

Briefing 58/2010
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Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), 88th session: 24 November - 3 December 2010

Mandatory fire test procedures Code adopted by IMO Maritime Safety meeting

Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) to make mandatory the International Code for the Application of Fire Test Procedures (2010 FTP Code) were adopted when IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 88th session from 24 November to 3 December 2010.

The busy agenda also included discussion on piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia and the approval of a revised resolution on principles of safe manning.

2010 FTP Code adopted

The 2010 FTP Code, along with relevant SOLAS amendments to make it mandatory, was adopted, with an expected entry into force date of 1 July 2012.

The 2010 FTP Code provides the international requirements for laboratory testing, type-approval and fire test procedures for products referenced under SOLAS chapter II-2. It comprehensively revises and updates the current Code, adopted by the MSC in 1996.

The 2010 FTP Code includes the following: test for non-combustibility; test for smoke and toxicity; test for "A", "B" and "F" class divisions; test for fire door control systems; test for surface flammability (surface materials and primary deck coverings); test for vertically supported textiles and films; test for upholstered furniture; test for bedding components; test for fire-restricting materials for high-speed craft; and test for fire-resisting divisions of high-speed craft.

It also includes annexes on *Products which may be installed without testing and/or approval* and on *Fire protection materials and required approval test methods*.

Other amendments adopted

The MSC also adopted:

- amendments to SOLAS regulation V/18 to require annual testing of automatic identification systems (AIS);
- amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 on pilot transfer arrangements, to update and to improve safety aspects for pilot transfer;
- amendments to safety certificates in the SOLAS appendix and SOLAS Protocol of 1988, relating to references to alternative design and arrangements;
- amendments to the International Convention for Safe Containers, 1972, to include addition of new paragraphs in Regulation 1 *Safety Approval Plate*, specifying the validity of and elements to be included in approved examination programmes; the addition of a new test for containers being approved for operation with one door removed; and the addition of a new annex III *Control and Verification*, which provides specific control measures to enable authorized officers to assess the integrity of structurally sensitive components of containers and to help them decide whether a container is safe to continue in transportation or whether it should be stopped until remedial action has been taken; and
- a new chapter 9 of the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code), related to fixed fire detection and fire alarm systems.

Lifeboat release mechanisms amendments postponed

The MSC agreed to postpone the adoption of an amendment to SOLAS regulation III/1, which would require lifeboat on-load release mechanisms not complying with new International Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code requirements, to be replaced no later than the next scheduled dry-docking of the ship, following entry into force of the SOLAS amendment. However, the Committee reached agreement, in principle, to set 1 July 2014 as the date for implementation of the system of assessment, evaluation and replacement of existing release mechanisms.

The whole package of measures addressing the safety of lifeboat release and retrieval systems, including the proposed SOLAS amendment, related amendments to the LSA Code and the draft *Guidelines for evaluation and replacement of lifeboat release and retrieval systems*, referenced in the draft amendment to SOLAS regulation III/1, were referred back to an intersessional working group, which will meet prior to the 55th session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE) (21 to 25th March 2011) and will continue its work through the Sub-Committee.

The SOLAS amendment is intended to ensure new, stricter, safety standards for lifeboat release and retrieval systems, aimed at preventing accidents involving lifeboats, and will require the assessment and possible replacement of a large number of release hooks for lifeboats, thereby requiring action from all involved parties, including flag States, manufacturers, shipowners and surveyors.

Guidance for company security officers on piracy agreed

The Committee approved an MSC Circular on *Guidance for company security officers on preparation of a company and crew for the contingency of hijack by pirates in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden*, which supplements existing guidelines.

The MSC also reviewed the latest statistics on piracy and armed robbery against ships, in particular in relation to the situation off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, where ships continue to be attacked and hijacked, despite the concerted efforts of the international community, spearheaded by IMO, navies and the industry, to protect shipping.

The Committee was also updated on measures taken by IMO to assist States in implementing the Code of Conduct concerning the repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (the Djibouti Code of Conduct). During the meeting, Eritrea became the 18th State to sign the Djibouti Code of Conduct.

The Committee was also informed that, following the establishment of a distribution facility at IMO headquarters in London, for the provision of flag State Long Range Identification and Tracking of ships (LRIT) information to security forces operating in waters of the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean, the IMO Secretary-General has received requests from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) for the provision of access to the distribution facility. Both security forces had indicated that the flag State LRIT information they would receive through the distribution facility would be used to enhance the protection of all ships navigating in the waters of the Gulf of Aden and the western Indian Ocean, irrespective of their flag, and for the protection of ships delivering humanitarian aid to Somalia. The requests received a positive response and SOLAS Contracting Governments were invited (via IMO Circular Letter No.3134) to consider providing flag State LRIT information to NATO and EU NAVFOR.

