

OFAC ALERT



Sanctions Risks of Iranian Demands for Strait of Hormuz Passage

May 1, 2026

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is aware of Iranian threats to shipping and demands for “toll” payments to receive safe passage through the international Strait of Hormuz. These demands may include several payment options, including fiat currency, digital assets, offsets, informal swaps, or other in-kind payments, such as nominally charitable donations made to the Iranian Red Crescent Society, Bonyad Mostazafan, or Iranian embassy accounts. OFAC is issuing this alert to warn U.S. and non-U.S. persons about the sanctions risks of making these payments to, or soliciting guarantees from, the Iranian regime for safe passage. These risks exist regardless of payment method.

U.S. persons and U.S.-owned or -controlled foreign entities are generally prohibited under U.S. sanctions from engaging in transactions with the Government of Iran, including the provision or receipt of services, unless exempt or authorized by OFAC. U.S. sanctions also generally prohibit U.S. persons from engaging in transactions with Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which is sanctioned pursuant to several authorities, including nonproliferation and counterterrorism sanctions, and is a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization. U.S. persons are also generally prohibited from engaging with Iranian digital asset exchanges, which are considered blocked Iranian financial institutions under U.S. sanctions.

Additionally, non-U.S. persons may risk exposure to sanctions for engaging in transactions with the Government of Iran and the IRGC that are not otherwise exempt or authorized for U.S. persons. This risk to non-U.S. persons includes secondary sanctions on participating foreign financial institutions, which could prohibit or restrict such foreign financial institutions’ access to the U.S. financial system. Non-U.S. persons engaging with blocked Iranian digital asset exchanges may also risk sanctions for operating in or supporting the sanctioned Iranian financial sector. Further, non-U.S. persons could face civil and criminal enforcement liability should such payments cause U.S. persons, such as insurers, reinsurers, and financial institutions, to violate sanctions.

Please see [FAQ 1249](#) for more information on sanctions risk for paying tolls to the Government of Iran and the IRGC, and FAQs [1250](#) and [831](#) on engaging with Iranian digital asset exchanges and the Iranian financial sector.

Maritime industry participants involved with vessels calling at Iranian ports face significant sanctions risk under multiple sanctions authorities targeting Iran’s shipping sector and ports, and OFAC will continue to aggressively target Iran’s main revenue-generating sectors, in particular its petroleum and petrochemical sectors, under

Executive Order 13902 and other sanctions authorities. Vessels of all nations entering or leaving Iranian ports and coastline are also subject to U.S. Central Command's impartial [naval blockade](#), and OFAC authorizations do not supersede the authorities of all other U.S. government agencies and departments, including U.S. Central Command.

MARITIME SERVICE PROVIDERS

OFAC strongly encourages all maritime service providers to conduct enhanced due diligence on any vessels attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz to ensure that such vessels have not engaged in any sanctionable conduct involving Iran, which could expose the service provider to sanctions risk. Service providers should carefully review all available information for red flags, including voyage planning or actual transits through Iranian territorial waters. Service providers should ask counterparties for details on who they coordinated with to transit the Strait of Hormuz and if any safe passage fees were or will be paid to Iran. For more information about Iran's use of obfuscation techniques in maritime shipping, please see [OFAC's Sanctions Advisory: Guidance for Shipping and Maritime Stakeholders on Detecting and Mitigating Iranian Oil Sanctions Evasion](#).

Mariners are encouraged to coordinate with U.S. authorities:

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