

FAQ for ClassNK e-Certificate

| Category | No | Question | Answer |
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| About ClassNK e-Certificate Service | | | |
| | 1 | Are e-Certificates required to be used? (Are only e-Certificates going to be issued from now on?) | The use of e-Certificates is not mandatory. It is an optional service for shipowners/ship managers. Paper certificates will continue to be issued in cases where no application for ClassNK's e-Certificate Service is received. |
| | 2 | What are the advantages of e-Certificates? | The advantages of e-Certificate are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Easier to manage and reduced risk of loss or damage · The latest e-Certificate is always accessible and downloadable from our online server · e-Certificates are issued via a secure electronic files thus allowing users to verify their authenticity in a timely manner as opposed to paper certificates which can be manipulated or falsified. |
| | 3 | What should be considered when applying for an e-Certificate? | Please notice the following points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Internet-connected computer, email address, and printer are needed. 2. Please review the procedures related to the control of electronic certificates (including file transfers between office and ship) and make amendments to the Safety Management System (SMS) accordingly. 3. Please verify the Port State Control policy regarding electronic certificates for each port of call for your vessel in advance. |
| | 4 | Which flagged vessels qualify for e-Certificates? | Flags authorized to use ClassNK e-Certificates by the flag administrations government are shown on the following page. ClassNK homepage > Web Service Portal > ClassNK e-Certificate http://www.classnk.or.jp/hp/en/activities/portal/e-cert.html |
| | 5 | Which certificates can be issued as e-Certificates? | Applicable certificates are as follows: Full-term Classification Certificates, Installation Registration Certificates, and Statutory Certificates (LL, SOLAS, MARPOL, ISM, ISPS, MLC, etc.). As of October 2017, however, only the ClassNK Head Office can issue e-Certificates; full-term certificates, conditional and other certificates issued by ClassNK branch offices will continue to be issued as paper certificates. |
| | 6 | What about Statements of Compliance, Cargo Gear Certificates, and certificates for the approval of materials, machinery and equipment? | These certificates are not currently eligible to be issued as e-Certificates. |
| | 7 | What about acceptance by port authorities? | Use of electronic certificates has only recently started and such certificates are still not fully recognized by all ports and countries. In particular, there is not much of information about the acceptance of such certificates in Africa, South America, and Middle East. According to the Liberian Registry (LISCR), instances of PSC authority questioning the validity of these certificates at port of Egypt (Suez) have been reported. (The authority did seem to accept the electronic certificates at the end of the inspection.) ClassNK e-Certificates acceptance has been obtained from maritime authorities through ClassNK branch office staff member visits made to USCG, AMSA, China MSA as well as other authorities in order to directly promote and inform PSC officers about the service. Moreover, the use of electric certificates has already been approved by major flag states such as Panama, Singapore, and the Marshall Islands in addition to the Liberian Registry (LISCR), so ClassNK feels that other flag states will follow suit in the near future and agree to accept such certificates. |
| | 8 | Are there any problems calling at ports in Africa, South America, and the Middle East? | We do not recommend e-Certificates for vessels calling in areas where Internet access might be limited, and e-Certificates may not in some cases be accepted by maritime authorities and PSC officers. Preparing conventional paper certificates is recommended in such cases. |

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| Issuing and applying e-Certificate | | | |
| | 9 | Can I also receive paper certificates when I apply for ClassNK's e-Certificate Service? | Paper certificates will not be issued in cases where applying for ClassNK's e-Certificate Service. Full-term certificates and conditional certificates issued by ClassNK branch offices upon completion of surveys, however, will be issued as paper certificates. |
| | 10 | When are e-Certificates issued if an application for them is submitted? | After the application is approved, e-Certificates are issued as follows: 1. After completion of renewal surveys/audits 2. When existing paper certificates require rewriting due to changes in any information contained thereon. In addition to the above, e-Certificates may be issued for a fee per when requested. Certificates which have no expiry date (e.g., Installation Registration Certificates, International Energy Efficiency Certificates, International Tonnage Certificates, etc.) are issued as e-Certificates when rewriting is required due to changes in any of the information contained thereon. |
| | 11 | How can I receive an e-Certificate? | The procedure of receiving of an e-Certificate is as follows: 1. Full-term certificates are issued as paper certificates by ClassNK branch offices after completion of surveys/audits. 2. e-Certificates are issued by the ClassNK Head Office. 3. A "Notification of issuance of e-Certificate" containing a hyperlink (URL) will be sent to the registered e-mail address. You can access the download page through the link and download the electronic files (PDF) for each certificate. |
| | 12 | How can I receive an e-Certificate when there is no Internet access available on board? | Please access the download page for an e-Certificate while ashore (e.g., at the shipowner's or ship manager's office) and download the electronic files (PDF), then send them to the ship by email, etc. |
| | 13 | What about the file size of an e-Certificate? | The typical file size for an e-Certificate is about 200 KB, but it depends upon the kind of certificate and the number of endorsement pages. Total file size is typically 4-6 MB when all certificates are issued after completion of renewal surveys, so please email multiple files separately to ships. |
| | 14 | Is there a limit to the number of times an e-Certificate may be downloaded? | No, there is no such limit. An e-Certificate may be downloaded as many times as needed. |
| | 15 | I lost the download page link. | Please access the "Inquiries" page listed below or contact nkecert@classnk.or.jp . The download page link will be re-sent to your designated e-mail address. ClassNK homepage > Quick Links > e-Certificate Verification > Inquiries https://e-certificate.classnk.or.jp/CERF02010.aspx |
| | 16 | How can I change the email address which receives the "Notification of issuance of e-Certificate"? | Please access the "Inquiries" page listed below or contact nkecert@classnk.or.jp . ClassNK homepage > Quick Links > e-Certificate Verification > Inquiries https://e-certificate.classnk.or.jp/CERF02010.aspx |
| Operations and management | | | |
| | 17 | Is there a user manual for ClassNK e-Certificate Service Operation? | Please access the "About e-Certificate" page listed below. ClassNK homepage > Quick Links > e-Certificate Verification > About e-Certificate https://e-certificate.classnk.or.jp/CERF09920.aspx |
| | 18 | How can I manage electronic certificates while on board? | Please keep both the latest e-Certificate (electronic files) and printed version of the e-Certificate on board. When new certificates are issued, please download the e-Certificate (electronic files), print out and keep printed copies of the certificates along with the electronic files. |

