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High Speed Offshore Service Craft Code (HS-OSC Code)

Notice to all Shipowners, Masters, Managers, Crew, Charterers, Ship-builders, Project Managers, Employers, Surveyors, Recognised Organisations Contractors and other providers of personnel and/or ship-based services to the offshore industries

Summary

The Code for High Speed Offshore Service Craft (HS-OSC Code) has been developed with industry input to meet industry requests to be able to transport larger numbers than the current mandatory limit of 12 persons in addition to the crew, primarily for vessels operating in the offshore renewable energy sector. This new Code is attached at Annex 1 and is intended to apply to new build vessels of up to 500 gross tons carrying up to 60 persons on board.

The HS-OSC Code has been developed in recognition that the personnel being carried on vessels in the offshore renewable sector are not passengers in the normal sense, being better regarded as “industrial personnel” who comply with safety training and medical fitness standards more akin to normal seafarers.

A General Exemption from the requirements of the HSC Code can be found in Annex 2. To qualify for the General Exemption, a vessel must comply with the Code set out in Annex 1 and must be certificated accordingly by a Recognised Organisation.

Introduction

1.1 UK regulations and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS) allow a cargo ship to carry up to 12 passengers in addition to the crew. A ship carrying more than 12 passengers by definition must be a passenger ship.

1.2 The MCA already recognises in the application of the Special Purpose Ships Code (SPS Code) in MGN 515, that there are ships carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew, that are of such a design and which operate in services and under conditions that can make strict compliance with passenger ship requirements inappropriate. Additionally, certain key attributes of those persons carried are not typical of passengers, in that they are regularly working in the maritime environment, are certified medically fit and have relevant safety training.



1.3 The purpose of this standard therefore, is to extend the principle set in MGN 515 by providing an appropriate level of safety for high speed cargo-carrying craft and for the persons being carried, to provide the offshore renewable industry with the enhanced operational flexibility that comes with being able to transport larger numbers of persons on board.

Background

2.1 In accordance with SOLAS Chapter 1, regulation 2(e), every person other than the master of the ship and the members of the crew or other persons employed or engaged in any capacity on board a ship on the business of that ship is a “passenger.” This is reflected in the definition of “special personnel” in the SPS Code, in that such personnel would ordinarily be expected to carry out their work on the ship. MGN 515 makes reference to “walk to work” operations and personnel which are being transported to work off the ship.

2.2 Discussions currently underway at the IMO has resulted in a working definition for “industrial personnel” which is more appropriate for wind farm technicians who are working off the ship (i.e. on turbine structures). The IMO definition for industrial personnel has therefore been used in the standard at Annex 1, as it is deemed more suitable to address the particular circumstances of the offshore renewable sector and is to be distinct from the definition of “special personnel” in the SPS Code for personnel working on board vessels which certificated in accordance with the SPS Code.

2.3 Operators can continue to utilise vessels built in accordance with Workboat Code, but must recognise that this will limit the number of “industrial personnel” that can be carried to the SOLAS limit of 12 passengers. The purpose of this new Code therefore, is to provide greater operational flexibility to meet the demands of an industry which is increasingly being required to operate further offshore.

2.4 The standard in the HS-OSC Code in Annex 1 has been developed to provide standards of construction, equipment and operation of vessels whilst at the same time giving recognition of the safety training that the industrial personnel being transported, by definition will have undertaken. The Code is deemed to provide a level of safety for such vessels and their personnel equivalent to that required by SOLAS as applied as far as reasonable and practicable to craft of less than 500GT.

The Merchant Shipping (High Speed Craft) Regulations implements in the UK the 1994 and 2000 High Speed Craft Codes (HSC Code) developed by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The Regulations allow for exemptions to be granted from the requirements of the HSC Code, subject to an equivalent level of safety being provided. Annex 2 provides the required exemption for vessels and industrial personnel which comply with the HS-OSC Code.



