69) for further details.



3. ENTITIES THAT MEASURE VESSELS

In the United States, the tonnage measurement program is under the administrative control of the United States Coast Guard, which assumed this responsibility from the Bureau of Customs in 1967. Prior to 1982, all tonnage measurement work was performed by officials of the United States government. From 1982 to 1989, the Coast Guard granted limited authorization for Formal measurement to a single Authorized Measurement Organization (AMO): the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS). In 1989, the Coast Guard turned most Formal measurement work over to AMOs meeting the requirements of 46 CFR 69.27, with several exceptions (such as warship measurement), while retaining an oversight function. There are multiple AMOs that perform Formal measurement on the Coast Guard's behalf under 46 CFR 69.15. The Coast Guard has retained full responsibility for measurement under the Simplified system.

4. TONNAGE MEASUREMENT RECORDS

In the context of this Tonnage Guide, tonnage measurement records are documents associated with the tonnage certification process. Depending on the measurement system used, these records may include application forms, drawings, photos, sketches, tonnage calculations, water ballast justifications, and/or copies of tonnage certifying documents such as U.S. Tonnage Certificates (formerly Certificates of Admeasurement) and Applications for Simplified Measurement (Form CG-5397). Copies of tonnage calculations and tonnage certifying documents have generally been treated as permanent records. Drawings, photos and sketches used in the tonnage measurement process have generally not been treated as permanent records. For vessels measured by the Bureau of Customs or the Coast Guard, non-permanent records are no longer available in most cases.

5. LOCATION OF RECORDS

The location of tonnage measurement records depends on a number of factors, including the entity responsible for performing the tonnage measurement (e.g., the federal government vs. the private sector), the status of the vessel (e.g., whether the vessel is in service, out of service, or scrapped), and when the vessel was initially measured and/or remeasured (e.g., older federal records were not collected in a central location, and may reside at various National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) locations). Also, because of historical relationships between processes for tonnage measurement and vessel documentation, copies of tonnage certifying documents are frequently available in files associated with the vessel documentation process.

6. OBTAINING COPIES OF RECORDS

Obtain copies of tonnage measurement records from the current record holding entity as identified in Appendix A, using the procedures which follow, as applicable.

- (a) **MARINE SAFETY CENTER (MSC)** Submit written requests to the MSC. If you are not the owner (or owner's representative) of the vessel or a sister vessel, your request will be processed under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) procedures, and the MSC may withhold information deemed not releasable under this law (e.g., tonnage calculations, the release of which may be considered to cause substantial competitive harm to the owner or designer). Otherwise, include a statement of attestation of owner authorization to obtain the desired record copies. Refer to Appendix C for a sample request. Before submitting any written request, we encourage you to contact the MSC Tonnage Division to discuss the availability of records (including those of sister vessels). Refer to the MSC's website at www.dco.uscg.mil/msc for contact information.
- (b) **AUTHORIZED MEASUREMENT ORGANIZATION (AMO)** Contact the AMO directly for its policy and procedures on release of copies of tonnage measurement records. FOIA does not apply to tonnage measurement records held by AMOs.
NOTE: Copies of tonnage certificates issued by AMOs but held in National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) files are subject to release under FOIA procedures.
- (c) **NATIONAL VESSEL DOCUMENTATION CENTER (NVDC)** Submit written requests to the NVDC, under FOIA procedures, regardless of whether or not you are the vessel's owner or the owner's representative. Refer to Appendix B for more detailed

information on how to obtain copies of tonnage measurement records from the NVDC.

NOTE: In most cases, for vessels measured under the Simplified system, the only available tonnage measurement record is a form submitted by the owner or builder.

(d) NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA) Contact NARA directly for procedures on obtaining copies of tonnage measurement records.

7. ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

If you have questions on tonnage measurement records, or are experiencing difficulty in locating specific records, please contact the MSC Tonnage Division for further assistance. Refer to the MSC's website at www.dco.uscg.mil/msc for contact information.



