



## **Marshall Islands Registry Qualifies for United States Coast Guard Qualship 21 for Seventh Consecutive Year**

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The Marshall Islands Registry's commitment to quality and safety has been recognized by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) through its Qualship 21 program. This marks the seventh consecutive year that the Marshall Islands Registry has qualified for this listing status.

Qualship 21 designation enables vessel owners/operators of Marshall Islands flagged vessels to apply to the USCG for a Qualship 21 certificate. The Qualship 21 initiative provides positive rewards to high-quality ships from qualifying registries. These rewards range from a two-year limited port State control (PSC) oversight for freight ships to a possible reduction of scope for annual/"mid-period" exams for tank ships that have applied for and received Qualship 21 certification. Nearly 18% of the vessels on the USCG's Qualship 21 vessel list are Marshall Islands flagged vessels.

While the eligibility criteria for Qualship 21 are stringent, one new factor will become mandatory for flag Administrations to qualify in 2012. Similar to one criterion of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding's (MoU) Low Risk Ship (LRS) list, the USCG will also consider whether or not a flag Administration has participated in the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) Voluntary Member State Audit Scheme (VMSAS).

The Marshall Islands has maintained its white list status with both the Paris and Tokyo MoUs and has met the LRS list criteria of the Paris MoU. "While a few major open registries have been recognized on the Qualship 21 list, the Marshall Islands is the only major open registry to maintain its status on this list for seven consecutive qualifying years. This is testimony to the quality owners/operators who have registered vessels under the Marshall Islands flag and the Registry's commitment to safety, security and environmental protection," said Bill Gallagher, President of International Registries, Inc. (IRI), who, through its affiliates, administer the maritime and corporate programs of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

The Marshall Islands Registry is the third largest and fastest growing registry in the world with 71.5 million gross tons and more than 2400 vessels. "Service to customers and the quality of the fleet both play critical roles in choice of flag and PSC acts as the scorecard for the quality of a registry," continued Mr. Gallagher. "This accolade extends the benefits of flagging with the Marshall Islands to owners/operators and charterers that are actively trading in the United States," concluded Mr. Gallagher.