# REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

**MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR**

**Marine Guideline**

**No. 2-11-19**

**Jul/2024**

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

**SUBJECT:** **Offshore Wind Farm Installation, Maintenance, and Support Vessels**

**Reference:**
(a) **SOLAS**, *International Convention of Life at Sea, Consolidated Edition 2020*
(b) **IMO Circular** MSC.1/Circ.1455, *Guidelines for the approval of alternatives and equivalents as provided for in various IMO instruments*, issued 24 June 2013
(c) **RMI** Maritime Act 1990
(d) **RMI** Maritime Regulations (MI-108)
(e) **RMI Marine Notice** 2-011-8, *National Safety Requirements for Miscellaneous Vessels*
(f) **RMI Marine Notice** 2-011-34, *Special Purpose Ships*
(g) **RMI Marine Notice** 2-011-60, *Safety Requirements for Vessels Carrying Industrial Personnel*
(h) **RMI Marine Notice** 5-034-1, *Safety Inspection Program*

## PURPOSE

This Marine Guideline (MG) provides information from the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the "Administrator") that is necessary for registering certain vessels supporting offshore wind farm installations.

This revision supersedes that of Mar/2024. The Table in §1.5 has been amended to show that an Industrial Personnel Safety Certificate is necessary for Wind Turbine Installation Vessels.

## DEFINITIONS

**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 or Industrial Personnel.

**Crew Transfer Vessel** means a vessel whose primary function is to ferry persons to, from, or between offshore wind installations or ships and shore. Such transfers may be for activities such as operations, maintenance visits, and inspections.

**Floating Offshore Wind Turbine** means an unmanned floating installation composed of a wind turbine (tower and rotor-nacelle assembly), a floating support structure, and a station-keeping system.

**Industrial Personnel (IP)** means all persons transported or accommodated on board for the purpose of offshore industrial activities[1] performed on board other ships and/or offshore facilities. (See SOLAS Chapter XV).

**Maritime Autonomous Surface Ship (MASS)** a ship which, to a varying degree, can operate independent of human interaction.

**Service Operations Vessel** means a vessel that operates as general in-field platform assist for floating offshore wind turbine servicing and repair. Such vessels will typically be enabled with dynamic positioning (DP) systems. They may provide accommodations for workers and be equipped with a means of personnel transfer that includes heave-compensated 'walk-to-work' gangways.

**Special Personnel** as applicable to and defined in the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships and the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships, 2008.

**Submersible** means a craft which may, or may not, be capable of carrying personnel or passengers and which can operate underwater, submerge, surface, and remain afloat.

**Wind Farm Support Vessel** means a vessel specifically designed for maintaining and repairing floating offshore wind turbines or towers, as well as for transporting industrial personnel between the offshore wind farm and a shore-based facility. A wind farm support vessel may also carry cargo.

**Wind Turbine Installation Vessel** means a vessel designed to install fixed and floating wind power equipment and installations. It is typically equipped with a cargo deck designed to carry: 1) the floating offshore wind turbine component parts (tower, rotor assembly, nacelle, and other equipment); and 2) a large crane for installing floating offshore wind turbines. It may have accommodation to house personnel.

1. **Offshore industrial activities** mean the construction, maintenance, decommissioning, operation or servicing of offshore facilities related, but not limited, to exploration and exploitation of resources by the renewable or hydrocarbon energy sectors, aquaculture, ocean mining, or similar activities. (See SOLAS Chapter XV).

## APPLICABILITY

This Marine Guideline applies to vessels where International Maritime Organization (IMO) instruments may not adequately address their innovative or technically advanced designs, or operations.

a. crew transfer vessels

b. floating offshore wind turbines

c. service operations vessels

d. wind farm support vessels

e. wind turbine installation vessels

## GUIDANCE

### 1.0 General

To be registered in the RMI, a vessel must be classed and maintain active Class status with an RMI-Recognized Organization (RO) according to the RMI Maritime Regulations. (Also see MG 2-11-15)

1.1 The Administrator accepts alternative and/or equivalent solutions to the prescriptive requirements under applicable IMO instruments, provided that the solution provides a level of safety, operations, and environmental protection comparable with the original requirements. This includes fully considering the total number of persons onboard.

