TO: ALL SHIPOWNERS, OPERATORS, MASTERS AND OFFICERS OF MERCHANT SHIPS, AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

SUBJECT: Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

References: (a) Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), 2017 Edition, as amended
(b) Ships’ Routeing, 2017 Edition, as amended

PURPOSE

This Marine Notice sets out the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator’s (the “Administrator”) requirements for complying with International Maritime Organization (IMO) Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs). It supersedes Rev. 10/06 and aligns the Administrator’s requirements on the Great Barrier Reef Region and the Torres Strait with decisions taken at the IMO.

BACKGROUND

Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

A PSSA is an area that has been provided special protection through action by the IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological, socio-economic or scientific attributes, and which may be vulnerable to damage by international maritime activities. The criteria for designating PSSAs are contained in IMO Assembly Resolution A.982(24), Revised guidelines for the identification and designation of particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSAs).

Associated Protective Measures

When a PSSA is designated, the IMO also may approve associated protective measures (APMs). These measures aim to prevent, reduce, or eliminate the identified risk by controlling maritime activities within the designated area. APMs include, but are not limited to: mandatory ships routing; mandatory ships reporting; and areas to be avoided. APMs are to be consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
**The Great Barrier Reef PSSA**

At the IMO’s 53rd Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) meeting in 2005, the Great Barrier Reef PSSA was extended through IMO Resolution MEPC.133(53) to include the Torres Strait. The decision was made to recommend, rather than require compliance with Australia’s compulsory pilotage system when navigating the Torres Strait. RMI supported the decision, based on the principle of navigation freedom under UNCLOS, Section 2. More recently, the PSSA was extended through IMO Resolution MEPC.268(68) to include the south-west Coral Sea.

**APPLICABILITY**

This Notice applies to all RMI-flagged vessels within an IMO designated PSSA.

**REQUIREMENTS**

1.0 **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas**

The APMs adopted to protect a designated PSSA are required to be complied with, as detailed in the relevant IMO instrument (Resolution, Circular etc). See Appendix A. There is also a [world map](#) from the IMO showing the PSSAs.

2.0 **Great Barrier Reef, Torres Straight and Coral Sea PSSA**

2.1 The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires compulsory pilotage of certain vessels navigating within the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait, although such pilotage is recommended under the IMO PSSA. See AMSA [Marine Notice 10/2015](#). Penalties for non-compliance with the pilotage requirements are likely if a vessel is not in transit passage, but enters an Australian port.
APPENDIX A

This Appendix is a summary of PSSAs and their APMs. It is based on Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), a compilation of official guidance documents and PSSAs adopted by IMO since 1990. The supplemental information from Ships’ Routing\(^1\) details measures, meaning, traffic separation schemes, inshore traffic zones, deep water routes, areas to be avoided, mandatory ship reporting systems, and precautionary areas adopted by IMO up to June 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)</th>
<th>Associated Protective Measures (APMs)</th>
<th>MEPC Endorsement</th>
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</table>
| The Great Barrier Reef                | • Mandatory ship reporting system (REEFREP)  
• IMO-recommended Australian pilotage system | MEPC 30, September 1990  
Resolution MEPC.44(30) |
| Torres Strait as an extension of the Great Barrier Reef | • Two-way shipping route through the Torres Strait  
• IMO-recommended Australian pilotage system | MEPC 53, July 2005  
Resolution MEPC.133(53) |
| South-west Coral Sea as an extension of the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait | • Two-way route in the Prince of Wales Channel  
• Two-way route in Diamond Passage  
• Two-way route to the West of Holmes Reef  
• Area to be avoided north-east of the Great Barrier Reef, between Palm Passage and Hydrographers Passage | MEPC 68, May 2015  
Resolution MEPC.268(68) |
| The Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago       | • Traffic separation schemes off Costa de Matanzas, in the Old Bahama Channel, and the Punta Maternillos  
• Discharge prohibition  
• Area to be avoided in the access routes to the ports of Matanzas and Cardenas | MEPC 40, September 1997  
Resolution MEPC.74(40) |
| Malpelo Island                        | • Area to be avoided around Malpelo Island | MEPC 47, March 2002  
Resolution MEPC.97(47) |
| The sea around the Florida Keys        | • Mandatory no anchoring areas in the Tortugas Ecological Reserve and the Tortugas Bank in the Florida Keys  
• Areas to be avoided off the Florida coast | MEPC 47, March 2002  
Resolution MEPC.97(47) |
| The Wadden Sea                         | • Existing protective measures, including but not limited to: mandatory ship reporting systems; deep water routes, traffic separation schemes, recommended and mandatory pilotage, MARPOL Special Area, and other national measures | MEPC 48, October 2002  
Resolution MEPC.101(48) |
| Paracas National Reserve              | • Area to be avoided (by ships > 200 gt carrying hydrocarbons in bulk)  
• Traffic separation scheme in the approaches to Puerto Pisco | MEPC 49, July 2003  
Resolution MEPC.106(49) |
| Western European Waters                | • Ship reporting system for single-hull tankers carrying heavy grades of fuel oil | MEPC 52, October 2004  
Resolution MEPC.121(52) |

\(^1\) The chartlets within this publication are not to be used for navigation. Hydrographic services provide full details of routing systems adopted by IMO that are relevant to the mariner.
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| Canary Islands                        | • Mandatory ship reporting system (CANREP)  
• Traffic separation schemes  
• Five (5) areas to be avoided off Lanzarote Island; off the island of Tenerife; off the island of Grand Canary; off La Palma island; and off the island of El Hierro | MEPC 53, July 2005  
Resolution MEPC.134(53) |
| The Galapagos Archipelago             | • Recommended tracks, mandatory as a condition of port entry  
• Mandatory ship reporting system (GALREP)  
• Area to be avoided | MEPC 53, July 2005  
Resolution MEPC.135(53) |
| The Baltic Sea area                   | • Existing protective measures, including but not limited to: existing routing and pilotage systems; mandatory ship reporting systems; MARPOL Special Area; Emission Control Area  
• Traffic separation scheme and associated routing measures in the South-west Baltic Sea  
• Deep-water route of Gotland Island  
• Areas to be avoided in the Southern Baltic Sea | MEPC 53, July 2005  
Resolution MEPC.136(53) |
| The Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument | • Mandatory ship reporting system (CORAL SHIPREP)  
• Six (6) areas to be avoided | MEPC 57, April 2008  
Resolution MEPC.171(57) |
| The Strait of Bonifacio               | • Mandatory ship reporting system (BONIFREP)  
• Routing Measures  
• Recommendation on navigation through the Strait of Bonifacio | MEPC 62, July 2011  
Resolution MEPC.226(64) |
| The Saba Bank                         | • Existing MARPOL Annex V Special Area  
• Mandatory no anchoring area for all ships  
• Area to be avoided (by ships 300 gt and over) | MEPC 64, October 2012  
Resolution MEPC.226(64) |
| The Jomard Entrance                   | • Two-way route to the north of Jomard Entrance  
• Three (3) two-way routes to the south of Jomard Entrance  
• Precautionary area that lies between the northern and southern two-way routes | MEPC 70, July 2016  
Resolution MEPC.283(70) |
| Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park         | • Area to be avoided (enters into force on 01 January 2018) | MEPC 71, July 2017  
Resolution MEPC.294(71) |