

# Merchant Marine Circular

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

## MERCHANT MARINE CIRCULAR MMC-401

**To:** Recognized Organizations (RO's), Ship-owners/Operators, Legal Representatives of Panamanian Flagged Vessels, Panamanian Merchant Marine Consulates, SEGUMAR Regional Offices, ASI Inspectors, Port State Control Inspectors, and all other maritime industry stakeholders.

**Subject:** International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code)

**Reference:**

- Law No. 7 of 27 October 1977,
- Law No.12 of 9 November 1981 and No. 31 of 11 July 2007 – SOLAS Convention and their Protocols,
- Resolution No.106-OMI-288-DGMM date 11 March 2024 – Adoption of Amendments to SOLAS – New Chapter XV and mandatory provisions of the International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code) mandatory under the Convention.
- MMC-288, 167, 292, 192 and 324.

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### 1. Purpose

1.1. This merchant marine circular provides a summary of the principal aspects of the *Amendments to SOLAS, new Chapter XV – Safety measures for ships carrying industrial personnel, and the mandatory provisions of the International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code) mandatory under the Convention*, vessels flying Panama flag, aiming to provide the Panama policy related to the new amendments and mandatory provisions for all interested parties.

### 2. Scope

2.1. This Merchant Marine Circular applies to all Panamanian registered ships intend to carry industrial personnel.

2.2. The IP Code has been developed for ships operating on international voyages as defined in SOLAS regulation I/2(d).



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## 3. Background

- 3.1. As per the International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code) preamble, it has been developed to supplement existing IMO instruments in order to meet the demand from the offshore and energy sectors and overcome the difficulties caused by the lack of a clear definition for industrial personnel and the lack of an international safety standard for the carriage of industrial personnel on board in the existing IMO instruments.
- 3.2. The Code, in addition to the cargo ship requirements in SOLAS regulations, provides an international standard of safety for ships carrying industrial personnel which will facilitate safe carriage and safe personnel transfer by addressing additional risks connected to such operations.
- 3.3. However, it is recognized that the transport of a large number of industrial personnel will take place either within the confines of a particular coastal State or between a base port and an offshore installation outside territorial waters. To facilitate international movement and safe operations of ships carrying industrial personnel, the IMO encourages Administrations to apply this Code also to ships operating only on such voyages.
- 3.4. The new IP Code is based on the Code of Safety for Special Purpose Ships (2008 SPS Code) (refer to our MMC-288), but with adaptations and provisions for the training of industrial personnel, the safe transfer of personnel and the carriage of dangerous goods in combination with industrial personnel.

## 4. Definitions

- 4.1. **Carriage** means transportation, accommodation or both.
- 4.2. **Essential systems** mean systems referred to in SOLAS regulation II-2/21.4.
- 4.3. **HSC Code** means the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft, 2000, as adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee of the Organization by resolution MSC.97(73), as amended.
- 4.4. **Industrial personnel (IP)** mean all persons transported or accommodated on board for the purpose of offshore industrial activities performed on board other ships and/or offshore facilities.
- 4.5. **IP area** is every area or space where IP are normally intended to stay during voyage or are allowed to access.
- 4.6. **IP Code** means the International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial

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personnel, as adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee by resolution MSC.527(106), as may be amended, provided that such amendments are adopted, brought into force and take effect in accordance with the provisions of article VIII of the SOLAS Convention concerning the amendment procedures applicable to the annex other than chapter I.

- 4.7. **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.
- 4.8. **Personnel transfer** means the full sequence of the operation of transferring personnel and their equipment at sea to or from a ship to which this Code applies and from or to another ship or an offshore facility.
- 4.9. **SOLAS** means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended.
- 4.10. **Special Personnel** means all persons who are not passengers or members of the crew or children of under one 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. (refer to SPS Code and MMC-288)

## 5. General aspects in SOLAS XV/2:

- 5.1. Whenever the IP Code refers to passenger ship requirements, the corresponding cargo ship requirements are deemed to be complied with,
- 5.2. Industrial personnel shall not be treated or considered as passengers,
- 5.3. wherever in SOLAS XV, or in the IP Code, the number of industrial personnel appears as a parameter, it shall be the aggregate number of industrial personnel, special personnel (as per the SPS Code) and passengers carried on board, where the number of passengers shall not exceed 12, and
- 5.4. a ship certified in accordance with the requirements of SOLAS XV and the IP Code shall be deemed to have complied with the requirements of chapters 2 to 12 and 18 of the HSC Code.

## 6. IP Code applicability

- 6.1. The new SOLAS chapter XV applies to the following types of **ships constructed on or after 1 July 2024:**



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6.1.1. **cargo ships** of 500 gross tonnage and upwards carrying more than 12 industrial personnel,

6.1.2. **high-speed cargo craft**, of 500 gross tonnage and upwards, which carry more than 12 industrial personnel.

6.2. **Special Purpose Ships** of 500 gross tonnage and upwards carrying more than 12 industrial personnel **constructed on or after 1 July 2024** shall comply with SOLAS XV and the IP Code.

6.3. **Special provision for existing ships:**

6.3.1. The following **existing ships** (authorized by the Administration) subject to the Class Society/Recognized Organization assessment before 1 July 2024 to carry more than 12 industrial personnel are subject to special provisions:

6.3.1.1. **cargo ships** constructed before 1 July 2024: shall comply with regulations III/1, III/2 (except for paragraph 2.1.7), IV/7 and IV/8 of the IP Code by the first intermediate or renewal survey, whichever occurs first, after 1 July 2024.

6.3.1.2. **high-speed cargo craft** constructed before 1 July 2024: shall comply with regulations III/1, III/2 (except for paragraph 2.1.7), V/7 and V/8 of the IP Code by the third periodical or first renewal survey, whichever occurs first, after 1 July 2024.

