



TUVALU SHIP REGISTRY

Singapore Operations Office:

10 Anson Road #25-16, International Plaza, Singapore 079903

Tel: (65) 6224 2345 Fax: (65) 6227 2345

Email: info@tvship.com Website: www.tvship.com

MARINE CIRCULAR

MC-6/2026/1

04/2026

FOR: Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Ship Masters, Ship Officers, Classification Societies

SUBJECT: 2025 AMENDMENTS TO SOLAS REGULATION V/23 – PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR PILOT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

DEFINITIONS:

The following abbreviations stand for:

- “FSI” – Flag State Inspection
- “IMO” – International Maritime Organization
- “MSC” – Maritime Safety Committee
- “PSC” – Port State Control
- “RO” – Recognized Organization as defined by MSC.349(92) / MEPC.237(65).
- “SMS” – Safety Management System as defined by the ISM Code
- “SOLAS” – International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974, as amended

The following terms shall mean:

- “Administration” – Tuvalu Ship Registry;
- “Company” – the owner of the ship or any other organization or person such as the Manager, or the Bareboat Charterer, who has assumed the responsibility for operation of the ship from the Ship-owner and who on assuming such responsibility has agreed in writing to take over all the duties and responsibilities imposed by the ISM Code;
- “Master” – the person having command of the ship;
- “Pilot transfer arrangement” – all equipment and arrangements used for pilot embarkation and disembarkation;
- “Pilot ladder” – a ladder constructed in accordance with SOLAS requirements;
- “Combination arrangement” – pilot ladder used together with an accommodation ladder; and
- “Responsible officer” – an officer designated by Master to supervise pilot transfer operations.

REFERENCES:

- (a) SOLAS 1974, Chapter V, Regulation 23 – Pilot Transfer Arrangements.
- (b) SOLAS 1974, Chapter I, Regulation 6 – Survey and Certification.
- (c) IMO Resolution MSC.576(110) – Performance Standards for Pilot Transfer Arrangements.
- (d) IMO Resolution MSC.572(110) – Amendments to SOLAS Regulation V/23.
- (e) IMO Resolution A.1045(27) – Recommendations on Pilot Transfer Arrangements, as amended by IMO Resolution A.1108(29).

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Marine Circular is to provide detailed technical and administrative guidance on the implementation of the 2025 amendments to SOLAS Regulation V/23, adopted by IMO Resolution MSC.576(110). This circular reflects the Administration's interpretation and establishes minimum compliance standards to be applied by Companies, Masters and Recognized Organizations. It is intended to support verification, audit and inspection activities, including those under FSI and PSC programs.

APPLICATION:

This Marine Circular applies to all Tuvalu flagged vessels engaged on international voyages requiring pilot transfer arrangements. The Company shall ensure that all vessels under its management comply with the provisions of this circular and that such compliance is incorporated within the SMS.

CONTENTS:

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1. The Company shall ensure that pilot transfer arrangements are designed, constructed, installed and maintained in accordance with SOLAS and IMO performance standards.
- 1.2. The arrangements shall be suitable for safe use under all operational conditions, including variations in draft, trim, list and environmental conditions.
- 1.3. The Company shall ensure that risk assessments are carried out for pilot transfer operations and incorporated into operational procedures.
- 1.4. The Master shall ensure that pilot transfer operations are supervised by a responsible officer.
- 1.5. The responsible officer shall maintain communication with the bridge and ensure continuous monitoring of the operation.
- 1.6. The Master shall ensure that safe embarkation and disembarkation routes are established and maintained.

2. COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1. The Company shall establish procedures within the SMS addressing pilot transfer operations.
- 2.2. Procedures shall include rigging, operation, inspection and maintenance of equipment.
- 2.3. The Company shall ensure that all deficiencies are reported, recorded and rectified in a timely manner.
- 2.4. The Company shall ensure that only approved pilot transfer equipment is used on board.
- 2.5. Equipment certification shall be verified during internal audits and external inspections.

3. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1. Pilot ladders shall be constructed in accordance with IMO standards.
- 3.2. Steps shall be evenly spaced and fitted with non-slip surfaces.
- 3.3. Steps shall be not less than 400 mm in length and spaced not less than 310 mm nor more than 350 mm apart.
- 3.4. Side ropes shall be continuous, with a diameter of not less than 20 mm and not more than 22 mm, and shall have a minimum breaking strength of 24 kN.
- 3.5. Ladders shall be clearly marked with manufacturer details and certification.
- 3.6. Strong points used for securing pilot ladders shall be capable of withstanding a load of not less than 48 kN.
- 3.7. The Company shall ensure that securing arrangements prevent movement or failure during use.

3.8. Where the height of climb exceeds 9 m, a combination arrangement shall be provided.

4. OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1. Pilot ladders shall be rigged in a safe location clear of discharges.
- 4.2. The ladder shall be positioned to allow safe approach of the pilot boat.
- 4.3. The ladder shall remain secured and stable during use.
- 4.4. Combination arrangements shall be used where required and the Master shall ensure safe transfer between ladders at all times.

5. INSPECTION AND VERIFICATION

- 5.1. The Company shall implement inspection procedures for pilot transfer arrangements.
- 5.2. Inspections shall be conducted prior to each use.
- 5.3. Periodic inspections shall be documented within the SMS.
- 5.4. RO shall verify compliance during statutory surveys.
- 5.5. Flag State Inspectors may verify compliance during FSIs.

6. TRAINING AND COMPETENCE

- 6.1. The Company shall ensure that crew members are trained in pilot transfer procedures.
- 6.2. Training shall include safe rigging, operation and emergency response.
- 6.3. Records of training shall be maintained and available for inspection.

7. NON-CONFORMITIES AND ENFORCEMENT

- 7.1. Any deficiency identified shall be recorded as a non-conformity.
- 7.2. Major deficiencies affecting safety shall be treated as major non-conformities.
- 7.3. Corrective actions shall be implemented without delay.

8. TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

- 8.1. Pilot transfer arrangements shall fully comply with IMO Resolution MSC.576(110), including requirements for dimensions, strength, making, rigging and operational safety.
- 8.2. Strong points shall be tested and certified.
- 8.3. Access arrangements shall ensure safe transition between ladder and deck.
- 8.4. Equipment shall be maintained and replaced when defective.

9. ACTION REQUIRED

Companies shall review their pilot transfer arrangements and ensure compliance with the provisions of this circular prior to 1 January 2028. Pilot transfer arrangements installed before 1 January 2028 shall comply with the requirements of this circular not later than the first survey on or after 1 January 2029 for ships to which SOLAS Chapter I applies, and not later than 1 January 2030 for ships to which SOLAS Chapter I does not apply. RO shall verify compliance during audits and surveys.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar
Tuvalu Ship Registry