



भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
पत्तन, पोत परिवहन और जलमार्ग मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS  
नौवहन महानिदेशालय, मुंबई  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING, MUMBAI

**Merchant Shipping Notice No. 01 of 2026**

**File Ref. No: 25-63011/70/2025-NT - DGS**

**Date: 15.01.2026**

**Subject: Criteria for Empanelment and Retention of Salvors**

**1. Background**

With the rapid expansion of India's maritime sector, including increased vessel traffic and the growth of port infrastructure, the risk of maritime incidents has also risen significantly. This has necessitated the creation of a structured salvage framework to strengthen national preparedness and ensure timely, coordinated responses to marine casualties, in line with international best practices.

**2. Statutory Mandate**

The statutory basis for this initiative is provided under the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025 (Act 24 of 2025). Under Part XII, Chapter II, Section 255, the Central Government is empowered to prescribe and implement criteria for the retention and empanelment of salvors in India. This mandate is intended to establish a dedicated mechanism for effective response to maritime emergencies along the Indian coast and in its waters.

**3. Framework for a National Salvage Ecosystem**

Pursuant to this mandate, the Directorate General of Shipping has prepared criteria for the empanelment and retention of Salvors. The objective is to build a national salvage ecosystem with enhanced capacity for emergency response, towing, firefighting, salvage operations, and spill response. The framework envisions a financially viable and operationally sustainable model, whereby assets and resources are strategically positioned to enable **deployment within twenty-four (24) hours of an incident** having been reported.

Such Salvors are required to establish in-house firefighting, spill response capacity and shall have the capacity to engage and deploy high bollard pull tugs which may be stationed at strategic locations or have an agreement with other recognized service providers. Further, arrangements are to be made for emergency response assets which will be deployed at strategic coastal locations to ensure rapid mobilisation. This model is intended to advance the development of a self-sustaining salvage hub for India.

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The draft Merchant Shipping (Wreck & Salvage) Rules, 2026 and Merchant Shipping (Regulation of Entry of ships into Coastal Waters) Rules, 2026 mandates every ship entering into or sailing out of any Indian port, terminal, anchorage, or seeking port facilities or Indian offshore facilities within coastal waters shall be required to maintain a valid contract with the Salvors empanelled under the MS Act. The stakeholder consultation for the draft rules has been completed. The said requirements will come into force immediately upon notification of the rules. Considering the fact that the draft rules will be notified shortly, it has been decided to commence the process of empanelment of Salvors based on the criteria given in this notice from 01<sup>st</sup> Feb 2026.

#### **4. Essential Criteria for Empanelment**

The criteria set out essential requirements for empanelment and retention of Salvors. Applicants must be duly registered entities, either Indian companies or joint ventures with Indian partners in the case of foreign firms, with a minimum paid-up capital requirement and demonstrable financial stability. Further, such salvors are required to establish at-least one (01) centralized Headquarters with warehouse and operational bases on Indian coasts within twelve (12) months of empanelment, and to expand the operations nationwide within three (03) years.

Applicants must maintain adequate salvage assets and equipment in India, supported by qualified and experienced personnel. Firms are required to demonstrate operational capability by evidencing successful salvage operations (Wreck Removal/ Refloating/ Spill Recovery/ Underwater repairs) in the preceding five (05) years, with preference given to those with prior experience in the Indian Ocean Region, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Persian Gulf. The salvors must also hold membership in the International Salvage Union or an equivalent accreditation.

To ensure integration with India's emergency response system, salvors must have tie-ups with recognised Marine Pollution Response Operators (MPROs), and enter into agreements with ship operators/Tug owners for the emergency deployment of tugs, with mobilisation required within twenty-four (24) hours of an incident.

#### **5. Procedure for Empanelment**

The procedure for empanelment of Salvors shall be as delineated and notified by the Competent Authority i.e. Director General of Maritime Administration. Interested entities seeking empanelment are required to submit their applications to the Competent Authority in accordance with the Merchant Shipping (Wreck and Salvage) Rules, 2026. The application shall be submitted strictly in accordance with the prescribed checklist annexed to this Notice, along with all requisite enclosures and supporting documents.

The Competent Authority shall undertake a detailed examination of the applications received to assess the technical capability, operational preparedness, and financial soundness of the applicants in accordance with the eligibility criteria stipulated. The Competent Authority may convene a meeting with the applicants for the purpose of evaluating their submissions, seeking clarifications, or eliciting additional information as considered necessary.

Upon due consideration and to the satisfaction of the Competent Authority, the eligible salvors shall be notified for empanelment. The Competent Authority may constitute an advisory committee of experts for evaluation of applications received for empanelment of Salvors. The decision of the



Competent Authority in this regard shall be final and communicated to the concerned applicants through the established official channels.

