

IMO MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC)

109th Session, 02 – 06 December 2024

Session Outcome



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Indian Register of Shipping

MSC 109

The 109th session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of IMO was held from 02nd to 06th December 2024.

Concise Summary of Important Decisions made

A. MSC 109 adopted the following:

- a) Amendments to IGC Code (use of cargo as fuel)
- b) Amendments to the IGF Code
- c) Draft MSC resolution on amendments to paragraph 6.14.1.1 of resolution MSC.81(70) concerning assumed weight used to represent each person in self-righting tests for totally enclosed lifeboats
- d) Draft MSC resolution regarding Performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system (AIS) revising annex 3 to resolution MSC.74(69), and applicable to new installations.

(please see the relevant sections in this report for detailed explanation of the amendments)

B. Relevant circulars further elaborated in this report regarding the following agenda items were approved at this session:

- a) Agenda Item 4 - Goal Based New Ship Construction Standards
- b) Agenda Item 5 – Development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)
- c) Agenda Item 6 – Development of a Safety Regulatory Framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from Ships using new technologies and Alternative Fuels
- d) Agenda Item 7 – Revision of the Guidelines on Maritime Cyber Risk Management (MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3/Rev.2) and Identification of next steps to enhance Maritime Cyber Security
- e) Agenda Item 11 – Formal Safety Assessment
- f) Agenda Item 12 – Ship Systems and Equipment
- g) Agenda Item 13 – Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue
- h) Agenda Item 14 – Carriage of Cargo and Containers
- i) Agenda Item 15 - Implementation of IMO Instruments
- j) Agenda Item 19 – Work Programme
- k) Agenda Item 20 – Any other business

Summarised outcome of relevant topics discussed at MSC 109

Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments (Agenda Item 3)

✓ ***Amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships carrying liquefied gases in bulk (IGC Code)***

The Committee adopted the draft MSC resolution which enumerates amendments to the IGC Code. These amendments are concerned with the use of cargoes as fuels on these ships (except those toxic cargoes which require carriage in 1G ships). This amendment therefore allows construction of liquefied gas carriers with ammonia cargo and usage of such cargo as fuel.

The amendments will enter into force from 1 January 2026.

In this regard, the Committee also approved draft MSC circular to invite Member States for voluntary early implementation of these amendments.

✓ ***Amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships using gases or other low-flashpoint fuels (IGF Code)***

The Committee adopted the draft MSC resolution which enumerates the amendments to the IGF Code regarding the following topics.

- 1) Part A-1, Section 5.3 – A new paragraph 5.3.3.6 is introduced. This provides requirements to permit the bottom of suction wells installed within fuel tanks to protrude into the vertical extent of the minimum distance to be maintained of the fuel tank from the ship's bottom.
- 2) Part A-1, Section 7.3 – A new paragraph 7.3.1.4 is introduced. This provides requirements for discharge (gas or liquid) from pressure relief valves of gas fuel piping systems into the fuel tanks.
- 3) Part A-1, Section 9.4 – A new paragraph 9.4.2 is introduced. This provides requirements in regard to fuel tank inlets from pressure relief valves protecting the gas fuel piping system. Such fuel tank inlets need to be provided with non-return valves in lieu of automatically operated valves when the safety system in accordance with paragraph 15.2.2 is activated. Additionally, safe means of tank isolation for maintenance is also to be provided without affecting proper operation of such pressure relief valves.
- 4) Part A-1, Section 11.3
 - a. Paragraph 11.3.2 is amended to provide requirements which address the segregation of fuel tanks from dangerous cargo (carried in accordance with requirements of the IMDG Code).
 - b. Paragraph 11.3.3.1 is amended to provide requirements which enable the consideration the fuel storage hold as a cofferdam.
- 5) Part A-1, Section 12.5.2 – Paragraph 12.5.2.3 is amended and a new paragraph 12.5.2.4 is introduced to provide clarification on evaluation of the size and extent of Hazardous Areas Zone 1 (this also includes consideration of gas dispersion analysis to establish the size and extent of such zones)
- 6) Part A-1, Section 13.3 – The requirements for ventilation are amended to clarify the installation of ventilation ducts serving hazardous spaces or non-hazardous spaces.