Safe manning draft resolution and SOLAS amendments approved

The MSC approved revised *Principles of Safe Manning*, with a view to adoption by the IMO Assembly next year as an Assembly resolution. It also approved amendments to SOLAS regulation V/14 relating to mandatory requirements for determining safe manning, with a view to adoption by MSC 90, which will be held in 2012.

The aim is to ensure that a ship is sufficiently, effectively and efficiently manned to provide safety and security of the ship, safe navigation and operations at sea and in port, prevention of human injury or loss of life, the avoidance of damage to the marine environment and to property, and to ensure the welfare and health of seafarers through the avoidance of fatigue. These objectives can be achieved through the adoption of a goal-based approach; standard procedures for effective implementation; and effective enforcement.

The proposed resolution includes a number of annexes giving detailed guidance on implementing safe manning, including: *Guidelines for the application of the principles of safe manning*; *Guidelines for the determination of minimum safe manning*; *Responsibilities in the application of principles of minimum safe manning*; *Guidance on content and model form of minimum safe manning document*; and *Framework for determining minimum safe manning*.

The proposed SOLAS amendment would require Administrations to take into account the guidance on minimum safe manning adopted by IMO (with a footnote referring to the Assembly resolution on *Principles of Minimum Safe Manning*).

Correspondence group to finalize IMO Maritime Security Manual

The Committee established a correspondence group to finalize the *IMO Maritime Security Manual* in time for MSC 89, to be held next May. The manual aims at consolidating the work undertaken so far to address security matters and will serve as a valuable reference tool for practitioners in Administrations, as well as for the industry and those operating in the field.

LRIT status updated

The MSC was updated on the status of the establishment of the global LRIT system, including the establishment of the International LRIT Data Exchange by the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Committee approved *Guidance notes for the first modification testing phase of the LRIT system* and urged LRIT data centres to make the necessary provisions in order to complete the modification testing phase before 1 March 2011.

Future work to implement goal-based standards discussed

The Committee invited Member Governments and international organizations to submit detailed proposals in order to be able to finalize the draft *Generic guidelines for developing goal-based standards* at MSC 89 and agreed to consider any proposals regarding the future work on GBS at the next session.

The MSC noted information on the progress made with the implementation of the verification scheme for the International Goal-based Construction Standards for Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, which were adopted at its last session, along with the associated amendments to SOLAS Chapter II-1 making their application mandatory.

STCW Convention: independent evaluations to be considered

The list of Parties deemed to be giving full and complete effect to the provisions of the STCW Convention, as amended, was updated when the Secretary-General submitted his report on one country whose initial evaluation had been completed as well as on those countries whose independent evaluations had been completed since the previous MSC meeting.

Other issues

In connection with other issues arising from the reports of IMO Sub-Committees and other bodies, the MSC:

- adopted a number of new and amended ships' routing systems and mandatory ship reporting systems, which had been approved by the Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation (NAV);

- adopted *Revised Guidelines on **the prevention of access by stowaways and the allocation of responsibilities to seek the successful resolution of stowaway cases***, which will also be submitted to the Facilitation Committee for adoption;
- reviewed a series of recommendations submitted by the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI) associated with the consideration of possible ways in which the Code for the implementation of mandatory IMO instruments (which is used as the audit standard for the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme) could be made mandatory – in particular, the issue of how to introduce the Code and auditing into the annexes to some or all of the 10 instruments covered by the Code;
- in the context of the above-mentioned Audit Scheme, reviewed the analysis of the first three consolidated audit summary reports;
- reviewed the progress made in the development of a new code for recognized organizations;
- approved draft amendments to the LSA Code to require lifeboats to “*be of international or vivid reddish orange, on all parts where this will assist detection at sea*” and to delete the reference to allowing “*a comparably highly visible colour*” with a view to subsequent adoption;
- approved draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/20, regarding fixed gas and water-spraying fire-extinguishing systems for vehicle, ro-ro, container and general cargo spaces, with a view to subsequent adoption;
- approved draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/9, concerning fire integrity of bulkheads and decks separating adjacent spaces of ro-ro spaces for passenger ships carrying not more than 36 passengers and cargo ships, with a view to subsequent adoption;
- agreed to modifications to footnotes in the Performance Standard for protective coatings for dedicated seawater ballast tanks in all types of ships and double-side skin spaces of bulk carriers, adopted by resolution MSC.215(82), and in the Performance standard for protective coatings for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers, adopted by resolution MSC.288(87);
- approved amendments to chapters 5 to 8 of the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (**FSS Code**); and
- approved supplementary advice on the IMO position on the World Radiocommunications Conference 2012 agenda items concerning matters relating to maritime services.

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IMO – the International Maritime Organization – is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

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