



# Kiribati Ship Registry

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## MARINE CIRCULAR 9/2025

12 November 2025

**TO Ship Owners, Ship Managers, Ship Operators, Ship Masters, Ship Officers, Recognized Organizations**

**SUBJECT SHIPBOARD OIL POLLUTION EMERGENCY PLAN (SOPEP)**

### REFERENCES:

- (a) MARPOL 73/78, Annex I, Regulation 37, as amended
- (b) MARPOL 73/78, Annex II, Regulation 17, as amended
- (c) MEPC Resolution 54(32) as amended by MEPC Resolution 86(44)
- (d) MEPC Resolution 85(44) as amended by MEPC Resolution 137(53)

### DEFINITIONS:

The following abbreviations stand for:

- “GT” – Gross Tonnage as determined under the provisions of the ITC 69 and shown on the International Tonnage Certificate (based on ITC 69) of the ship
- “IMO” – International Maritime Organization
- “ITC 69” – International Convention on the Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969
- “MARPOL” – International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978
- “RO” – Recognized Organization as defined by MSC.349(92) / MEPC.237(65)
- “SMPEP” – Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan
- “SOPEP” – Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan

The term “Administration” shall mean Kiribati Ship Registry.

### APPLICATION:

This applies to the following Kiribati flagged vessels:

- a. oil tankers over 150 GT; and
- b. every ship, including yachts and fishing vessels, other than an oil tanker over 400 GT.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Marine Circular is to inform ship owners / operators and managers of Kiribati flagged vessels of the Administration’s policy concerning SOPEP approval.

### CONTENTS:

#### 1. General

- 1.1. Kiribati, as a party to MARPOL 73/78, is required to take the necessary steps to ensure that each of its vessels has on board a SOPEP prepared in accordance with Regulation 37 of Annex I of MARPOL 73/78 and the IMO Guidelines contained in reference (c) or (d) above.
- 1.2. Every ship of 150 GT and above certified to carry noxious liquid substances in bulk shall carry on board a shipboard marine pollution emergency plan for noxious liquid substances prepared in accordance with Regulation 17 in Annex II of MARPOL 73/78 and the IMO Guidelines contained in reference (d) above.

- 1.3. In the case of ships to which both Regulation 37 of Annex I and Regulation 17 of Annex II of the Convention also apply, the two (2) plans may be combined. In this case, the title of such a plan shall be SMPEP, and it should be prepared in accordance with the IMO Guidelines contained in reference (d) above.
- 1.4. Owners and operators of vessels intending to trade in the United States (U.S.) should note that all tank and nontank vessels are required to have a U.S. Coast Guard approved Vessel Response Plan (VRP) or Nontank Vessel Response Plan (NTVRP) on board in addition to the SOPEP(s) required by MARPOL 73/78. These rules also apply to both delivering and receiving vessels conducting bulk oil cargo lightering operations within the exclusive economic zone of the U.S. (where cargo is destined for a port or place in the U.S.). Vessels that do not have such a VRP or NTVRP may be subject to U.S. Coast Guard enforcement action and may not be permitted to enter U.S. waters. The RO you select for your plan development will be familiar with the U.S. regulations (NVIC 01-05 and CH-1) and should be able to assist you in the process of developing VRPs and NTVRPs and obtaining U.S. Coast Guard approval.

## **2. Development and Approval of SOPEP / SMPEP**

- 2.1. As every RO may have different procedures, ship owners / operators / managers should contact the respective RO for guidance on the development and approval of these plans.
- 2.2. The list of ROs authorised by this Administration to approve these plans on Kiribati's behalf may be found at: <https://kiribaship.com/recognizedorganization>

## **3. List of National Operational Contact Points for SOPEP**

- 3.1. SOPEPs shall contain a list of authorities or persons to be contacted in the event of a pollution incident as required by reference (a) and (b) above.
- 3.2. The list of national operational contact points responsible for the receipt, transmission and processing of urgent reports on incidents involving harmful substances, including oil from ships to coastal States is updated at the end of each calendar year. The list is also available at IMO website/MSC-MEPC.6/Circ.23. (select "National Contacts" link on the bottom of the IMO homepage). The on-line version is updated on a quarterly basis and includes a summary indicating which country has submitted changes to its information since the previous update.

Yours sincerely,

Deputy Registrar  
Kiribati Ship Registry