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Safer Lives, Safer Ships, Cleaner Seas



Interim Code for High Speed Offshore Service Craft (HS-OSC) (of up to 500GT carrying up to 60 persons)

Preamble

1. The Code has been developed in cooperation with industry, adopting the principles of the Special Purpose Ships (SPS) Code published by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and Section 9 of Marine Guidance Note MGN 515, taking into consideration the particular characteristics of transporting trained and fit personnel for their transfer at sea.
2. The applicable, United Kingdom (UK) regulations on which certification is based are the Merchant Shipping (High Speed Craft) Regulations 2004, SI 2004 No. 302 – referred to in this document as “the Regulations”. Regulation 4 of the Regulations provides for the granting of exemptions, such as reference to *Application* limits in sub-paragraph 1.3.4.2 of the HSC Code 2000, Chapter X Regulation 2.1.2 of SOLAS and Regulation 3 of the UK 2004 regulations. The UK legislation takes precedence over any requirement in SOLAS or in the HSC Code.
3. The standards in the Code have been developed to provide levels of safety for personnel, ship construction, equipment and operation equivalent to that of SOLAS, facilitating the operation of such craft with the required numbers of persons onboard. They are applied as far as reasonable and practical given that the craft are of less than 500 gross tonnage and giving due recognition to the specific abilities of the personnel being carried.
4. Defining *Industrial Personnel* is key to enabling the certification for this type of craft using the currently indicated direction for the development of similar standards at the IMO and out of discussions on technical standards and regulations for “Offshore Service Vessels” between maritime administrations around the North Sea.

1. General

The construction standards in this document shall be without prejudice to those standards developed in the IMO Special Purpose Ship Code and EU Directive 2009/45/EC on safety rules and standards for passenger ships.

The standard for High Speed Offshore Service Craft of up to 500GT shall follow the framework of the HSC Code for Cargo Craft unless expressly stated otherwise.

Such craft are to be designed, constructed and maintained in compliance with the standards of a Recognised Organisation appropriate for cargo craft under the HSC Code, equivalent to this code and accepted by the Administration (the MCA), unless otherwise specified.

UK requirements for a risk assessment with reference to wash¹ are not required.

Unless expressly provided otherwise in this Code:

- the requirements;
- the definitions; and
- numbered sections that are referred to

are those specified in or applied by the High Speed Craft Code.

A craft of less than 24 metres in length may additionally, also hold a valid certificate for the UK Workboat Code² to engage in alternate operations meeting the requirements of that code. United Kingdom registered craft when operating outside of United Kingdom waters, may be subject to

¹ Regulation 7 of S.I. 2004 No. 302 as amended.

² Craft of less than 24 metres in length may therefore revert to compliance operationally with the Workboat Code (including carriage of no more than 12 passengers or industrial personnel) to facilitate e.g. voyages of relocation.



additional requirements of the port state or overseas administration, over and above the requirements of this Code. Owners/managing agents should contact the administration controlling those waters for further information.

Vessels intended for operations as Offshore Service Craft of up to 500GT which are unable to meet the conditions of this Code are advised to examine and agree with the MCA the application of relevant standards in the IMO Special Purpose Ships Code³.

Any craft which is certified under this Code for the first time shall be considered a new craft.

This Code addresses only the principal variations with respect to the HSC Code and (for vessels of less than 24 metres load line length), the Workboat Code. All other UK and international regulations including load line, environmental protection, health and safety at work, employment law, the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collision at Sea etc. continue to apply to craft certified under this code.

The words craft, ship, vessel or boat are used synonymously throughout.

2. Definitions

2.1 *Crew* means all persons carried on board the ship to provide navigation and maintenance of the ship, its machinery, systems and arrangements essential for propulsion and safe navigation or to provide services for other persons on board.

2.2 *High speed craft* (HSC) is a craft capable of maximum speed in metres per second (m/s), equal to or exceeding

$$3.7\sqrt[0.1667]{\nabla} \quad ; \text{ and}$$

also an operating speed of 20 knots or above in calm water.

Where: ∇ = volume of displacement corresponding to the design waterline (m³)

2.3 *High Speed Craft Code* is the 2008 consolidated edition of International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft, 2000 (HSC Code) adopted, by resolution MSC.97(73) of the Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-third session (27 November to 6 December 2000), incorporating amendments MSC.175(79) and MSC.222(82);

2.4 where the length of a craft is specified, this refers to the load line length meaning the greater of the following distances -

(a) 96% of the total length on a waterline at 85% of the least moulded depth measured from the top of the keel, or

(b) the length from the fore-side of the stem to the axis of the rudder stock on that waterline.