The amendments will enter into force from 1 January 2028.

Goal Based New Ship Construction Standards (Agenda Item 4)

The Committee discussed this agenda item considering the following two topics:

- 1) Initial audit of the Rules and Regulations of Biro Klasifikasi Indonesia (BKI) to confirm their compliance with MSC.454(100)
- 2) GBS audit of the IACS Recommendation 34, revision 2 (submitted outside the regular three-year cycle)

With regard to the rules and regulations of BKI, the Committee confirmed that the information submitted by BKI demonstrated conformity with IMO's Goal based ship construction standards for oil tankers and bulk carriers (provided BKI adopted the necessary actions to address the non-conformities recorded by the auditors).

The Committee agreed to refer the proposed table incorporating amendments, to the third GBS Workshop for consideration by the GBS experts, with a view to being used for the next maintenance audit cycle 2025-2027. MSC noted that, although the report of the third GBS Workshop would be considered by the Committee, the table could be used beforehand for audit submissions.

As regards the IACS Recommendation 34, Revision 2, the Committee noted the clarification of IACS and in particular it's statements affirming the following:

- 1) IACS common structural rules as developed on the basis of Rec.34/Rev.2, was not being applied to designs, orders or construction of bulk carriers or oil tankers subject to SOLAS regulation II-1/3-10.
- 2) In 2025, IACS would conduct consultations with the industry through the IACS External Advisory Group on the wave loads resulting from Rec.34/Rev.2
- 3) IACS aimed to complete the development of the draft changes to CSR, their detailed technical background and consequence assessment of the impact on the designs of ships as a package by 2025, with a view to adoption in 2026 and submission to the Secretary-General to initiate a verification audit.
- 4) The rule changes are planned to enter into force in 2028, allowing time for the audit and a Committee's decision thereon, and that IACS aimed to deliver classification requirements offering the shipping community enhanced safety without a reduction in the level of safety of bulk carriers and oil tankers.

Therefore, the Committee further encouraged IACS to work together with other stakeholders, including Member States and the industry, with a view to ensuring an inclusive involvement of all parties concerned, or affected, by the rule development process. This was further affirmed by IACS stating that balanced industry consultation would be carried out to ensure that concerns if any from the industry were addressed.

Development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) (Agenda Item 5)

In respect of discussions for reinstating within the preamble of the draft MASS Code the need to ensure equivalency of safety between a MASS and a conventional ship, the Committee decided that the discussion on "equivalency" could be revisited at a later stage during the experience building phase, after the adoption of the non-mandatory MASS Code.

The Committee established the Working Group on MASS to continue the discussions from the intersessional working groups and the correspondence group. The group worked to deliver:

- 1) Finalization of the chapters 7 (Risk Assessment), 12 (Connectivity) and 18 (Remote Operations)
- 2) Revised roadmap for developing the draft MASS Code targeting to complete the development of the non-mandatory code and adoption by MSC 111 (2026) and commence development of the mandatory MASS Code from 2028 with a view to adoption so that the entry into force would be from 2032.

It may be noted that the WG could not consider the potential gap in the draft MASS Code on delegation of the master's tasks and duties due to time constraints.

The WG also proposed an Intersessional MASS WG between MSC 110 and MSC 111. However, the Committee decided that a decision on the ISWG-MASS would be taken at MSC 110.

The Committee re-established the Correspondence Group on MASS to work further on development of the MASS Code.

Development of Safety Regulatory Framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from Ships using New Technologies and Alternative Fuels (Agenda Item 6)

The Committee established a Working Group to preliminarily develop and update the list of alternative fuels and technologies.

