



**REPUBLIC OF
THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**

MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

Marine Notice

No. 7-038-4

Rev. Oct/2017

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

SUBJECT: Principles of Watchkeeping

- References:**
- (a) **STCW Convention**, *International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 2011 Edition*, as amended
 - (b) **STCW Code**, *Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping Code, 2011 Edition*, as amended
 - (c) **COLREGS**, *International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972*
 - (d) **ISPS Code**, *International Ship and Port Facility Security Code*, as amended
 - (e) **MLC, 2006**, *International Maritime Labour Convention, 2006*, as amended
 - (f) **IMO Assembly Resolution [A.893\(21\)](#)**, *Guidelines for Voyage Planning*, adopted 25 November 1999
 - (g) **RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification ([MI-118](#))**

PURPOSE

This Notice promulgates the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) requirements for watchkeeping at sea.

This Notice supersedes Rev. 11/13 and reflects the explicit inclusion of cargo watches in the determination of watchkeeping arrangements as required by the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW).

APPLICABILITY

This Notice is applicable to all RMI-flagged vessels and RMI certified or documented seafarers.

REQUIREMENTS

1.0 Standards Regarding Watchkeeping

STCW, the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972 (COLREGS), and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) have a direct impact on watchkeeping practices in all merchant ships and the manning requirements for vessels. The following outlines the requirements of STCW.

1.1 Watchkeeping at Sea

- 1.1.1 The Master of every ship is bound to ensure that watchkeeping arrangements are adequate for maintaining safe navigational and cargo watches.
- 1.1.2 Under the Master's general direction, the officers of the watch are responsible for navigating the ship safely during their periods of duty, when they will be particularly concerned with avoiding collision and stranding.
- 1.1.3 The Chief Engineer of every ship is bound, in consultation with the Master, to ensure that watchkeeping arrangements adequately maintain safe engineering watches.
- 1.1.4 The officer in charge of the watch is the Master's representative and is primarily responsible at all times for the safe navigation of the ship and for complying with COLREGS.

1.2 Fitness for Duty

- 1.2.1 All persons who are assigned duty as officer in charge of a watch or as a rating forming part of a watch shall be provided a minimum of 10 hours of rest in any 24-hour period.
- 1.2.2 The hours of rest may be divided into no more than two (2) periods, one (1) of which shall be at least six (6) hours in length.
- 1.2.3 During overriding operational conditions, the minimum period of 10 hours may be reduced to not less than six (6) consecutive hours; provided that, any such reduction shall not extend beyond two (2) days, and not less than 70 hours of rest shall be provided in each seven (7) day period.

1.3 Oil Pollution Act of 1990

- 1.3.1 For vessels operating within United States waters to which the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90) requirements apply, as the limit specified in §1.2.1 is more stringent than the OPA 90 limitation of no more than 15 hours work in any 24-hour period, adherence to the minimum limit of 10 hours of rest in any 24 hour period would be in compliance with STCW, the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006), and OPA 90 requirements.
- 1.3.2 However, the OPA 90 restriction of no more than 36 hours of work in any 72-hour period is unique and distinct from the limits prescribed under STCW and MLC, 2006. Therefore, adherence to the limit specified in §1.2.2 may not ensure compliance with this unique 72-hour period limit. Accordingly, shipowners and operators shall take measures which ensure that the most onerous limits for all periods (24-hour, 72-hour and 7-day periods) are met while operating under OPA 90 regulations.
- 1.3.3 Due to the differences among the OPA 90 and with both STCW/MLC, 2006 on this issue, the restrictions under OPA 90 above shall not be utilized unless permitted under the seafarers' collective agreement where applicable.

1.4 Protection of the Marine Environment

The Master, officers, and ratings shall be aware of the serious effects of operational or accidental pollution of the marine environment and shall take all possible precautions to

prevent such pollution, particularly within the framework of relevant international and port regulations.