2.5 *offshore service craft* means a vessel which is used to convey Industrial personnel;

2.6 *High speed offshore service craft or HS-OSC* means an offshore service craft that is also a high speed craft;

2.7 *Industrial personnel* means all persons other than the crew or passengers, onboard for transport or accommodation⁴;

2.8 *Passenger* is as defined by SOLAS Part A, Regulation 2(e).

2.9 *Personal Protective Equipment or PPE* means the requirements and provisions for personal equipment in The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Personal Protective Equipment) Regulations 1999, S.I. No. 2205, (see also MSN 1731 (M+F)).

³ MGN 515(M) provides guidance on application of the SPS Code.

⁴ Subject to the additions and exceptions of the HSC Code Chapter 4 under Section 9 below.



2.10 *Recognised organisation* means those recognised organisations referred to under Regulation (EC) 391/2009 within the meaning of Article 5, paragraph 2 of Directive 2009/15/EC implemented in the UK as referred to in Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1672 (M+F);

2.11 *SOLAS* means the International Convention of 1974 for the Safety of Life at Sea with protocols of 1978 and 1988, as amended;

2.12 *Load Line Convention* means the International Convention on Load Lines 1966 with Protocol of 1988 as amended;

2.13 *Tons* means gross tonnage, measured in accordance with the International Tonnage Convention 1969 (ITC 69);

2.14 *Regulation (EC) 391/2009* means the regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on common rules and standards for ship inspection and survey organisations;

2.15 *Directive 2009/15/EC* means refers to the directive of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on common rules below and standards for ship inspection and survey organizations and account of relevant activities of maritime administrations (OJ. L 131, 28.5.2009, p 47), as amended.

2.16 *Workboat Code* or *Brown Code*, means “The Workboat Code - Industry Working Group Technical Standard” published by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and National Workboat Association in June 2014⁵ for vessels of up to 24 metres load line length.

3. Application:

This Code applies to craft that:

- 3.1 are seagoing high speed offshore service craft;
- 3.2 of less than 500 Tons; and
- 3.3 are UK craft or other craft operating in UK waters⁶.

4. Industrial personnel requirements

4.1 Before commencing any voyage, it shall be ensured by the Master that any Industrial Personnel:

- .1 are engaged and on board for transport or accommodation for the purposes of offshore industrial activities⁷;
- .2 are able bodied and meet appropriate medical standards⁸;
- .3 have received basic safety training, according to relevant industry standards⁹;
- .4 have an understanding of the layout of the ship and the handling of the ship's safety equipment before departure from port (e.g. through a safety briefing); and

⁵ In public consultation until 05/10/2015 as a new Brown Code, under proposed new workboat (code of practice) regulations.

⁶ See also 5.2.

⁷ Examples of such activities may include safe transfer of personnel, with other examples referred to under offshore operations in paragraph 6.2.2.11 of resolution A.1079(28).

⁸ The standards referred to in paragraph 7.2 of MGN 515 are also considered suitable for industrial personnel in the context of this Code as an alternative to STCW I/9.

⁹ Industry standards e.g. Global Wind Organization (GWO), Offshore Petroleum Industry Training Organization (OPITO), Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training (OPITO accredited) are accepted alternatives to STCW A-VI/1 paragraph 2. An example for personnel undergoing transfer from ship to foundation or vice versa, will require specific transfer training.



.5 are equipped with appropriate personal safety equipment suitable for the risks to safety such personnel are likely to experience on the forthcoming voyage (e.g. immersion suits).

4.3 Persons that do not meet all of the requirements of Industrial Personnel may be transported as passengers subject to the overall limit of 12 passengers.

5. Operational requirements

5.1 The maximum number of persons onboard overall shall be no more than 60, of which up to 12 may be passengers. For craft of less than 24 metres load line length, the overall limit shall be 36 persons. In all cases this shall be subject to meeting the space allowance (see also section 9 additions and exceptions below references to the HSC Code Sections 3.3 and 3.4 - and the requirements of the HSC Code Section 4.7.2).

