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

SUBJECT: National Safety Requirements for Vessels Carrying Persons in Addition to Crew.

References: (a) RMI Marine Notice 2-011-35, National Safety Requirements for Offshore Supply Vessels
(b) RMI Marine Notice 2-011-34, Special Purpose Ships
(c) IMO Resolution A.863(20), Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Cargoes and Persons by Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV Code)
(d) IMO Resolution MSC.235(82), Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Offshore Supply Vessels, 2006

PURPOSE

This Notice has been developed to establish minimum requirements for vessels carrying persons in addition to the vessel’s crew.

The SOLAS Convention allows a cargo vessel to carry up to 12 persons in addition to the crew. Under the SOLAS Convention, a cargo vessel that carries more than 12 passengers on an international voyage must be considered a passenger ship. In that regard, those vessels must be certified in accordance with SOLAS passenger ship requirements or other standards the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) considers to provide an equivalent level of safety.

The Administrator recognizes that there are vessels of such a design and/or which operate in services and under conditions which make strict compliance with SOLAS passenger ship requirements inappropriate. Additionally, the persons carried on these vessels may not be the typical passenger in that they are regularly working in the maritime environment and trained in shipboard emergency procedures. This Notice establishes the Administrator’s minimum requirements necessary to establish an equivalent standard to SOLAS for these vessels.

This Notice supersedes the original issue of 3/10 and reflects the removal of “…mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU) or…” in section 2.6.

APPLICABILITY

This Notice applies to each vessel of any gross tonnage that is carrying, on any voyage, any persons who are not crewmembers of the vessel. These persons may include but are not limited to
passengers, family members of crew, maintenance/repair workers, representatives of the owners/operators, or regulatory/class surveyors who are onboard for the duration or part of a voyage.

This Notice applies to the transport of offshore crew and marine service providers between offshore installations and shore, offshore support vessels transporting offshore supplies, and standby vessels for evacuation of offshore installations.

It does not apply, however, to passenger ships covered by SOLAS or special purpose ships (SPSs) addressed in reference (b) above. Additionally, it is not intended to cover pilots, class/cargo surveyors, regulatory personnel, or other persons attending or visiting the vessel incidental to a port call.

REQUIREMENTS

1.0 General

1.1 Any vessel intending to carry not more than 12 persons in addition to the crew may do so within the limits of this Notice, provided the total persons on board does not exceed that allowed by the vessel’s statutory documents. If total persons on board exceed that allowed by the vessel’s statutory documents, the Administrator may consider a limited increase, for a short term, in accordance with paragraph 3.1 below.

1.2 Any vessel intending to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew must be issued a National Document of Compliance (NDOC), in addition to any other required statutory certification, with specific authorization from the Administrator. This document shall serve as evidence that the vessel is in compliance with a standard determined by the Administrator to be equivalent to those of the SOLAS Convention, 1974, as allowed by SOLAS Regulation I/5.

1.3 Suitable accommodations, including sanitary facilities, shall be provided for each person on board. For voyages in excess of 12 hours, this shall include overnight accommodations. In any case where temporary or portable accommodations are employed, they shall meet equivalent standards for construction, structure, heating and ventilation, egress, water/weather tightness, safety systems and sanitary facilities as a vessel in the intended service.

1.4 The minimum crew size, including number of certified lifeboatmen, shall be adjusted as deemed necessary based on the total number of persons carried and total number of life boats.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 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.
2.2 **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.

2.3 **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).

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

2.5 **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.

2.6 **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.

2.7 **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.

2.8 **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, from or below the ocean floor, on or at an offshore installation. The term does not include the master or a member of the crew engaged in the business of the vessel (see 2.1 above).

2.9 **Passenger** - means every person other than the master and the members of the crew or other persons employed or engaged in any capacity on board a ship.


2.11 **Special personnel** - means all persons who are not crewmembers or passengers and 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.

2.12 **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 **Procedure**

3.1 Any owner or operator intending to operate a vessel carrying up to 12 persons in addition to the vessel’s crew, may do so only under the conditions of this Notice. Specific authorization from the Administrator is not required unless the total number of persons onboard will exceed the number allowed on the vessel’s Safety Equipment Certificate.
3.2 Any owner or operator intending to operate a vessel carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the vessel’s crew, under the conditions of this Notice, must request and receive specific authorization from the Administrator.

3.3 Requests should be forwarded, with the recommendation of the vessel’s Classification Society, to the Administrator for consideration. This request should include, at a minimum, a general arrangement plan, capacity and arrangement of all lifesaving appliances, a detailed scope of operations including area of operations, restrictions, and proposed manning and capacity to carry additional personnel. The request should also provide a description of the role or purpose for all persons onboard, including crew.

4.0 Surveys

4.1 The content of surveys is to be sufficient for the surveyor to verify that the vessel and its equipment are satisfactory for the carriage of the specified additional persons in the intended service.

4.2 The survey should include an inspection of accommodations, fire fighting equipment, lifesaving equipment and an operational check of the radio equipment.

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

4.4 The surveys of cargo vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above to which SOLAS statutory documents (Safety Construction, Safety Equipment and Supplement) have been issued should be harmonized.

