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

SUBJECT: Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas

References: 
(a) IMO Circular MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.3 List of special areas, emission control areas and particularly sensitive areas, issued 2 July 2018
(b) IMO Publication Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas (PSSA), 2017 Edition, as amended
(c) IMO Publication Ships’ Routeing, 14th Edition 2019, as amended

PURPOSE

This Marine Notice establishes 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). This revision supersedes Rev. Mar/2018.

Appendix A has been amended to reflect the information in IMO Circular MEPC.1/Circ.778/Rev.3.

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) as amended by resolution MEPC.267(68).
**Associated Protective Measures**

When a PSSA is designated, the IMO also may adopt 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).

**APPLICABILITY**

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

**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.

**REQUIREMENTS**

1.0 **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas**

The APMs adopted to protect a designated PSSA must be complied with, as detailed in the relevant IMO instrument (Resolution, Circular etc). For guidance see Appendix A.

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

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) requires compulsory pilotage for certain vessels navigating within the Great Barrier Reef and Torres Strait. This pilotage is also 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 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 (Australia)    | • 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  
• Traffic separation systems | MEPC 68, May 2015 Resolution MEPC.268(68) |
| The Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago (Cuba) | • 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 (Colombia)             | • Area to be avoided around Malpelo Island | MEPC 47, March 2002 Resolution MEPC.97(47) |
| The sea around the Florida Keys (United States) | • 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.98(47) |
| The Wadden Sea (Denmark, Germany, Netherlands) | • 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 (Peru)       | • 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) |

1. The chartlets within this publication must not be used for navigation. Hydrographic services provide full details of routing systems relevant to the mariner and adopted by the IMO.
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<td><strong>Western European Waters</strong></td>
<td>• Mandatory ship reporting system for single-hull tankers carrying heavy grades of fuel oil</td>
<td>MEPC 52, October 2004 Resolution MEPC.121(52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Canary Islands (Spain)**           | • Mandatory ship reporting system (CANREP)  
• Traffic separation schemes  
• Five 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 Galápagos Archipelago (Ecuador)** | • 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 (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden)** | • Existing protective measures, including but not limited to: existing routing and pilotage systems; mandatory ship reporting systems; MARPOL Special Area; SOx 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 (United States)** | • Mandatory ship reporting system (CORAL SHIPREP)  
• Six areas to be avoided | MEPC 57, April 2008 Resolution MEPC.171(57) |
| **The Strait of Bonifacio (France, Italy)** | • Mandatory ship reporting system (BONIFREP)  
• Routing Measures  
• Recommendation on navigation through the Strait of Bonifacio | MEPC 62, July 2011 Resolution MEPC.204(62) |
| **The Saba Bank, (North-Eastern Caribbean Area of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)** | • 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 (Papua, New Guinea)** | • Two-way route to the north of Jomard Entrance  
• Three 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 (The Sulu Sea, Philippines)** | • Area to be avoided | MEPC 71, July 2017 Resolution MEPC.294(71) |