5.2 The owner and master shall be responsible for ensuring that the craft does not carry more than the maximum number of personnel (crew, passengers and industrial personnel) as stated in the craft's Permit to Operate, in place of the requirements given in regulation 8(3) of The Regulations.

5.3 International voyages under this Code should only be undertaken with the prior agreement of the port State into whose port or ports a craft is intending to travel.

5.4 No persons under 16 years of age shall be carried on craft being operated under this Code¹⁰.

6. Survey and certification

6.1 United Kingdom Recognised Organisations are authorised to carry out survey and certification of the construction of craft to which this Code applies in accordance with the normal arrangements set out in their agreements with MCA.

6.2 The MCA will issue the Permit to Operate.

7. Alternative modes of operation – safety standards

To facilitate voyages of relocation or to facilitate a voyage carrying increased quantities of cargo and/or equipment. For any voyage, craft may reduce the number of Industrial Personnel or passengers carried from the maximum permitted. Where this number is reduced to 12 or fewer, craft of less than 24 metres in length may revert to full exercise and compliance with the requirements certification under the Workboat Code.

8. Lifting equipment:

Should not normally be operated or used at sea while also carrying more than 12 persons in addition to the crew. If it is to be used, the administration (MCA) should be consulted as to the standards that are to be applied.

9. Additions and Exceptions to the HSC Code (Section 1.2.1.1)

Additional requirements and/or express exceptions from the HSC Code are listed below applying the numbered references to chapters and sections of the HSC Code.

Section 1.2.1.2 - Safety Management and Operational Procedures

(a) Irrespective of the stated application of the ISM Code in SOLAS Chapter IX and Regulation

¹⁰ By regulations giving effect to Council Directive 94/33/EC and in part, the MLC 2006 on Minimum Age, the carriage of those of less than 16 years of age is not permitted and if persons of less than 18 years are carried, their employer must carry out a risk assessment.



(EC) No 336/2006, the requirements of the International Safety Management Code (ISM Code) shall apply, including certification¹¹.

(b) Operational procedures shall be developed which cover the operation of the craft and changes to the mode of operation (e.g. relocation voyages). Such procedures should also reflect the evacuation procedures for the number of persons carried. These procedures should form part of training drills.

Section 1.8 - Certificate:

The certificates and records of equipment for OSC Safety Certificate shall follow as closely as reasonably practical the form and content of that published in Annex 1 of the HSC Code, with the title amended to:

“HSC Code Safety Certificate for Offshore Service Craft and Record of Equipment”

References to the “numbers of passengers for which certified” should be suitably amended to specify the maximum number of persons for which the vessel is certified to carry:

“number of persons overall, for which certified”.

Section 1.9 - Permit to Operate:

As an acceptable alternative, craft may operate under a general permit to operate based on a portfolio of routes or sea areas for which the owner shall prepare Route Operational Manuals in the same manner as for an individual Permit to Operate. A general permit to operate produced in this way shall be provided to involved Flag and Port States for their agreement.

Should it be intended for the craft to operate on a route or sea area not included in the portfolio, then the normal procedure for obtaining a Permit to Operate shall be followed.

Annual checks shall be made by the operator to ensure that the portfolio remains valid and a review of the portfolio and the respective route operational manuals in accordance with the HSC Code to ensure information is kept up to date.

Permits to Operate for OSC shall follow as close as reasonably practical the form and content of that published in Annex 2 of the HSC Code, with the title amended to:

“Permit to Operate HSC Code Offshore Service Craft”

References to the “numbers of passengers, maximum permitted” should be suitably amended to specify the maximum number of persons for which the vessel is certified to carry:

“number of persons overall for which certified”.

Chapter 2 - Buoyancy, Stability and Subdivision, Part A – General

HSC cargo craft requirements shall apply, except for craft of up to 45 metres load line length, where the following exceptions shall apply:

(a) Section 2.6.7 (Extent of side damage) - shall only apply in the forward 1/3rd of the Load Line length of the craft, aft of the FP. In this area the extents of damage (as prescribed by the formulae in 2.6.7.1) shall be applied anywhere, including across the main transverse watertight bulkheads. In the remaining areas of the craft, the extents of damage shall extend between main transverse watertight bulkheads extending from keel to deck and from ship side to ship centreline.

