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MARINE CIRCULAR

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FOR: Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Ship Masters, Ship Officers, Classification Societies, Flag State Inspectors

SUBJECT: REQUIREMENTS FOR OFFSHORE SUPPLY VESSELS (OSVs) CARRYING PERSONS IN ADDITION TO CREW

DEFINITIONS:

The following abbreviations stand for:

- "COLREGS" – Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972
- "GA" – General Arrangement
- "GT" – Gross Tonnage
- "IMO" – International Maritime Organization
- "ISM Code" – International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention
- "ISPS Code" – International Ship and Port Facility Security Code implemented through chapter XI-2
- Special measures to enhance maritime security in SOLAS.
- "LSA" – Life-saving Appliances
- "MARPOL 73/78" – International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978
- "MODU Code" – Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units
- "RO" – Recognized Organization as defined by IMO Resolution A.789(19)
- "RSO" – Recognized Security Organization as defined by the ISPS Code
- "SOLAS" – International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended
- "SPS" – Special Purpose Ships defined as a mechanically self-propelled ship which by reason of its function carries on board more than 12 special personnel.
- "SPS 2008" – Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008, Annex to IMO Resolution MSC.266(84)
- "SPS Code" – Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, Annex to IMO Resolution A.534(13).

The following terms shall mean:

- "Administration" – Tuvalu Ship Registry;
- "Authorized person" – refers to those persons, other than offshore workers, carried onboard 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" – refers to 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” – refers to 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;
- “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);
- “International Voyage” – refers to a voyage outside the territorial waters of Tuvalu;
- “Near coastal voyage” – refers to 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” – refers to 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 drilling unit (MODU) or mobile offshore unit (MOU); accommodation units; floating production, storage and operations units (FPSO, FSO, FSU or MOSU); and maintenance units;
- “Offshore Supply Vessel (OSV)” – refers to 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 circular, the term also includes Crew Boats;
- “Offshore worker” – refers to 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;
- “Passenger” – refers to 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;
- “Persons in addition to crew” – 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;
- “Special personnel” – refers to 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.

PURPOSE:

In accordance with SOLAS definitions, a vessel of any GT carrying more than 12 passengers, on an international voyage is considered to be a passenger ship. OSVs (including crew boats) that often carry more than 12 offshore workers (normally consisting of offshore installation crewmembers and marine service providers) are therefore required that the vessel comply with SOLAS passenger vessel regulations as the offshore workers on board are considered passengers as they do not perform the functions of a crew.

However, in most circumstances these vessels differ greatly from the typical SOLAS passenger ship in the sense 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 a myriad of equipment, supplies, stores, industrial fluids, and personnel from nearby shore base facilities and the offshore oil and offshore gas installations, and vice versa. The extra persons carried are not typical passengers but primarily industrial personnel, trained for the marine environment and experienced in emergency and evacuation procedures.

This Administration recognizes these differences and this circular seeks to establish an equivalent standard to the SOLAS passenger ship requirements for OSVs registered with Tuvalu.

APPLICATION:

This circular applies to OSVs of any GT that:

- is self-propelled by machinery; and
- regularly transports persons in addition to the crew, who perform functions in support of exploration, exploitation, or production of offshore energy resources.

This circular does not apply to:

- vessels engaged in passenger trade; or
- vessels or units certified under the MODU Code or SPS 2008.

REFERENCES:

- (a) IMO Resolution A.863(20), Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Cargoes and Persons by Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV Code), as Amended
- (b) IMO Resolution MSC.235(82), Guidelines for the Design and Construction of Offshore Supply Vessels, 2006
- (c) IMO 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, as Amended
- (d) Marine Circular MC-6/2012/1, Guidance for Special Purpose Ships (SPSs)

CONTENTS:

1. General Requirements

- 1.1. Any owner / operator intending to operate a vessel carrying up to 12 persons in addition to the vessel's crew may do without any authorization from the Administration unless the total number of persons onboard will exceed the number allowed on the vessel's Safety Equipment Certificate in which case short-term authorizations may be requested for the Administration's consideration.
- 1.2. Short-term authorizations are considered for situations 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. Each additional person shall be provided with accommodations and personal lifesaving appliances.
- 1.3. A request for short-term authorization should be forwarded together with the number of extra persons, duration, nature of the intended duties on board, and capacity of LSA to the Administration at technical@tvship.com. If the request is approved, the vessel's RO will be authorized to conduct a survey to verify the conditions of the authorization are met and subsequently issue the appropriate short-term statutory instrument.
- 1.4. Vessels receiving a short-term authorization shall comply with Section 16 of this circular when carrying persons in addition to the crew. Sections 2, 6, 8, and 10 through 12 do not apply unless specifically identified by the Administrator.
- 1.5. Any vessel intending to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew must request for authorization from the Administration and such request should be forwarded together with the recommendations identified by the vessel's RO to the Administration for consideration. This request should include, at a minimum, a GA plan, capacity and arrangement of all LSA, 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.