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| | 19 | I cannot figure out which e-Certificate (electronic file) is the latest and should be kept on board. | You can download the latest e-Certificates from the download page. Multiple certificates can be downloaded at the same time. Please download e-Certificate (electronic files) either from on board the or from ashore. Files downloaded from ashore should then be emailed, etc. to the ship. |
| | 20 | Why does an e-Certificate need to be printed out and kept on board? | The reasons a printed versions of e-Certificates are needed are as follows: (1) For the purpose of endorsement upon completion of periodical surveys/audits by attending surveyors/auditors. (2) For the purpose of receiving clearance to enter/leave port, and examinations by Port State Control authorities. |
| | 21 | What type of paper do e-Certificates need to be printed out on? What about the ink color? | Type of paper: Any type of paper can be used. (Certificates do not need to be printed out on paper showing the ClassNK logo.) e-Certificates may be printed out in color or black and white, but printing out in color is recommended. |
| | 22 | How is endorsement after completion of periodical survey applied to an e-Certificate? | Our attending surveyor will make his/her endorsement on the printed version of the e-Certificates after completion of the periodical survey. The endorsement information (date of survey, place and name of surveyor, etc.) will also be added to the endorsement page of e-Certificate on the online server to ensure consistency. Please keep the printed version of e-Certificate endorsed by our attending surveyor on board, or print out a new copy of the e-Certificate after the endorsement page has been updated. |
| | 23 | What about issuing a revised e-Certificate? | When the details contained on an e-Certificate need to be changed, the survey office-in-charge will issue revised full-term certificates or conditional certificates as paper certificates. In such cases, the previous e-Certificate will become invalid, and a revised e-Certificate will be issued by the ClassNK Head Office at a later date. |
| | 24 | I lost or damaged the printed version of the e-Certificate. | Please download the latest e-Certificate from the download page. The latest e-Certificate is always downloadable from the online server. |
| | 25 | Is full-time access to the Internet on board required? | No Internet connection is required to open and print out previously downloaded e-Certificates. |
| Fee | | | |
| | 26 | What about the additional fee for ClassNK's e-Certificate Service? | A fixed issuance fee and a government surcharge will be charged for each certificate issued regardless of whether this service is used; there is, however, no extra fee for using this service. |
| | 27 | Is there any discount available for ClassNK's e-Certificate Service? | There are no discount and no preferential plans currently being offered. |
| | 28 | What about communication costs and printing costs? | Any relevant communication costs (including the cost of downloading electronic certificates and the cost of accessing the verification site), communication devices, printers and printing costs etc. are to be borne by the user (shipowner/ship manager). |
| Related to confirming the validity | | | |
| | 29 | How do you certify the validity of a printed version of an e-Certificate? | You can confirm the validity of the e-Certificate on the e-Certificate Verification Site. For this purpose, an Internet-connected PC or a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) is required. |
| | 30 | In cases where there is no Internet connection on board, how you would verify the validity of e-Certificate? | Please present the e-Certificate (electronic files). The digital signature on the e-Certificate certifies that the electronic file has been issued by ClassNK, and has not been tampered with or falsified. |

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| | 31 | How do I use QR code on an e-Certificate? | You can access the e-Certificate Verification Site directly by scanning the QR code using mobile devices (smartphones or tablets) using the device's camera. You will need to install an application for reading QR codes in advance. |
| | 32 | Do I need to input my user ID and password to access the e-Certificate Verification Site? | No password or user ID is required. Please enter the vessel's IMO Number (7-digit number) and Tracking ID (20-digit number) to access the e-Certificate Verification Site. |
| | 33 | Are all the Tracking IDs the same number? | Each Tracking ID for an e-Certificate is an unique number. |
| | 34 | Can the Tracking ID be changed? | The Tracking ID cannot be changed while the e-Certificate is valid. It also cannot be changed when endorsement is made on the e-Certificate after completion of periodical survey. It needs to be changed when rewriting or issuing a new e-Certificate. |
| | 35 | How can I access to the e-Certificate Verification Site? | Please access the page listed below. ClassNK homepage > Quick Links > e-Certificate Verification https://e-certificate.classnk.or.jp/CERF00010.aspx |
| | 36 | What about the security of e-Certificates? | e-Certificates are issued via electronic files (PDF) with digital signatures issued by a third party organization. The digital signature certifies that the electronic file has not been tampered with or falsified in any way. The online server provides safe and secure Internet access for verifying validity and downloading e-Certificates. |
| | 37 | I cannot find the digital signature on e-Certificate. | The digital signature will not appear when the electronic file (PDF) is opened using a mobile device (smartphone, tablet). It only appears when the electronic file (PDF) is opened using a computer. |

* If you need further assistance, please access the Inquiries page or contact nkecert@classnk.or.jp.