S. T. BRADY
Chief, Tonnage Division
U.S. Coast Guard
By direction

APPENDIX A**ENTITIES THAT MAINTAIN TONNAGE MEASUREMENT RECORDS**

The information contained in this table applies to United States flag non-military vessels (e.g., commercial and recreational vessels). This information should only be used as a general guide, as there are a number of exceptions not reflected in the table. *Note: In most cases, copies of tonnage certificates for formally measured vessels that were documented as vessels of the United States are available in files associated with the vessel documentation process. Refer to Appendix B for information on how to obtain copies of such records from the National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC).*

| TONNAGE MEASUREMENT RECORDS | | |
|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| DATE VESSEL MEASURED | ISSUING AUTHORITY | CURRENT RECORDS ENTITY |
| FORMAL SYSTEMS | | |
| 1789 - 1967 | Bureau of Customs | MSC/NARA |
| 1967 - 1982 | USCG Field Units | MSC/NARA |
| 1982 - 1989 | USCG Field Units/AMOs | MSC/AMOs |
| 1989 - Present | AMOs | AMOs |
| SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM | | |
| 1966 - 1984 | Bureau of Customs/USCG Field Units | NVDC/MSC |
| 1984 - 1988 | USCG Headquarters | NVDC/MSC |
| 1988 - 1995 | USCG Field Units / NVDC | NVDC |
| 1995 - Present | NVDC | NVDC |

APPENDIX B**NATIONAL VESSEEL DOCUMENTATION CENTER TONNAGE MEASUREMENT RECORDS**

1. **GENERAL** The National Vessel Documentation Center (NVDC) maintains copies of tonnage certificates and other documents used as the basis for tonnages and registered dimensions that appear on Certificates of Documentation (CODs). Copies of these tonnage measurement records are releasable to the public under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) procedures.
2. **SUBMITTAL PROCESS** Obtain copies of tonnage measurement records from the NVDC in accordance with the following:
 - a. **Required Information** The request must be in writing, attention to the FOIA Manager. Include your name and mailing address, along with the official number and current name of the vessel. For expedited service, also include credit card information (refer to the Payment section below).
 - b. **Transmittal to NVDC** Mail, fax or email the request to the NVDC per instructions found on the NVDC's web site.
 - c. **Making Copies** The NVDC will locate the records and make necessary copies, which may involve record retrieval from an offsite storage facility (e.g., a Federal Records Center (FRC)). Record retrieval will generally add to the processing time.
 - d. **Payment** The cost and method for payment to obtain a certified copy of these records is available on the NVDC website or by contacting them directly for the Fee Schedule. The NVDC will notify you of the total cost once the records are located.
 - e. **Mailing of Copies** The NVDC will mail copies to you upon receipt of payment.
3. **RESPONSE TIME** The NVDC typically responds to FOIA requests within 20 days. This does not guarantee you will receive the requested material in this time frame. You can help minimize response times by ensuring that submittals are clear and complete, and that payment is promptly made.
4. **QUESTIONS** If you have questions on the process for obtaining copies of tonnage measurement records from the NVDC, please contact the NVDC's FOIA Manager at (304) 271-2547). If you have questions regarding the overall tonnage certification and record keeping process, please contact the Coast Guard Marine Safety Center (MSC) Tonnage Division. Refer to the MSC's website at www.dco.uscg.mil/msc for contact information, or call the main office line at (202) 795-6729.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE MARINE SAFETY CENTER TONNAGE RECORDS REQUEST

Akins, Thomas

From: Akins, Thomas
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2017 7:24 AM
To: msc@uscg.mil
Subject: Tonnage File Request: LISA M (ON 123456)

To whom it may concern,

Please provide a copy of the MSC tonnage file for the subject vessel. I certify that I am the vessels owner/authorized representative. Owner and vessel details are listed below. [Optional: Should the tonnage file for the subject vessel not be available, I request the tonnage calculations for the following sister vessel(s): MONA L (ON 654321).]

VESSEL: LISA M (ex LISA MONET)
PRINCIPAL DIMENSIONS - 125.2 X 22.8 X 10.6 (LxBxD) VESSEL TYPE - TOWING VESSEL BUILDER/YARD -
ACME SHIPBUILDING PLACE BUILT - SAVANNAH, GA

OWNER - T.G. AKINS (912-555-1234/tgakins@akinscorp.com)

Sincerely,

T.G. Akins
President
Akins Corporation