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IMO Maritime Safety Committee adopts FTP Code, Piracy Guidelines and More

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IMO Maritime Safety Committee 88th Session – 24 November to 3 December 2010

At the 88th Session of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (24 November to 3 December 2010) 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. The session also included discussion on piracy and armed robbery against ships off the coast of Somalia, postponement of lifeboat release mechanism amendments and the approval of a revised resolution on principles of safe manning. Extracts from IMO's briefing on the session dealing with these issues are set about below. The full text of IMO's Briefing 58/2010 which reports on the 88th session is also available to view and download below.

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*.

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.

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.

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*).

*The circular is available to view and download below. Earlier IMO MSC circulars (from June 2009) and other information on related issues can be found on the [Piracy](#) webpage.