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

SUBJECT: National Safety Requirements for Offshore Supply Vessels

References: (a) SOLAS, International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, Consolidated Edition 2014, as amended
(b) MARPOL, International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, Consolidated Edition 2017, as amended
(c) IMO Assembly Resolution A.1122(30), Code for the Transport and Handling of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk on Offshore Support Vessels (OSV Chemical Code), adopted 18 December 2017
(d) IMO Assembly Resolution A.863(20), Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Cargoes and Persons by Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV Code), adopted 27 November 1997, and amended by IMO Resolution MSC.237(82), adopted 01 December 2006
(e) IMO Resolution MSC.235(82), Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Offshore Supply Vessels, 2006, adopted 01 December 2006, and amended by IMO Resolution MSC.335(90), adopted 22 May 2012
(f) RMI Marine Notice 5-034-1, Safety Inspections Program
(g) RMI Marine Notice 2-011-36, National Safety Requirements for Vessels Carrying Persons in Addition to Crew

PURPOSE

This Notice addresses offshore supply vessel (OSV) design, construction, and operation. It specifically:

- establishes an equivalent standard to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), passenger ship requirements;
- establishes and clarifies Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) safety requirements; and
- standardizes the procedures for issuing a National Cargo Ship Document of Compliance to vessels operating in support of offshore energy exploration, drilling, and production and carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew.

This Notice supersedes revision 7/14. It reflects the removal of the reference to IMO Assembly Resolution A.1122(30) and A.863(20), and the introduction of the RMI Marine Notice 5-034-1 and 2-011-36.
Resolution A.673(16), Guidelines for the Transport and Handling of Limited Amounts of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk on Offshore Support Vessels (LHNS Guidelines), which has now been superseded by IMO Assembly Resolution A.1122(30), Code for the Transport and Handling of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk on Offshore Support Vessels (OSV Chemical Code), effective 01 July 2018.

BACKGROUND

Under SOLAS, a vessel of any tonnage that carries more than 12 passengers on an international voyage is defined as a passenger ship.

OSVs, and the similar crew boats, often carry more than 12 offshore workers (normally consisting of offshore installation crewmembers and marine service providers). SOLAS considers these persons as passengers rather than crew in that they do not perform a function onboard. As a result, these vessels are required to comply with the SOLAS passenger vessel regulations.

However, in most circumstances these vessels differ greatly from the typical SOLAS passenger ship in that they are relatively small, coastal vessels serving in support of energy exploration and production in offshore oil and gas fields around the world. They are used to transport equipment, supplies, stores, industrial fluids, and personnel between shore-based-facilities and the offshore oil and offshore gas installations. The extra persons carried are not typical passengers, but primarily industrial personnel, trained for the marine environment and experienced in emergency and evacuation procedures.

Recognizing these vessels’ unique design features and service characteristics, the RMI Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has established an equivalent standard to the SOLAS passenger ship requirements to promote OSV vessel and personnel safety.

APPLICABILITY

1.0 This Notice applies to each vessel of any gross tonnage and voyage that:

   .1 is self-propelled by machinery;

   .2 regularly carries persons in addition to the crew, who perform functions in support of exploration, exploitation, or production of offshore energy resources; and

   .3 carries the products identified in §1.1.9, IMO Assembly Resolution A.1122(30).

2.0 This Notice does not apply to:

   .1 vessels engaged in passenger trade; or

   .2 vessels or units certified under the Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit (MODU) Codes or the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008 (2008 SPS Code), (IMO Resolution MSC.266(84)).
DEFINITIONS

**Authorized person** – means those persons, other than offshore workers, carried aboard an OSV to an offshore installation to perform a task, including maintenance, service, or function related to the energy exploration and production conducted at the offshore installation.

**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.

**Crew Boat** – means a vessel which is *primarily* used for the transportation of personnel to, from and between offshore installations. These vessels are typically arranged to also have capacity to deliver limited amounts of stores, materials, or equipment.

**Near coastal voyage** - means a voyage in the vicinity of the coast of a State as defined by the Competent Authority of that State. In no case shall this include voyages greater than 200 nautical miles from the nearest port of refuge.

**Offshore installation** - means a marine structure located at an offshore site. The term includes: fixed production platforms; floating production platforms; floating storage units; any unit certificated as a mobile offshore unit (MOU); accommodation units; floating production, storage and operations units (FPSO, FSO, FSU or MOSU); and maintenance units.

**Offshore Supply Vessel (OSV)** – means a vessel which is used for the transportation of stores, materials, equipment or personnel to, from, and between offshore installations. These vessels are sometimes categorized as *offshore support vessels*. For the purposes of this Notice the term also includes crew boats.