1.2 A structured, well-documented process for submitting and gaining approval of alternatives, equivalencies and exemptions should be used. MSC.1/Circ.1455 is an example of this process but due to its complexity it may, or may not, be considered appropriate, in whole or in part, for a particular project.

1.3 Where innovative or novel technologies or materials (meaning, alternative fuels) will be used, discussions between the intended owner, classification society, designated RO, and the Administrator should occur early in the vessel's design.

1.4 For vessels constructed under another flag administration, the Administrator will review any previously accepted alternative features to determine whether an equivalence or exemption can be accepted. The Administrator may request an independent validation to verify whether the original parameters are still valid and the originally applied criteria remain acceptable.

1.5 Any agreed alternative solution should be appropriately reflected in the scope of statutory surveys, certificates, and other documentation carried onboard. Examples are in this table.

| Alternative Solution Examples | |
|---|---|
| **Vessel Type** | **Suggested Statutory Path** |
| Wind Turbine Installation Vessel | Special Purpose Ships Certificate + SOLAS Certificate + + IP Safety Certificate + MODU Certificate of Compliance |
| Service Operations Vessel | Special Purpose Ships Certificate + SOLAS Certificate |
| Crew Transfer Vessel | >500 GT: High Speed Craft Certificate or Special Purpose Ships Certificate<br><br><500 GT: High Speed Craft Certificate, or Special Purpose Ships Certificate, or National Document of Compliance (IACS Recommendation No 99) |
| Floating Offshore Wind Turbine | Mobile Offshore Unit Safety Certificate |

1.6 The Administrator will submit to the IMO the details of any approved alternative or equivalent design as required.

## 2.0 Minimum Safe Manning

2.1 It is the vessel operator's responsibility to ensure there are sufficient qualified seafarers on board for it to be operated safely, securely, and with due regard to protecting the environment per the Maritime Regulations, §7.38.

2.2 The manning requirements and process to obtain, for manned vessels, a Minimum Safe Manning Certificate (MSMC) from the Administrator are in Marine Notice (MN) 7-038-2.

2.3 Early consultation with the Administrator is recommended to determine the appropriate manning level for vessels, particularly those with increasing levels of autonomy.

## 3.0 Carriage of Industrial Personnel

Vessels carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew must comply with MN 2-011-60 when accommodating or transporting at least one IP.

## 4.0 Transferring Persons at Sea

Transferring personnel safely is an operational risk that should be addressed in a structured and documented system enabling Company personnel to effectively implement the Company safety and environmental protection policy. Vessels not subject to mandatory compliance with the ISM Code may do so voluntarily. See MN 2-011-13.

## 5.0 Safety Inspections

5.1 According to the Maritime Regulations §5.34, RMI-flagged vessels must undergo an initial safety inspection:

.1 within 60 days of registration or re-registration (90 days for mobile offshore units);

.2 after any substantial structural alteration; or

.3 before resuming service at the end of an official lay-up period.

5.2 Additional safety inspections are also required. See MN 5-034-1.

## 6.0 National Requirements

6.1 The following National standards may already provide the flexibility necessary for some vessels and should be applied where appropriate.

.1 MN 2-011-34, *Special Purpose Ships,* which can be applied to vessels carrying more than 12 Special Personnel that meet the SPS Code applicability criteria in construction and operation.

.2 MN 2-011-8, *National Safety Requirements for Miscellaneous Vessels*, which clarifies RMI national requirements and standardizes procedures for issuing a "National Cargo Ship Document of Compliance" to certain categories of vessels.

6.2 Nothing in this MG alters the requirement for the vessel to comply with applicable requirements, including those in the RMI Maritime Act 1990 and Maritime Regulations.

6.3 The Administrator requires compliance with applicable port and coastal State requirements. These mandates may go beyond international convention requirements or RMI laws and regulations. As a result, it is imperative that the shipowner or operator fully understand the local regulations applicable to the vessel before its construction or operation in those waters.

6.4 Compliance with future IMO instruments may be required, where applicable, upon their entry into force for the RMI.