## 6. General Provisions

Accordingly, all prospective Salvors are advised to carefully examine the criteria and procedure set out herein and in the annexed checklist, and to ensure strict compliance while submitting their applications for empanelment. The terms used herein shall have the respective meaning assigned to them in the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, the Merchant Shipping (Wreck & Salvage) Rules, 2026 and any other Merchant Shipping Rules that may be applicable to the notice.

The Directorate General of Shipping reserves the right to seek additional information, impose further conditions, modify the criteria, or withdraw or suspend empanelment, as may be considered necessary in the interest of maritime safety, environmental protection and orderly development of the national salvage ecosystem.

This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.



Capt. Harinder Singh,

Nautical Surveyor & DDG(Tech.)

**MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS****GOVERNMENT OF INDIA****DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SHIPPING****CHECK LIST FOR EVALUATING APPLICATIONS FOR APPROVAL OF  
EMPANELMENT AND RETENTION OF SALVAGE FIRMS UNDER PART XII OF THE  
MERCHANT SHIPPING ACT, 2025.**

<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
1	Registration with the relevant regulatory body (Ministry of Corporate Affairs)	Mandatory	Copy of certificate of incorporation to be submitted
2	Type of Company (Indian Company or Joint Venture with an Indian Entity by foreign salvage firms)	Mandatory	In case of Joint Venture, details of all entities to be submitted
3	Total paid-up capital of the Company	1 (one) crore (Mandatory)	Evidence required to be submitted with the application
4	Audited Financial Statements indicating positive net worth and turnover of the Indian entity/Joint Venture with Indian entity	Last 1 year's financial statement and Turnover of 5 crores (Mandatory)	Evidence required to be submitted with the application Note: In case of newly formed Joint Venture entity, preceding turnovers of each entity shall be taken into account' to the Financial Statements indicating positive net worth and turnover criteria.
5	Operational set-up/ Stand-by locations around Indian Coast	Establishment of minimum Operational set-up/Stand-by locations at any one location on East and West Coast of India within 12 months (Assurance of setting up a minimum 4 locations around the Indian Coast within 3 years)	Evidence to be submitted for the existing facility. Detailed setup plan to be submitted along with the application
6	Assets/Equipment's available on standby	Mandatory	Evidence of assets/salvage equipment's available in India or which may be shipped to India, to be submitted with the application

7	Manpower Requirements (Salvage Master, Naval Architect, Chemist, Firefighting Expert and other salvage personnel)	Mandatory	Details, qualifications and experience of Salvage Master <sup>1</sup> , Naval Architect, Chemist, Firefighting Expert and other salvage personnel to be provided
8	Experience of successful completion of salvage operations in last 05 years. <sup>2</sup>	Successful completion of minimum 4 salvage operations (Mandatory)	Evidence of successful completion of salvage operation to be submitted
9	Experience of conducting salvage operations around Indian Ocean Region, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and Persian Gulf in the last 10 years	Successful completion of minimum 2 salvage operations (Preferred)	Evidence of successful completion of salvage operation to be submitted
10	Details of any unsuccessful salvage operations	As applicable	Details required to be submitted with the application
11	A Member of International Salvage Union or equivalent accreditation	Mandatory	Evidence required to be submitted with the application. Note: ISU accreditation maybe of one of the partners in case of a JV.
12	Adequate Professional Indemnity insurance by reputable insurer to be maintained by Salvage company	Mandatory	Evidence required to be submitted with the application
13	Tie up with MPRO (Marine Pollution Response Operators) in India with the list of equipment's and its locations	Mandatory	Evidence of tie up with MPRO required to be submitted with the application
14	Tie up/MOU with Ship operators/owners/managers for Emergency deployment of Tugs	Agreement should state that the tugs should be mobilized within 24 hours of reporting (Mandatory)	Evidence of tie up/MOU with Ship operators / owners/ managers required to be submitted with the application
15	24 X 7 availability of Point of Contact for salvage	Mandatory	Declaration to be provided with the details of Point of Contact
16	Affidavit to comply with Indian laws	Mandatory	In compliance with the Merchant Shipping Act, 2025, Indian Ports Act, 2025 & other applicable Indian Laws

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<sup>1</sup> Key personnel should have a certain level of security clearance with authorities (Ports, Indian Coast and Indian Navy) for expeditious deployment.

<sup>2</sup>Emphasis should be placed on the scope of work, and the complexity of the salvage case, including cooperation with local authorities and other local Indian companies, which is demonstrative of the understanding and knowledge of Indian salvage companies and salvage capabilities.