**Offshore worker** – means an individual carried aboard an OSV and employed in a phase of exploration, exploitation, or production of offshore mineral or energy resources on or at an offshore installation. The term does not include the Master or a member of the crew engaged in the regular marine operations of the vessel.

REQUIREMENTS

1.0 General

1.1 All vessels to which this Notice applies must be designed and constructed in accordance with IMO Resolution **MSC.235(82)**, as amended by IMO Resolution **MSC.335(90)**.

1.2 Vessels intending to carry more than 12 persons (industrial personnel) must also comply with the requirements of IMO Assembly Resolution **A.863(20)**, as amended by IMO Resolution **MSC.237(82)**, and RMI Marine Notice **2-011-36**.
2.0 Authorization

2.1 Any owner or operator intending to operate a vessel under the conditions of this Notice must receive specific authorization from the Administrator. Each proposed use of this standard must be forwarded, with a recommendation from the vessel’s Classification Society, to the Administrator for consideration. This request must at a minimum include:

.1 a general arrangement plan;
.2 capacity and arrangement of all lifesaving appliances;
.3 a detailed scope of operations including area of operations; and
.4 proposed manning and capacity to carry additional personnel. The proposed manning description must detail all persons onboard, including crew, special personnel, and any passengers.

3.0 Surveys

3.1 The survey’s scope must be sufficient for the surveyor to verify that the vessel and its equipment are in a satisfactory condition for its intended service.

3.2 The survey must include an inspection of firefighting equipment, lifesaving equipment and an operational check of the radio equipment.

3.3 Verification of hull integrity, watertight closing arrangements and machinery status will be covered by maintaining classification.

4.0 Certification

4.1 All surveys necessary for issuance and maintenance of the validity of the National Offshore Supply Vessel Document of Compliance (Certificate) must be carried out by the vessel’s Classification Society.

4.2 The Certificate must be issued to all vessels only upon completion of an Initial Survey which is carried out concurrently with the surveys required for registration.

4.3 The Certificate must be issued for a validity of five (5) years, running concurrently with the five (5) year classification period between Special Surveys, but is subject to annual verification surveys by the Classification Society’s surveyors, who must endorse the Certificate accordingly. The Annual Survey must be conducted within three (3) months before and three (3) months after each anniversary date of the Initial or Renewal Survey.

4.4 Cargo vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above must also be issued appropriate SOLAS statutory documents (Safety Construction, Safety Equipment and Supplement) using “Cargo Ship other than any of the above (OSV)” as type of ship.
4.5 For any OSV carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew, the Certificate must be annotated:

.1 Voyages not greater than 200 nautical miles from the coast, and;

.2 Carriage of persons in addition to the crew must be limited to authorized personnel and offshore workers.

5.0 Initial and Annual Safety Inspections

5.1 The Safety Inspection procedures applicable to all RMI-flagged vessels must be followed as provided in RMI Marine Notice 5-034-1.

6.0 Modifications and Alterations

6.1 No modifications or alterations will be required of existing approved arrangements. However, where the provision of equipment falls below generally accepted international standards or normal good shipbuilding practice, the Administrator, in consultation with the relevant Classification Society and the owner, must specify the number and/or type of equipment to be carried.

7.0 Radio Equipment

7.1 All certificated vessels must comply with the requirements of Chapter IV, Regulation 4, of SOLAS, as amended, unless alternative arrangements are approved by the Administrator.

7.2 Cargo Ships over 300 gross tonnage must, in addition to the National Cargo Ship Document of Compliance, comply with the requirements of the new SOLAS Chapter IV (GMDSS), as stated in the 1988 Amendments and Chapter V/19.1 for Long Range Tracking and Identification (LRIT).

8.0 International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code

8.1 Vessels not subject to mandatory compliance with the ISPS Code may do so voluntarily. It is highly recommended that cargo ships, including OSVs, 300 gross tonnage or above but less than 500 gross tonnage (ITC 69), voluntarily comply. While still voluntary for such vessels, mandatory compliance is anticipated in the future. See RMI Marine Notice 2-011-16.

8.2 It also must be understood that certain coastal States may impose special security requirements on these vessels. Such is the case in the United States (US) territorial waters wherein foreign commercial vessels greater than 100 gross tonnage not subject to SOLAS are subject to Part 104 of the USCG Final Rules. Such vessels should consider adopting the appropriate Alternative Security Plan provided by groups representing specialized marine sectors within the US.
9.0 Load Lines

9.1 All certificated vessels must comply with the requirements of the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966, as amended, with the sole exception of the requirements for marking and freeboard computation, unless alternative arrangements are approved by the Administrator.

