

M-Notices - July 2009

MGN 390 (M) Construction Standards for Offshore Support Vessels and Other Special Ship Types

This notice gives guidance on the construction and operation of special ship types for which the provisions of global safety and pollution prevention conventions, as implemented in UK legislation, may be inappropriate.

Vessels which may be partly exempted on the basis of compliance with various IMO resolutions include: offshore supply vessels, offshore support vessels equipped for well intervention duties, derrick and pipelay barges, research vessels, and other vessels when undertaking similar work.

The notice points out that the legislation may be inappropriate for vessels that have special construction features or with large numbers of non-marine or industrial personnel living aboard. Exemptions from the relevant regulations may be given subject to compliance with various IMO resolutions, the note says. These are explained in the notice, and also highlighted in a flow diagram that illustrates the relationship between various resolutions.

While the application of IMO resolutions relating to special ship types cannot be precisely specified, the guidance notes that 'the position is further complicated by ships which may undergo conversion to equip them for different or additional roles, or which may change flag with or without conversion'.

The notice – which details guidance on the application of resolutions applicable to special ship types, and an appendix on their implementation – is primarily addressed to new UK ships whose keels are laid, or which are undergoing major conversion to equip them for a new operational role, on or after 1 July 2009. Although the guidance may also apply to existing vessels, such ships, it says, will be permitted to continue in the operational roles undertaken as UK ships prior to this notice.