- 1.6. Vessels approved to carry more than 12 persons shall be issued a Statement of Compliance (SOC) in accordance to this circular in addition to any other required statutory certification. This SOC shall serve as evidence that the vessel is in compliance with a standard determined by the Administration to be equivalent to SOLAS as allowed by SOLAS Regulation I/5.
- 1.7. 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.
- 1.8. The minimum crew size, including number of certified lifeboat-men, shall be adjusted as deemed necessary based on the total number of persons carried and total number of life boats.

2. Survey Requirements

- 2.1. The scope and content of the surveys shall 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.
- 2.2. The survey shall include an inspection of fire-fighting equipment, life-saving equipment and an operational check of the radio equipment.
- 2.3. Verification of hull integrity, watertight closing arrangements and machinery status will be covered by maintaining classification.
- 2.4. The surveys of cargo vessels of 500 GT and above to which SOLAS statutory documents (Safety Construction, Safety Equipment and Supplement) have been issued should be harmonized.

3. Certification Requirements

- 3.1. All surveys necessary for issuance and maintenance of the validity of a Statement of Compliance (SOC), or equivalent, shall be carried out by the vessel's RO.
- 3.2. The SOC shall be issued only upon completion of an Initial Survey.
- 3.3. The SOC shall be issued for a period of validity of 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 RO's surveyors, who shall endorse the SOC accordingly. The Annual Survey shall be conducted within three (3) months before and three (3) months after each anniversary date of the Initial or Renewal Survey.
- 3.4. Cargo vessels of 500 GT and above must *also* be issued appropriate SOLAS statutory certificates (Safety Construction, Safety Equipment and Supplement) and for such vessels, the SOC and the SOLAS statutory certificates should be harmonized.
- 3.5. For OSVs carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew, the SOC shall be annotated:
 - 3.5.1. Voyages not greater than 200 nautical miles from the coast, and;
 - 3.5.2. Carriage of persons in addition to the crew shall be limited to authorized personnel and offshore workers.

4. Modifications and Alterations

- 4.1. No modifications or alterations shall be required of existing approved arrangements.
- 4.2. However, where the provision of equipment falls below generally accepted international standards or normal good shipbuilding practice, the Administration, in consultation with the relevant RO and the owner, shall specify the number and/or type of units of equipment to be carried.

5. Radio Equipment Requirements

- 5.1. All certificated vessels shall comply with the requirements of Chapter IV, Regulation 4, of SOLAS 1974, and with the 1978, 1981, 1983 and 1988 amendments, unless alternative arrangements are approved by the Administration.
- 5.2. Cargo Ships over 300 GT shall, in addition to the SOC, be required to comply with the requirements of the new SOLAS Chapter IV (GMDSS) as stated in the 1988 Amendments and Chapter V/19.1 for LRIT.

6. ISM and ISPS Code Requirements

- 6.1. The ISM Code shall be implemented on all vessels authorized to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew. Evidence of compliance must be provided by a RO.
- 6.2. The ISPS Code shall be implemented on all vessels authorized to carry more than 12 persons in addition to the crew. Evidence of compliance must be provided by a RSO.
- 6.3. OSVs not subject to mandatory compliance for the ISPS Code (i.e. below 500 GT and not carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew) may do so voluntarily.

7. Load Lines Requirements

- 7.1. All certificated vessels shall 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 Administration.
- 7.2. New vessels of 24 meters or more in length and existing vessels of 150 GT and above, engaged on any international voyage shall carry an International Load Line Certificate in addition to the SOC.

8. Stability Requirements

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. However, consideration may be given to use the stability and subdivision requirements of Chapter 2 of the SPS 2008 (IMO Resolution MSC.266(84)) for vessels carrying more than 60 total persons onboard, including the crew.
- 8.3. The intact and damage stability, and the subdivision of any OSV should in general comply with the requirements of IMO Resolution A.863(20).
- 8.4. Arrangements made to maintain the watertight integrity of openings in watertight subdivisions should comply with the relevant provisions for cargo ships contained in SOLAS Chapter II-1.

9. MARPOL Requirements

All vessels shall fully comply with the requirements of MARPOL 73/78.

