

Merchant Marine Circular

Panama Maritime Authority
General Directorate of Merchant Marine
Control and Compliance Department

MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-167

To: Ship-owner/Operators, Company Security Officers, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates and Recognized Organization (RO's).

Subject: Crew Boat Requirements.

Reference: Resolution No. 106-38 DGMM, September 10, 2013.
MMC-299 - Regulation for the Safety of Vessels under 500GRT.
OMI - Circular Letter No. 5 – April 7, 1982.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this Circular is to inform users of the Panamanian Registry that this Administration has decided that based on the SOLAS Convention definitions, a vessel that carries more than 12 passengers is categorized as a passenger ship. Since a crew boat normally carries over 12 passengers (comprising offshore crew and marine service suppliers), it is therefore required to comply with passenger vessel's regulations.

2. Scope.

- 2.1. These guidelines will apply immediately to crew boats newly registered and Panama vessels already under Panamanian flag may continue operation on the present basis until expiration of present certificates. A crew boat shall not be classified as Passenger vessel and therefore the Resolution No. 106-138- DGMM, 10 September, 2013 shall be used with additional requirements rather the complying. The following ships may be considered as Crew boats provided that, in addition to their crew and normal activities, they are engaged on the transportation of offshore crew and marine service providers to installations offshore:



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- Utility boats for the purpose of transportation of spares;
- Supply boat for the transportation of offshore supplies;
- Security boat for patrolling offshore installations
- Standby boat for evacuation purposes.

3. Requirement.

3.1. The existing regulations require that:

- a) Vessels carrying more than 12 industrial personnel shall comply with the requirements of SOLAS 74 for passenger vessels.
- b) Vessels carrying 12 or less industrial personnel shall comply with the applicable Panamanian rules for cargo vessels in the international service.
- c) Additionally, vessels of 24m in length or more shall comply with the requirements of Load Line Conference, 1966.

It must be noted that most crew boats transport more than 12 industrial personnel (offshore crew which is not engaged on the activities of the crew boat) and not passengers. Ships transporting passengers shall therefore comply with SOLAS requirements for passengers. A Passenger Ship Safety Certificate shall be issued to those vessels. However, due to the size and traditional standards of construction, crew boats fail in general to meet the requirements of SOLAS for passenger ships.

4. Certification.

- 4.1. Certificates will be issued on behalf of the Republic of Panama by the approved organizations. The Panamanian Administration authorizes the Recognized Organizations to issue Cargo Ship Safety Certificate (Instead of Passenger-ship Safety Certificate) using "Cargo Ship other than any of the above (OSV)" as type of ship.
- 4.2. A Limitation Clause must be inserted in the Safety Certificate for the Crew boat that carries more than 12 persons, as follows:
 - Voyages not beyond 400 miles from coast;
 - Carriage of authorized personnel and crew/workers only for Marine Offshore Units.



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According to Regulation I/5 of the SOLAS Convention, 1974, the Administration can accept and apply requirements not strictly in conformance with those of the Convention as long as it is satisfied that the resulting levels of safety are equivalent to those of the Convention. For vessels up to 100 GRT, to attain such levels, the Administration will prescribe adherence to the Panamanian “Rules for Cargo Vessels under 500 GRT in service outside the Jurisdictional Waters of the Republic of Panama” (Resolution No. 106-138-DGMM, 10 September, 2013) to at least the same extent that would be required for cargo vessels of 100 GRT and 24 meters in length in unrestricted trade, with the following exceptions:

- a) For all vessels under 24 meters in length, an approved stability letter may be accepted in lieu of the trim and stability information and calculations required by Article 10 of the Rules.
- b) Engine tachometers shall be considered equivalent to the propeller tachometers required by Article 11 of the Rules.
- c) In vessels with mechanical, hydraulic or duplicated electric remote engine control, the engine room telegraph indicated in Article 11 of the Rules shall not be required.
- d) In twin screw vessels, the emergency steering system indicated in Article 13 of the Rules will not be required.
- e) In vessels of less than 24 meters in length, only two fire hydrants shall be required, instead of the three hydrants indicated in Article 14 of the Rules.
- f) The fixed fire-extinguishing system indicated in Article 14 of the Rules shall be required.
- g) Quick release life rings required to be installed at the bridge wings by Article 17 of the Rules can be installed at other suitable locations if vessel has no wings.
- h) In aluminum hull vessels, the main compass required by Article 23 of the Rules, can be located in the wheelhouse.

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- i) Notwithstanding, the requirements stated in Article 17 of the Rules, the survival craft capacity shall never be less nor need to be more than three or more survival crafts of approved type (lifeboats, life crafts or combination of either) with an aggregate capacity for 125% of the persons on board. The equipment and launching appliance of these crafts shall comply with the requirements of the Rules. No rescue boat shall be required.
- j) The vessel shall have a collision bulkhead located at a distance of not less than 5% and not more than 15% of the length of the vessel abaft the item at the loaded waterline. The bulkhead shall be of strong construction in which only watertight pipe or cable penetrations may be permitted. The vessels shall have additional internal watertight subdivisions complying with the following requirements:
 - 1) Vessels carrying more than 150 industrial personnel shall meet the damage stability requirements of Chapter II-1 of SOLAS 74 with a subdivision factor equal to unity.
 - 2) Vessels carrying up to 150 industrial personnel may either comply with 1, above or alternatively be fitted with watertight bulkheads spaced so the lengths of the compartments do not exceed the maximum permissible lengths indicated in Annex I to this circular.
- k) A Safety Management System based in the ISM Code is to be implemented in the Company following recommendations specified in IMO Resolution A.863(20), Code of Safe Practice for the Carriage of Cargoes and persons by Offshore Supply Vessels (OSV Code).
- l) The requirements of the ISPS Code may be applied to the Company.
- m) Panama crew boat less than 300 GRT and carrying more than 12 personnel has to comply with Resolution No. 106-138-DGMM, 10 September, 2013. In addition, equipment regardless of the size, such as the following:
 - VHF (or VHF with DSC) radiotelephone
 - SSB (or MF with DSC) radiotelephone (for voyage exceeding 20 miles from coast).



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- A satellite EPIRB (as secondary alert system)
 - Radar Transponder (for pin-pointing vessels in distress)
- n) Crew boat of 300 GRT will need to comply with SOLAS registration pertaining to GMDSS requirement corresponding with the tonnage. Notwithstanding the provisions above.
- a. Crew Boats that have been built under specific regulations for this type of ship to sail without restrictions and; comply with the provisions of the Resolution No. 106-138-DGMM, 10 September, 2013 for cargo vessels under 500 gross tons; will not be restricted by this circular. These crew boats should show evidence of the Class regulations under which they were built and their class certificate.
- b. Utility, supply, security and standby boats that are also engaged on the transportation of offshore crew and; are capable of providing sheltered inclining seats for each worker/offshore personnel being transported to offshore units will not be restricted by this circular provided that they comply with the SOLAS or Resolution No. 106-138-DGMM, 10 September, 2013 provisions for cargo ships according to their tonnage.

November, 2023 – Revised text and reference.

May, 2015 – Executive Decree No.45 regulated by Resolution 106-138-DGMM, 10 September, 2013.

April, 2013 – form modification and addition of missing Annex I.

August, 2012 – General modification of entire text.

July, 2008.

Inquiries concerning the subject of this Merchant Marine Circular or any other request should be forward to:

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