5.0 Certification

5.1 Short-Term Authorization

5.1.1 Short-term authorizations may be given by the Administrator for those circumstances in which it is necessary to carry additional persons for limited periods in order to carry out maintenance, cleaning, or other necessary tasks related to the condition of the ship or cargo, or conduct onboard relief of crewmembers. These authorizations are typically limited to three (3) months or less.

5.1.2 Each additional person shall be provided with accommodations and personal lifesaving appliances.

5.1.3 Specific authorization is required if the additional personnel number more than 12 or the resulting total persons onboard are more than the total persons allowed by the vessel’s Safety Equipment Certificate or NDOC. In such cases additional lifesaving appliances may need to be provided. A written request that includes the number of extra persons, duration, nature of the intended duties on board, and capacity of lifesaving appliances should be forwarded to the Administrator at technical@register-iri.com. If authorized, the vessel’s classification society will be authorized to conduct a survey to verify the conditions of the authorization and to issue the appropriate short-term statutory instrument.
5.1.4 Specific authorization is not required if the additional persons on board are 12 or less and the resulting total persons onboard are less than the total persons allowed by the vessel’s Safety Equipment Certificate or NDOC.

5.1.5 Vessels receiving a short-term authorization shall comply with Section 10.0 of this Notice, when carrying persons in addition to the crew. Sections 4, 6 through 9, and 11 do not apply unless specifically identified by the Administrator.

5.2 Full-Term Certification (NDOC)

5.2.1 Each vessel intending to regularly carry more than 12 persons on board in addition to the crew shall be issued an NDOC. The NDOC shall be issued by the Classification Society to all vessels upon completion of an Initial Survey which is carried out concurrently with the surveys required for registration.

5.2.2 The NDOC shall be valid for five (5) years, running concurrently with the five (5) year classification period between special surveys, but shall be subject to annual verification surveys by the Classification Society’s surveyors, who shall endorse the NDOC accordingly. The Annual Survey should be conducted between three (3) months before and three (3) months after the anniversary of the Initial Survey date.

5.2.3 Cargo vessels of 500 gross tonnage and above must also be issued appropriate SOLAS statutory documents (Safety Construction, Safety Equipment and Supplement). For such vessels, the National and International certification should be harmonized.

6.0 Stability and Subdivision

6.1 The intact and damage stability, and the subdivision of any vessel intending to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew should, at a minimum, comply with the requirements of the Intact Stability Code.

6.2 Consideration may be given to use of the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008 (2008 SPS Code) requirements for stability and subdivision for vessels carrying more than 60 total persons onboard, including the crew.

6.3 Arrangements made to maintain the watertight integrity of openings in watertight subdivisions should comply with the relevant provisions for cargo ships contained in chapter II-1 of SOLAS.

7.0 Machinery and Electrical Systems

7.1 The machinery and electrical systems shall be in compliance with the 2008 SPS Code.

8.0 Fire Protection

8.1 The fire protection systems shall be in compliance with the 2008 SPS Code.
9.0 **Lifesaving**

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

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

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

9.4 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 shall be provided for each person on board. Additional immersion suits shall also be provided to each watchstander at the watch locations.

9.5 Lifeboats - Vessels greater than 85 m 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.

9.6 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.

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

10.0 **Transport and Transfer of Persons By Vessels Other Than Passenger Ships**

10.1 All transport and transfer of persons in addition to the crew must be conducted in accordance with the following:

- only under suitable weather conditions;
- all personnel to be transported must receive safety briefing as per 10.2 below;
- a manned standby vessel must be available at all times during offshore personnel transfer operations;
- all watertight doors in subdivision bulkheads shall be kept closed at all times when the vessel is at sea, except when they are used for transit; and
- all personnel transport and transfer operations must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of IMO Assembly Resolution A.863(20).
10.2 Before a vessel gets under way on a voyage transporting industrial personnel, the master shall ensure that each person in addition to the crew is aware of:

- emergency and evacuation procedures;
- locations of emergency exits and of embarkation areas for survival craft;
- locations of lifejackets and immersion suits;
- proper method or methods of donning and adjusting lifejackets and immersion suits of the type or types carried on the vessel;
- locations of the instruction placards for lifejackets and other lifesaving devices as well as any placards of emergency instructions;
- which hazardous conditions might require the donning of lifejackets and immersion suits;
- types and locations of any other lifesaving device carried on the vessel;
- identity and location of survival craft to which assigned;
- any hazardous materials on the vessel; and
- any conditions or circumstances that constitute a risk to safety.

10.3 Unless specifically authorized by the Administrator, in all cases, transport voyages are limited to near coastal.

10.4 Except under emergency conditions, transport voyages are subject to favorable sea conditions.

11.0 Safety and Security Management Systems

11.1 The International Safety Management (ISM) Code shall be implemented by the operator of all vessels authorized to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew. Evidence of compliance must be provided by a Recognized Organization.

11.2 The International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code shall be implemented by the operator of all vessels authorized to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew. Evidence of compliance must be provided by a Recognized Security Organization.