1.5 Look-Outs

A proper look-out shall be maintained at all times in compliance with Rule 5 of COLREGS and shall serve the purpose of:

- .1 maintaining a continuous state of vigilance by sight and hearing as well as by all other available means, with regard to any significant change in the operating environment;
- .2 fully appraising the situation and the risk of collision, stranding and other dangers to navigation; and
- .3 detecting ships or aircraft in distress, shipwrecked persons, wrecks, debris, and other hazards to safe navigation.

2.0 Standards Regarding Number of Ratings Required on Watch

STCW is not specific as to how many ratings should be included in a navigational or engine room watch. **Therefore, for RMI vessels, the following determinations are made:**

2.1 Navigational Watch

When only one (1) rating forms part of a navigational watch, the watchstander shall be qualified as an Able Seafarer or GP-1. When more than one (1) rating is included in a navigational watch only one (1) need be qualified as an Able Seafarer. All watchstanders shall be qualified and hold certification prescribed for navigational rating watchstanders to the standards prescribed in A-II/4 or 5 of STCW according to the duties they are required to perform. (Refer to RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification ([MI-118](#)), §5.8.)

2.2 Engine Room Watch

- 2.2.1 When only one (1) rating forms part of an engine room watch, the watchstander shall be qualified to the standards and hold certification prescribed in Table A-III/4 or 5 of STCW, according to the duties required to be performed. When more than one (1) rating is included in an engine room watch, each rating must be qualified in accordance with this paragraph. (Refer to RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification (MI-118), §5.9.)
- 2.2.2 No member of the engine room watch shall be required to enter the engine room alone, except under controlled conditions (IMO Assembly Resolution [A.1047\(27\)](#)).
- 2.2.3 In cases where personnel not defined in MI-118, such as fitters, mechanics, etc., are carried on the crew list in lieu of Able Seafarer Engine, all watchstanders shall comply with the standards and hold the certification prescribed for engine room rating

watchstanders in A-III/4 or 5 of STCW, according to the duties they are required to perform. (Refer to RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification (MI-118), §5.9.)

3.0 Training and Qualifications for Persons on Tankers

3.1 Minimum Training and Qualification Levels

- 3.1.1 Chapter V, Section A-V/1, of STCW specifies minimum training and qualification levels for persons on tankers. It requires on oil tankers, chemical tankers and liquefied gas tankers that the Master, Chief Mate, Chief Engineer and First Assistant Engineer possess training and experience appropriate to their duties. On tankers where a specialist cargo officer is carried, he too shall be qualified. Each of those officers shall prove competency by means of a Tanker endorsement as provided for in RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification ([MI-118](#)), §5.10.
- 3.1.2 Owners and Masters should ensure that all officers on tankers who are in charge of cargo operations or who have immediate responsibility for cargo handling operations are qualified as Tanker, Person-in-Charge in order to comply with STCW and to avoid possible port State interventions.
- 3.1.3 Ratings who perform cargo handling duties and responsibilities should be qualified as Tanker, Person Assisting.

3.2 Crude Oil Washing

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 (MARPOL) specifies that certain crew members must be appropriately qualified on tankers that conduct crude oil washing (COW) operations. The Master, Chief Mate, Chief Engineer, First Assistant Engineer, cargo officer (where carried), and any ratings who have responsibilities defined in the COW Operations and Equipment Manual, must possess the appropriate certification of qualification. The RMI Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) will provide, upon application and satisfactory proof of experience, an endorsement of competency in COW with the tanker certificate referred to in §3.1 above. (Refer to RMI Requirements for Seafarer Certification (MI-118), §5.10.)

4.0 STCW

For additional standards regarding Watchkeeping, refer to STCW Chapter VIII, Sections A-VIII/1 and A-VIII/2 Part 1, Part 2 as supplemented by IMO Assembly Resolution [A.893\(21\)](#), Part 3 and Part 4.