The Committee invited interested member states and delegations to submit proposals as regards definition of low flashpoint fuel in SOLAS II-2/2.29 to future sessions.

The Committee re-established the Correspondence Group on Development of Safety Regulatory Framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels.

The Committee endorsed the decision of the WG to include a new category for "swappable traction lithium-ion battery containers" to the list of new technologies and agreed to request the CG, when developing recommendations to address the gaps under the same topic.

Revision of the Guidelines on Maritime Cyber Risk Management (MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3/Rev.2) and Identification of next steps to enhance Maritime Cyber Security (Agenda Item 7)

The Committee agreed for the need to further develop cybersecurity standards for ships and port facilities with the possibility of establishing a working group at the next session of the Committee pending submissions under the present agenda item, considering the limit to the number of working groups for the next session of the Committee.

The Committee also extended the target year of completion to 2026 for this output.

Formal Safety Assessment (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee (based upon the report of the Expert Group on FSA/GBS established at MSC 109) approved the Revised Guidelines for Formal Safety Assessment for use in the IMO Rule making process (MSC-MEPC.2/Circ.12/Rev.3).

Ship Systems and Equipment (Agenda Item 12)

The Committee considered the report of SSE 10 and took the following actions:

- 1) approved the draft amendments to the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes as regards lifejacket carriage requirements. These apply to craft constructed on or before 1 January 2028.
- 2) approved draft MSC Circular on Unified Interpretations of SOLAS regulations III/20.8.4 and 20.11, and resolution MSC.402(96), on the applicability of SOLAS regulation III/20.11 and resolution MSC.402(96) to inflated rescue boats.
- 3) approved draft MSC Circular on Unified Interpretations of SOLAS regulation II-2/4.5.6.1, and paragraphs 3.1.2, 3.1.4 and 3.5.3 of the IBC Code, on cargo/vapour piping and related gas-freeing piping/ducts on tankers.
- 4) approved draft MSC Circular on Unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2, on consistent application of SOLAS regulation II-2/11.4.1 on the crown of a machinery space of category A; as well as SOLAS regulations II-2/4.5.3.2.2 and 11.6.3.2 on the secondary means of venting cargo tanks.
- 5) approved MSC.1/Circ.1276/Rev.2 regarding the Revised unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2, rectifying an oversight regarding references to SOLAS regulation II-2/9.7.5.1.
- 6) approved draft MSC Circular regarding the Unified interpretation of SOLAS chapter II-1, on SOLAS regulation II-1/26 concerning single essential propulsion components.
- 7) approved MSC.1/Circ.1630/Rev.3 regarding Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (survival craft), containing amendments on assumed weight in self-righting tests for totally enclosed lifeboats, as well as on retro-reflective materials used on survival craft, in conjunction with the adoption of the associated draft amendments to resolution MSC.81(70).
- 8) approved MSC.1/Circ.1628/Rev.3 on Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (personal life-saving appliances), containing amendments on retro-reflective materials used on personal life-saving appliances.
- 9) approved MSC.1/Circ.1632/Rev.1 on Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (rescue boats), containing amendments on retro-reflective materials used on rescue boats
- 10) approved MSC.1/Circ.677/Rev.1 on Revised standards for the design, testing and locating of devices to prevent the passage of flame into cargo tanks in tankers.

- 11) approved the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/11, for consistent implementation of this provision for passenger ships and cargo ships, as a minor correction
- 12) adopted draft MSC resolution on amendments to paragraph 6.14.1.1 of resolution MSC.81(70) concerning assumed weight used to represent each person in self-righting tests for totally enclosed lifeboats.

Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue (Agenda Item 13)

The Committee considered the report of NCSR 11 and took the following actions:

- 1) approved the draft Assembly resolution on charges for distress, urgency and safety communications through recognized mobile satellite services in the GMDSS, revising and revoking resolution A.707(17), with a view to adoption by A 34.
- 2) approved draft MSC Circular on amendments to the IAMSAR Manual, taking into account ICAO's concurrence with the inclusion of the proposed amendments to the Manual in its 2025 Edition.
- 3) approved the draft Assembly resolution on criteria for the provision of mobile satellite communication systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), revising and revoking resolution A.1001(25) and MSC.1/Circ.1414.
- 4) approved the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 and the appendix (Certificates), the associated draft MSC resolution on performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements, and the consequential draft amendments to the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes with view to adoption by MSC 110 and adopt the consequential draft amendments to the 2008 SPS Code; and, following adoption of the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 and the MSC resolution on Performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements, invite A 34 to revoke resolutions A.1045(27) and A.1108(29) as from the date of entry into force of the aforementioned draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 (i.e. 1 January 2028)
- 5) approved SN.1/Circ.297/Rev.1 on IALA Maritime Buoyage System
- 6) approved SN.1/Circ.296/Rev.1 on IALA Risk Management Toolbox for aids to navigation and vessel traffic services.
- 7) approved MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.5 on guidance on the validity of radiocommunications equipment installed and used on ships.
- 8) adopted draft MSC resolution regarding Performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system (AIS) revising annex 3 to resolution MSC.74(69), and applicable to new installations.
- 9) adopted draft MSC resolution on performance standards for the reception of maritime safety information and search and rescue-related information by MF and HF digital navigational data (NAVDAT) system and the draft resolution MSC.509(105)/Rev.1 on provision of radio services for the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)

Carriage of Cargo and Containers (Agenda Item 14)

The Committee approved the following as urgent matters emanating from CCC 10:

- 1) Draft MSC Circular regarding the Interim Guidelines for safety of ships using ammonia as fuel.
- 2) Draft amendments to the IGC Code, including the draft associated cover page of the MSC resolution and the proposal to request the Secretariat to prepare the text of the draft new consolidated version of the IGC Code, incorporating all amendments to the 2014 IGC Code, with a view to circulation and subsequent adoption at MSC 110.

Work Programme (Agenda Item 19)

The following submissions (considered as matters of urgent nature) have been approved by the Committee as new work outputs:

- 1) MSC 109/19 (Austria, EC et al): Proposal for a new output regarding the development of a transition scheme for the introduction of digital technology for Very High Frequency (VHF) voice communications.
- 2) MSC 109/19/3 (Antigua, UAE, BIMCO et al): Proposal for a new output to realize the full potential of the S-100 Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS)

The Committee approved MSC.MEPC.1/Circ.5/Rev.5 (subject to concurrent approval by MEPC 83) regarding preliminary assessment of proposals for new work outputs to ensure justifiable workload on the committees and subcommittees. This also includes the safeguards on the development of unified interpretations.

In order to facilitate the consideration of proposals for new outputs, or the expansion of the scope of an output, a preliminary assessment of such proposals would be undertaken in advance to the relevant Committee session by a standing body (i.e. "Group of Chairs"), composed of the Chair(s) and Vice-Chair(s) of the Committee and the subsidiary bodies concerned, as appropriate, supported by the Secretariat. Format for carrying out such an assessment is provided in Annex 8 of the Circular. Guidance for the Group of Chairs on criteria to be considered when conducting the preliminary assessment of proposals for new outputs or the expansion of the scope of an output, is set out in part 2 of the form in annex 8.

Any Other Business (Agenda Item 21)

In relation to the implementation of SOLAS Regulations IV/10 and IV/15, the Committee agreed to modify footnote No.6 in COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2, clarifying that for operating in sea area A3, a single MF/HF radio installation may be accepted both as a primary MF radio installation and a duplicated MF/HF radio installation as provided in the COMSAR Circular. The Committee approved COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.3 on Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships, superseding COMSAR.1/Circ.32/Rev.2 with immediate effect.

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