6.3.2. These special provisions (6.3.1. above) apply under the condition that the IP on board meet the criteria indicated in Resolution MSC.418(97).

6.3.3. Considering that this Administration adopted the 2008 SPS Code and the 1983 SPS Code and also considering the paragraph 6 in Resolution MSC.418(97) is acceptable they continue to meet the SPS Code requirements as an equivalent level of safety, providing that **special purpose ships constructed before 1 July 2024, certified under the provisions of the 2008 SPS Code, the 1983 SPS Code** are subject to the Class Society/Recognized Organization assessment before 1 July 2024 to carry more than 12 industrial personnel, taking into consideration the number of persons on board (before the entry into force of the IP Code).

6.3.4. Special Purpose Ships **constructed before 1 July 2024** shall be surveyed and certified to comply with regulations III/1, III/2 (except for paragraph 2.1.7), IV/7 and IV/8 of the IP Code by the first intermediate or renewal survey, whichever occurs first, after 1 July 2024.



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## 6.4. Ships below 500 gross tonnage

- 6.4.1. Also, ships below 500 gross tonnage may also carry an aggregated number of passengers, special personnel, and industrial personnel over 12. In such cases, the Administration may apply the goals and functional requirements of the Code on a voluntary basis and as far as practicable and in conjunction with our policy in MMC-167.
- 6.4.2. In case of ships below 500 gross tonnage complying with the IP Code, an Industrial Personnel Safety Certificate for a ship carrying more than 12 industrial personnel may be issued, as long as all relaxations are indicated in this certificate. (National rules for vessels less than 500 GT shall be observed in addition to the national legislation applicable to crew boats, refer to MMC-167).
- 6.5. In case of the issued High Speed Craft Safety Certificate or the Cargo Ship Safety Certificate for ships less than 500 gross tonnage, it may be evidence that those single safety certificates should be a precondition for the issuance or endorsement of the Industrial Personnel Safety Certificate.
- 6.6. Ships operating within Coastal State areas are subject to additional conditions imposed by the local Authorities.

## 7. Other Standards - Mobile Offshore Units

- 7.1. Vessels certified under the MODU Code ('79, '89 and 2009) are out of the scope of SOLAS Chapter XV. However, the Republic of Panama adopted as national legislation the issuance of a Mobile Offshore Unit Safety Certificate (MOU Safety Certificate) as an equivalent level of safety for units not equipped with drilling equipment and based on the MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.9 – Guidance for the application of safety, security and environmental protection provisions to FPSOs and FSUs.
- 7.2. Although these vessels have industrial personnel on board, IP certification is not applicable because they are certified under the provisions of the MODU Code, and these types of vessels (for example: Surface Units, SEUs and CSUs) are not literally indicated in the applicability of SOLAS Chapter XV.
- 7.3. However, if for some reason the vessel keeps valid SOLAS certificates, then the vessel would have to comply with the provisions of SOLAS Convention Chapter XV.

## 8. Administration approval in case of Personnel transfer methods appears



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## **unacceptable**

- 8.1. Considering that the Code is referring to international standards including how to assess the use of personnel transfer methods, such as MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.10, M202 of IMCA, EN 13852-1:2013, and requirements that might be developed by IACS or existing requirements are available; this Administration refers all parties to our type approvals policy (MMC-192) and the delegation of authority from the Administration. The dedicated risk assessment as per IMCA M202, 3.1 shall be approved by Classification Societies/Recognized Organizations.
- 8.2. In the case of the IP vessel without personnel transfer appliances the responsibility for the safe transfer is also to the IP vessel. Therefore, the following non-exhaustive list of documents to be reviewed as well as Documents verified for information and kept onboard:
  - 8.2.1. Interior communications system to be used during personnel transfer (to be reviewed),
  - 8.2.2. Personnel transfer routes, details, and arrangements (to be reviewed),
  - 8.2.3. Evaluation of Maneuverability and Position-Keeping for Safe Transfer (to be reviewed),
  - 8.2.4. Onboard documentation for IP monitoring, record-keeping, training, and familiarization; as well as Safety Analysis of personnel transfer (Documentation for information and verification for consistency with related review, and to be kept onboard),
  - 8.2.5. Safety Procedures for personnel transfer, taking into account guidance developed by IMO or other acceptable guidance such as IMCA D202 (Documentation for information and verification for consistency with related review, and to be kept onboard).

## 9. **Certification is required for personnel transfer appliances fitted on IP Code vessels**

- 9.1. IP Code Reg III/2.2 - Safe transfer, requires when planning personnel transfer, the guidance developed by the Organization (Guidance on safety when transferring persons at sea (MSC-MEPC.7/Circ.10)) or other relevant guidance (Such as the latest revision of IMCA M202 Guidance on the transfer of personnel to/from offshore vessels and structures) should be taken into account.
- 9.2. In order to meet the functional requirement in paragraph II/2.2.2, personnel transfer arrangements shall be designed, constructed, tested, and installed in accordance with standards acceptable to the Administration (in this case please



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refer to our MMC-192) or requirements of a classification society which is recognized by the Administration as per the provisions of SOLAS regulation XI-1/1.

## 10. **Instruction to Recognized Organizations**

- 10.1. All Recognized Organizations duly approved to issue the certificates related to the SOLAS Convention Chapter I and Special Purpose Ships Code on behalf of the Republic of Panama, are authorized to issue the Industrial Personnel Safety Certificate.
- 10.2. The issuance of the Industrial Personnel Safety Certificate shall be subject to the provisions of MMC-324.
- 10.3. Recognized Organizations not approved as stated in paragraph 10.1 but are interested in, shall email [ro-monitoring@segumar.com](mailto:ro-monitoring@segumar.com).

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

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