(b) Section 2.6.8.1.2 - (Extent of stern damage) shall not be applied.

¹¹ The MCA will be responsible for the application of the ISM Code, for which fees will be charged. The MCA also, however retains the enforcement duties of the Code and is responsible for auditing the Recognised Organisations.



- (c) Section 2.6.9 (Extent of bottom damage in areas vulnerable to raking damage) - shall not be applied.
- (d) Section 2.6.10 (Extent of bottom damage in areas not vulnerable to raking damage) - shall only apply in the forward 1/3rd of the Load Line length of the craft, aft of the FP. In this area the extents of damage (as prescribed by the formulae in 2.6.10.2) shall be applied anywhere, including across the main transverse watertight bulkheads. In the remaining areas of the craft, the extents of damage shall be limited to occurring between main transverse watertight bulkheads, extending from keel to deck and from ship side to ship centreline.
- (e) Section 2.6.11 (7 metre obstruction for multihull craft damage determination) - shall not be applied.

Chapter 3, Sections 3.3 and 3.4 - Additional structural requirements:

4.9.1 When the craft is intended for push up operations to transfer industrial personnel and cargo, the structure in way of main propulsion machinery, shaft bearings, A and P brackets, propellers and rudders should be arranged and strengthened taking into account the possibility of contact shock loading.

4.9.2 Craft often operate at high engine power with no boat speed during push up operations. Operating this way can lead to high local vibrations from the propeller at zero speed, maximum thrust. Craft should be designed to ensure that such operations do not adversely affect propulsion performance, shorten component life or expose the crew to excess vibration.

4.9.3 When intended for this type of push-up operation, the structure in way of main propulsion machinery and stern gear should be carefully considered to avoid vibrations which could damage the local and surrounding structure. The structure should be robust with scantlings in excess of those typically required from the Recognised Organisation. The panel size should be small to minimize any potential for resonance. Connection details should be carefully considered to minimise stress concentrations.

4.9.4 When intended for operations to transfer personnel or cargo over the bow, the bow structure should be suitably arranged and strengthened for this purpose.

4.9.5 Bow structures supporting fenders for bow push up operations are to be robust. Deck, wet-deck, bulwarks and framing should be designed to accommodate the foreseen dynamic loads.

4.9.6 Calculations to demonstrate that the bow structures will not yield or buckle when subject to the loads referred to above are to be submitted to the Certifying Authority for consideration and approval.

Chapter 4 and Sections 1.2.1.9 to 1.2.1.11 - Additional requirements for provision of accommodation and for seating areas:

MLC 2006 standards for on board facilities shall be applied to industrial personnel as if they are crew with the exception of sleeping accommodation, which may only be provided for off-duty crewmembers. Operating speeds and noise and vibration levels shall take into account those sleeping crewmembers.

Construction standards, public spaces and facilities shall be provided for industrial personnel and passengers in accordance with those required for passengers in Chapter 4 of the HSC Code.

Section 4.7.2 - The design for safe evacuation shall additionally provide sufficient area for occupants to access, pull on and wear, ready to evacuate, lifejackets and appropriate PPE or



immersion suits. The seating should be provided with sufficient space for personnel to wear PPE used in personnel transfers.

Chapter 4, Sections 4.9, 4.11 and 7.17 - Cargo and transported equipment:

The quantities of dangerous goods carried on voyages at the same time as more than 12 industrial personnel are also carried, shall be limited to the personnel's own work equipment and to quantities required for immediate needs of maintenance and service of offshore structures and installations (on those voyages). Where dangerous goods are carried refer to Chapter II-2 Regulation 19¹², Chapter VII of SOLAS and the IMDG Code, for craft of less than 24 metres in length refer to Chapter 29 of the Workboat Code.

Section 4.11 - When intended for operations to transfer personnel or cargo over the bow, the foredeck and bow-fendering arrangements are to be suitably arranged to minimise the risk to personnel engaged in transfer operations. Special care should be taken in the arrangement of handrails, 'step-across' arrangements and flush deck fittings positioned within walkways.

