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

SUBJECT: Special Purpose Ships

References:  
(a) IMO Resolution MSC.266(84) of 13 May 2008, Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008 (2008 SPS Code)  
(b) IMO Resolution A.534(13) of 17 November 1983, as amended, Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships (SPS Code)  
(c) IMO Resolution MSC.299(87), Amendments to the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008 (2008 SPS Code), adopted 14 May 2010

PURPOSE:

The Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008 (2008 SPS Code) is recognized by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) for the construction and equipment of new and existing special purpose ships (SPSs) for registration in the RMI. This Notice contains the Administrator’s clarifications to, and interpretations of, the 2008 SPS Code, as well as requirements for ships certified as cargo ships which by reason of its function are carrying “special personnel” on board.

This Notice supersedes the original issue of 3/10 and reflects the deletion of section 1.5 due to the revocation of RMI Marine Notice 1-000-2 and the hyperlinking of referenced documents where possible.

APPLICABILITY:

The 2008 SPS Code is applicable to all SPSs, carrying more than 12 special personnel, certified on or after 13 May 2008. Noting that the existing SPS Code (reference (b) above) has been superseded by the 2008 SPS Code (reference (a) above), the provisions of the 2008 SPS Code shall be applied as far as reasonable and practicable to SPSs constructed before 13 May 2008. While the application of the 2008 SPS Code is limited to vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above, the Administrator shall apply the standard to all SPSs, irrespective of tonnage. Additionally, a vessel shown to meet the 2008 SPS Code, which is intended to carry 12 or less special personnel, may also be certified as a SPS in order to meet certain Coastal Administration requirements.

REQUIREMENTS:
1.0 General

1.1 The 2008 SPS Code has been developed to provide an international standard of safety for SPSs of new construction, the application of which will facilitate operation of such ships and result in a level of safety for the ships and their personnel equivalent to that required by the International Convention for the Safety at Life of Sea, 1974 (SOLAS).

1.2 The RMI fully recognizes the 2008 SPS Code and authorizes its use for vessels which meet the applicability criteria in construction and operation.

1.3 Owners or operators should make arrangements with the certifying Classification Society for confirmation that their ships comply with the appropriate SPS Codes and are eligible to be issued, SOLAS Certificates, SPS Safety Certificates, or National Documents of Compliance (NDOC) prior to registration in the RMI.

1.4 Due to the often vague operational status and service of SPSs, each proposed use of the appropriate SPS Code should be forwarded, with the recommendation of the vessel’s class, to the Administrator for consideration. This request should include, at a minimum, a general arrangement plan, a detailed scope of operations, details of the 2008 SPS Code Compliance, and a proposed manning level. The proposed manning description should detail all persons onboard including crew, special personnel, and any passengers.

2.0 Definitions

.1 Crew – means all persons carried on board the ship to provide navigation and maintenance of the ship, its machinery, systems and arrangements essential for propulsion and safe navigation or to provide services for other persons on board. It does not include those persons identified as special personnel.

.2 Existing SPS – Any SPS certified or operating in SPS service prior to 13 May 2008.

.3 Gross Tonnage – The measurement of the internal volume of spaces within the craft as defined by the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969 (ITC).

.4 International Voyage – means a voyage outside the territorial waters of the RMI.


.7 Special personnel – means all persons who are not passengers or members of the crew or children under one (1) year of age and who are carried on board in connection with the special purpose of that ship or because of special work being carried out aboard that ship.
.8 **Special purpose ship** – means a mechanically self-propelled ship which by reason of its function carries on board more than 12 special personnel.

### 3.0 Compliance Requirements for New and Existing SPSs

3.1 All new and existing SPSs must be issued SPS Code Certificates or NDOCs. SPSs of 500 gross tonnage and above should also be issued SOLAS safety certificates (passenger or cargo ship, with exemptions as appropriate).

3.2 Vessels currently certificated to trade as an SPS under the old SPS Code may continue to trade if operating within the conditions of the existing certificate until its expiration. Where reasonable and practicable, modifications may be required to bring the vessel in compliance with the operational provisions of the 2008 SPS Code at the time of the Renewal Survey.

3.3 For vessels intending to operate as an SPS but not previously certified as an SPS or operating as an SPS, certification shall be to the 2008 SPS Code, irrespective of build date.

### 4.0 Surveys and Certification Requirements

4.1 **Statutory Surveys**

4.1.1 Every SPS shall be subject to the survey schedule specified for cargo ships, other than tankers, as specified in reference (a) above:

.1 An Initial Survey is required before entering into service or before an SPS Safety Certificate or NDOC is issued for the first time.

.2 A Renewal Survey is required at intervals not exceeding five (5) years. This survey is normally done in conjunction with the Special Survey required by the Classification Society.

.3 An Annual Survey shall be performed within three (3) months before and three (3) months after each anniversary date of the Initial or Renewal Survey. On satisfactory completion of the Annual Survey, the Certificate is to be endorsed to maintain its validity.

.4 A Periodical/Intermediate Survey shall be performed within three (3) months before or after the second anniversary date or within three (3) months before or after the third anniversary date of the Initial or Renewal Survey, which shall take the place of one (1) of the Annual Surveys specified above.

4.2 **Certification**

4.2.1 Vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above:

.1 All new SPSs of at least 500 gross tonnage are to be issued an SPS Safety Certificate in accordance with the certification procedures of reference (a) above.
.2 All existing SPSs of at least 500 gross tonnage are to maintain their SPS Safety Certificates which had been issued in accordance with the certification procedures of reference (b) above until expiration. Thereafter, at the time of the Renewal Survey, all existing SPSs are to be issued an SPS Safety Certificate in accordance with the certification procedures of reference (a) above, where reasonable and practicable.

.3 If normally engaged on international voyages as defined in the 1974 SOLAS Convention it shall, in addition, carry SOLAS Safety Certificates, as a passenger ship with a SOLAS Exemption Certificate, or as a cargo ship with a SOLAS Exemption Certificate, as appropriate.

4.2.2 All SPS of less than 500 gross tonnage will be issued an NDOC. This certificate will indicate to what extent relaxations, if any, were authorized by the Administrator, in accordance with paragraph 1.2.1 of reference (a) above.

4.3 National Safety Inspections

4.3.1 SPSs are subject to RMI Annual Safety Inspections (ASIs), to be performed between 30 days before and 30 days after the vessel registration anniversary date. The inspections are to be carried out by an authorized RMI Nautical Inspector, unless other arrangements are discussed and specifically agreed to by the Administrator.

4.3.2 As an alternative, these ASIs may be performed by the Classification Society Surveyor in conjunction with the Annual Survey in accordance with the Alternate Safety Inspection Program outlined in Marine Notice 5-034-2.