

# Republic of the Marshall Islands

## MARITIME ADMINISTRATOR

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### MARINE SAFETY ADVISORY NO. 10-15

**To:** Regional Marine Safety Offices, Nautical Inspectors, Masters, Owners/Agents

**Subject:** LESSONS LEARNED: SAFE NAVIGATION IN THE VICINITY OF DESIGNATED PILOT EMBARKATION / DISEMBARKATION AREAS

**Date:** 10 March 2015

In recent months the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) has received several reports of collisions, allisions and groundings involving RMI registered ships that have occurred either in or near designated pilot embarkation / disembarkation areas. The underlying cause of these marine casualties was that the ship’s Master and members of the bridge team became distracted and lost their situational awareness either while maneuvering the ship to rendezvous with the pilot vessel while preparing to embark or disembark a pilot.

The following contributing causal factors were also noted during the Administrator’s investigations:

- The bridge team’s over-reliance on the pilot stations’ radioed advisories and wrongly assuming that they were consistent with the safe navigation. Examples of the consequences of such over-reliance include: a ship drifting across a busy shipping channel and colliding with an outbound ship; a ship alliding with a breakwater; or, a ship going aground on a nearby shoal.
- Lack of effective voyage planning and preparation by the bridge team to embark or disembark a pilot. For example, it has been observed that “no go” areas in the vicinity of the designated pilot embarkation / disembarkation area were not identified and plotted on the chart during voyage planning or, if they were plotted, they were not reviewed by the bridge team prior to maneuvering the ship to embark or disembark a pilot.
- Ineffective bridge team management. It has been noted that Masters appear reluctant to clearly delegate and identify the Officer of the Watch’s (OOW) role and responsibilities regarding monitoring the ship’s position and other vessel traffic or to handle the ship in order to avoid “no go” areas or other vessel traffic. Rather than working with the OOW as a team, Masters are assuming multi-tasking responsibility and personally endeavoring to supervise each step associated with the pilot’s embarkation / disembarkation while also

endeavoring to personally maneuver the ship. For instance, it has also been observed that Masters may task the OOW rather than another officer or senior rating to escort the pilot to and from the bridge.

- Ship management's Safety Management System's navigation procedures have not adequately identified and mitigated the associated navigation risks with embarking / disembarking the pilot. For example these risks include: vessel traffic entering and leaving port; the bridge team needing to transition from either the routine of a sea passage or from navigation while under pilotage; managing communications from Vessel Traffic Service centers; potential distractions associated with making final arrangements for entering port including communications with the ship's agent or sending departure messages, etc.

Ship managers are encouraged to review their Safety Management System's navigation procedures as well as the content of their shipboard bridge team training modules and, if deemed appropriate, revise them taking into account these lessons learned. In addition, Masters are encouraged to review this Marine Safety Advisory with their ship's bridge team.