Chapter 8 - Life-Saving Appliances, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Arrangements:

Industrial Personnel are to have appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) including equipment suitable for personnel transfer at sea where appropriate.

Immersion suits should be provided for all members of the crew. Immersion suits shall be provided for all non-crew personnel unless suitable PPE, designed to provide immersion protection, is provided and is carried on board by those personnel in accordance with agreed procedures. Any lifejackets, intended to be used together with immersion suits or PPE must be compatible and suitable for use.

Section 8.3.5.1 - it shall not be required to carry the lifejackets suitable for children as referred to in that Section of the HSC Code.

Section 8.7.4 and 8.7.5 - Craft with operational freeboards of up to 2.5 metres, in the absence of a marine Evacuation System (MES) fixed recessed disembarkation ladders may be accepted as equivalent. Such ladders should be designed based on a recognised international or European standard. The rungs or steps of portable ladders should be designed to minimise slipping (e.g. corrugated, knurled, dimpled or coated with skid resistant material) with the depth of the recess and rungs suitable for gloved hands and booted feet. Such arrangements for disembarkation must not be adversely affected by the angles of inclination following damage following any of the postulated damages referred to in Section 2.13 of the HSC Code.

Section 8.10.2 - Open reversible liferafts shall not be accepted.

Section 8.10.5 - Craft of less than 30 metres in length with fewer than five persons in the crew may be excepted from carrying a rescue boat, subject to meeting the requirements of Section 8.10.5.1 to Section 8.10.5.3 and the following:

- (a) the arrangements to allow a helpless person to be recovered from the water shall include an efficient means to aid the recovery of such persons from the water with practical use of this means being demonstrated at initial and renewal surveys;
- (b) the provision of fixed and recessed overside ladders on each side of the craft (these may be the same as the ladders provided for Section 8.7.4 and 8.7.5 above); and
- (c) the crew being trained and practised in man overboard procedures.

¹² As implemented by the MS Dangerous Goods and Marine Pollutants Regulations 1997 as amended, SI 1997 No. 2367.



Section 8.11 - Helicopter pick-up areas

On craft up to 300 Tons, the provision of a helicopter pick-up area need not be a permanent area, nor with a fixed or permanent marking. The arrangement is not subject to approval by the Administration (MCA). Craft should continue to follow best practice having regard to recommendations adopted by the IMO.

Chapter 15, Section 15.3 – Field of vision from the operating compartment

All docking, personnel, cargo, stores & fuel transfer activities should be visible from the helmsman's position. Visibility should be adequate in both the vertical and horizontal planes.

Section 18.3 and 1.2.1.3 - Manning and crew training and certification

Sections 18.3.1 and 18.3.2 - Crew members are to be qualified in accordance with the STCW Convention and two shall be trained in crowd control when carrying more than 12 persons other than crewmembers.

Sections 18.3.3 and 18.3.4 - A type rating training manual will document the procedure in accordance with the requirements and including the completion of a practical test on that route would be met. Contrary to the Administration endorsing each certificate, it shall be the responsibility of the shipowner in the form of a well-documented procedure that may be approved and be made available for inspection by officials of the flag and port States.



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GENERAL EXEMPTION

The Secretary of State, in exercise of his powers under Section 85(6) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 together with the exemption powers contained in regulation 4 of The Merchant Shipping (High Speed Craft) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/0302) hereby exempts:

High speed offshore service craft of up to 500 GT carrying up to 60 persons on board, from the requirements of such regulations as applicable to high speed cargo craft built in accordance with the High Speed Craft Code. This exemption shall have immediate effect until such time as this exemption is either amended or revoked.

This exemption is granted on the condition that:

- (a) the vessel meets the standard laid down in the Code for High Speed Offshore Service Craft of up to 500 GT carrying up to 60 persons (HS-OSC Code); and
- (b) the vessel has been issued with an appropriate Certificate of Inspection pertaining to such an approved standard.

Dated this x day of x 2015

Chris Thomas

Director of Maritime Safety and Standards

For the Secretary of State