10. Life-saving Requirements

- 10.1. The vessel should comply with the relevant provisions for cargo ships contained in Chapter III of SOLAS.
- 10.2. All lifesaving appliances and arrangements shall be in accordance with Chapter III of SOLAS and the LSA Code.
- 10.3. A lifejacket shall be provided for each person on board. Additional lifejackets shall also be provided to each watchstander at the watch locations.
- 10.4. Immersion suits shall be provided for each person on board. Additional immersion suits shall also be provided to each watchstander at the watch locations. However, an exemption certificate for immersion suits can be issued by the RO if the vessel is operating exclusively between 30° North and 30° South latitudes.
- 10.5. Lifeboats with sufficient capacity to accommodate the total persons on board must be fitted on vessels greater than 85 m in length, or any vessel carrying more than 60 total persons.
- 10.6. Life Rafts:
 - 10.6.1. Vessels must carry one (1) or more life rafts with an aggregate capacity that will accommodate the total number of persons on board.
 - 10.6.2. Life rafts must be stowed in a position providing for easy side-to-side transfer at a single open deck level, failing which 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.
- 10.7. At least one)1) SOLAS rescue boat shall be fitted on all vessels. An additional rescue boat may be required depending on total persons carried, route, and type of vessel.

11. Fire Protection Requirements

The fire protection systems shall be in compliance with SPS 2008.

12. Machinery and Electrical Systems Requirements

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

13. Accommodation Requirements

- 13.1. For voyages in excess of 12 hours, suitable overnight accommodations shall be provided for each person on board.
- 13.2. In any case where temporary or portable accommodations are employed, they shall 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. Navigation Lights

- 14.1. Due to the special construction and purpose of OSVs, it is typically difficult for the arrangement of the navigation lights to be in compliance with COLREGS especially with regards to:
 - 14.1.1. location of the sternlight, aft anchor light, and towing light (Rule 21 (c), 30 (a)(ii));
 - 14.1.2. second mast-light (Rule 23 (a)(ii), Annex I Paragraphs 2 (a),(b), & 3 (a)); and
 - 14.1.3. vertical spacing of lights (Annex I Paragraph 2 (ii)).
- 14.2. In such cases, the Administration has authorized its ROs to issue a full-term exemption certificate to these vessels, from the specific COLREGS provisions above. This is provided that:
 - 14.2.1. all alternative measures regarding placement of the stern/anchor lights as high and far aft as possible; and
 - 14.2.2. proper illumination of the aft working deck at night while at anchor or underway is provided; and
 - 14.2.3. the same is reflected on the exemption certificate when issued.

15. 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 73/78, as amended. The guidelines contained in IMO Resolution MSC.235(82) and IMO Resolution A.673(16), Guidelines for the Transport and shall be followed.
- 15.2. Each OSV carrying noxious liquid substances in bulk shall be issued with a Certificate of Fitness by the RO indicating the cargoes regulated by the Guidelines that the vessel is permitted to be carried.

16. Transport and Transfer of Persons By Vessels Other Than Passenger Ships

- 16.1. All transport and transfer of persons in addition to the crew must be conducted in accordance with the following:
 - 16.1.1. only under suitable weather conditions;
 - 16.1.2. all personnel to be transported must receive safety briefing as per 16.2 below;
 - 16.1.3. a manned standby vessel must be available at all times during offshore personnel transfer operations;
 - 16.1.4. 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
 - 16.1.5. all personnel transport and transfer operations must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of IMO Assembly Resolution A.863(20).
- 16.2. 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:
 - 16.2.1. emergency and evacuation procedures;

- 16.2.2. locations of emergency exits and of embarkation areas for survival craft;
 - 16.2.3. locations of lifejackets and immersion suits;
 - 16.2.4. proper method or methods of donning and adjusting lifejackets and immersion suits of the type or types carried on the vessel;
 - 16.2.5. locations of the instruction placards for lifejackets and other lifesaving devices as well as any placards of emergency instructions;
 - 16.2.6. which hazardous conditions might require the donning of lifejackets and immersion suits;
 - 16.2.7. types and locations of any other lifesaving device carried on the vessel;
 - 16.2.8. identity and location of survival craft to which assigned;
 - 16.2.9. any hazardous materials on the vessel; and
 - 16.2.10. any conditions or circumstances that constitute a risk to safety.
- 16.3. Unless specifically authorized by the Administration, transport voyages are in all cases limited to near coastal.
- 16.4. Except under emergency conditions, transport voyages are always subject to favourable sea conditions.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar
Tuvalu Ship Registry