9.2 New vessels of 24 meters (m) or more in length and existing vessels of 150 gross tonnage and above, engaged on any international voyage, in addition to the National Cargo Ship Document of Compliance must carry an International Load Line Certificate.

10.0 Stability

10.1 The intact and damage stability, and the subdivision of any OSV should in general comply with the requirements of IMO Resolution MSC.235(82), as amended by IMO Resolution MSC.335(90).

10.2 The intact and damage stability, and the subdivision of any vessel intending to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew should in general comply with the requirements of Chapter 2 of the 2008 SPS Code (IMO Resolution MSC.266(84)) – IMO Resolutions MSC.299(87) and MSC.408(96).

11.0 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)

11.1 All vessels must fully comply with the requirements of MARPOL.

12.0 Lifesaving

12.1 The vessel should comply with the relevant provisions for cargo ships contained in Chapter III of SOLAS.

12.2 All lifesaving appliances and arrangements must be in accordance with Chapter III of SOLAS and the Lifesaving Appliances Code.

12.3 Lifejackets - a lifejacket must be provided for each person on board. Additional lifejackets must also be provided to each watchstander at the watch locations.

12.4 Immersion suits – unless the vessel is operating exclusively between 30º North and 30º South latitudes and an exemption certificate has been issued by the vessel’s Classification Society, an immersion suit must be provided for each person on board. Additional immersion suits must also be provided to each watchstander at the watch locations.

12.5 Lifeboats – Vessels greater than 85m in length, or any vessel carrying more than 60 total persons, must be equipped with SOLAS lifeboats of sufficient capacity to accommodate the total persons on board.
12.6 Life Rafts:

.1 Vessels must carry one (1) or more life rafts with an aggregate capacity that will accommodate the total number of persons on board.

.2 Life rafts must be stowed in a position providing for easy side-to-side transfer at a single open deck level or additional life rafts must be provided to bring the total capacity available on each side to at least 100 percent of the total number of persons on board.

12.7 Rescue boats – all vessels must be equipped with at least one (1) SOLAS rescue boat. An additional rescue boat may be required depending on total persons carried, route, and type of vessel.

13.0 Accommodations

13.1 For voyages over 12 hours, suitable overnight accommodations must be provided for each person on board.

13.2 In any case where temporary or portable accommodations are employed, they must be to the same standard, or equivalent standard of construction, structure, heating and ventilation, egress, water/weather tightness, safety systems, and sanitary facilities, as provided on the vessel for its intended service.

14.0 Navigation Lights

14.1 Due to the special construction and purpose of OSVs, it is typically difficult for the navigation lights arrangement to be in compliance with the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS) with regard to:

.1 location of the sternlight, aft anchor light, and towing light (Rule 21 (c), 30 (a)(ii));

.2 second mast-light (Rule 23 (a)(ii), Annex I Paragraphs 2(a) and (b), and 3(a)); and

.3 vertical spacing of lights (Annex I Paragraph 2 (ii)).

14.2 In such cases, and in accordance with the provisions in RMI Technical Circular No. 4, the Administrator has authorized its Classification Societies to issue a full-term exemption certificate to these vessels, from the specific COLREGS provisions above. This is provided that:

.1 all alternative measures regarding placement of the stern/anchor lights as high and far aft as possible; and
.2 proper illumination of the aft working deck at night while at anchor or underway is provided; and

.3 the same is reflected on the exemption certificate when issued.

15.0 Transport and Handling of Limited Amounts of Hazardous and Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk

15.1 All OSVs carrying noxious liquid substances in bulk are subject to the requirements of Annex II of MARPOL, as amended. The Codes contained in IMO Assembly Resolutions A.863(20), as amended by IMO Resolution MSC.237(82), and A.1122(30), as amended, must be followed.

15.2 Following a satisfactory initial survey of an OSV, the Administrator’s duly authorized recognized organization must issue a certificate, the model form of which is set out in Appendix 1 of A.1122(30), suitably endorsed to certify compliance with the provisions of the OSV Chemical Code. The certificate must indicate the cargoes regulated by the Code that the OSV is permitted to carry with any relevant carriage conditions and should have a period of validity not exceeding five (5) years.

15.3 The certificate issued under the OSV Chemical Code must have the same force and receive the same recognition as the certificate issued under regulation 7 of MARPOL Annex II and regulations VII/10 and VII/13 of SOLAS.

15.4 The validity of the certificate referred to in §15.3 must be subject to the renewal, intermediate, annual, and additional surveys required by the IBC Code, the IGC Code, and MARPOL Annex II.