

IMO'S SUB COMMITTEE ON SHIP SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT (SSE)

11th Session, 24th – 28th February 2025

Session Outcome



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Indian Register of Shipping

The 11th Session of IMO's Subcommittee on Ship Systems and Equipment was held from 24–28 February 2025.

Concise Summary of Important Decisions made

SSE 11 sub-committee agreed to the following for approval at MSC 110 and further adoption at MSC 111:

- ✓ a new paragraph containing provisions for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats for existing and new ships in LSA Code with an expected date of application of 01/01/2031;
- ✓ amendments to the following MSC Resolutions
 - MSC.402(96) concerning free-fall lifeboats
 - MSC.81(70) concerning the testing of the release system under load without launching the free-fall lifeboat into the water
- ✓ amendments to the following MSC Circulars:
 - MSC.1/Circ.1205/Rev.1: Revised guidelines for developing operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboat systems
 - MSC.1/Circ.1529: Unified interpretation related to the implementation of the requirements relating to lifeboat release and retrieval systems
 - MSC.1/Circ.1578: Revised guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats
 - MSC.1/Circ.1630/Rev.3: Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms
- ✓ MSC.1/Circ.1086: revised Code of practice for atmospheric oil mist detectors
- ✓ the following unified interpretations:
 - Unified Interpretation Relating to the Extinguishing Media Containing PFOS
 - Unified Interpretation on Spacing of Combined Smoke and Heat Detectors
 - Unified Interpretation of SOLAS Chapter II-1/3-13.2.4 on Uniform Documentation of Load Testing and Thorough Examination of Non-Certified Lifting Appliances
 - Unified Interpretation of Paragraphs 6.1.1.3 and 6.1.2.2 of the LSA Code Regarding the Manual Hoisting of Dedicated Rescue Boats on Cargo Ships
- ✓ revision of MSC.1/Circ.1628/Rev.3 on Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms

New requirements for ventilation of survival craft

SSE 11 initiated the work on draft amendments to chapter IV of the LSA Code and resolution MSC.81(70), for partially enclosed lifeboats and the work will continue in a Correspondence Group reporting to SSE 12.

Development of design and prototype test requirements for the arrangements used in the operational testing of free-fall lifeboat release systems without launching the lifeboat

SSE 11 agreed to a series of amendments, to introduce design and prototype test requirements for approval by MSC 110 and adoption by MSC 111.

The arrangement to test the release system without launching a lifeboat (free-fall) is introduced through an amendment to the LSA Code. These amendments allow for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats without actually launching them, as long as the crew boards the lifeboat, secures themselves, and commences launch procedures up to but not including the actual release.

Expected for application to free-fall lifeboats installed 1 January 2031. The new arrangement will apply to new installations on both existing and new ships, on or after the implementation date.

Revision of SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code

SSE 11 extended the target completion year for the work on the revision of SOLAS chapter III and LSA Code to 2027. SSE 11 reviewed the work conducted by the LSA correspondence group on the drafting of FR and EP pertaining to alarms, embarkation, evacuation and the survival phase.

Amendments to SOLAS chapter III and chapter IV of the LSA Code to require the carriage of self-righting or canopied reversible liferafts for new ships

The working group established progressed on the draft amendments to SOLAS and the LSA Code, and a correspondence group will further develop amendments and report to SSE 12.

Comprehensive review of the Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear (resolution MSC.402(96)) to address challenges with their implementation

SSE 11 established a working group to consider the definitions for "make," "type," "model" and "series". contained in resolution MSC.402(96), however draft amendments to resolution MSC.402(96) have not been yet completed.

Amendments to the LSA Code for thermal performance of immersion suits

SSE 11 agreed to keep the item on the agenda for SSE 12 and invited interested Member States and international organizations to make relevant submissions.

Review and update of the Code of practice for atmospheric oil mist detectors (MSC.1/Circ.1086)

SSE 11 approved the revised Code of practice for atmospheric oil mist detectors, for approval at MSC 110 in June 2025 and an immediate entry into force.

Revision of the 2010 FTP Code to allow for new fire protection systems and materials

Due to time constraints, SSE 11 working group did not consider all matters and the work will continue in a correspondence group reporting to SSE 12.

Development of amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS Code concerning detection and control of fires in cargo holds and on the cargo deck of containerships

SOLAS regulation II-2/7 on Detection and alarm drafting work will continue in a correspondence group, reporting to SSE 12.

Draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II 2/10.7.3 and new draft guidelines for the design, performance, testing, and approval of water mist lances drafting work will continue in a correspondence group, reporting to SSE 12

Development of provisions to consider prohibiting the use of firefighting foams containing fluorinated substances, in addition to PFOS, for fire-fighting on board ships

SSE 11 agreed to keep the agenda item open for another year. Based on the outcome of the Conference of the Parties at its next meeting in May 2025, further action as deemed necessary by the SSE might be taken up.

Evaluation of adequacy of fire protection, detection and extinction arrangements in vehicle, special category and ro-ro spaces to reduce the fire risk of ships carrying new energy vehicles

SSE 11 Working Group was not able to consider in detail all the documents submitted and the work will continue in a correspondence group and reporting to SSE 12

Unified interpretations

- ✓ Unified Interpretation of Paragraph 2.4.2.2 of Chapter 9 of the Fire Safety Systems (FSS) Code Regarding the Spacing of Combined Smoke and Heat Detectors:

This unified interpretation outlines two acceptable methods for determining detector spacing:

1. Spacing Based on Maximum Distance Between Detectors: Detectors should be arranged in hexagonal patterns with a 5.2m side length, ensuring optimized coverage while maintaining compliance with the 9m maximum spacing requirement.
2. Spacing Based on Maximum Floor Area per Detector: This method applies square-based spacing with an 8.6m side length, ensuring detectors are distributed in compliance with both the 74m² coverage requirement and the 9m spacing rule.

- ✓ Unified Interpretation of Paragraphs 6.1.1.3 and 6.1.2.2 of the LSA Code Regarding the Manual Hoisting of Dedicated Rescue Boats on Cargo Ships:

1. Para 6.1.1. 3: On cargo ships, manual hoisting of a dedicated rescue boat before embarkation is considered part of the preparation process, rather than the actual launching sequence. If the rescue boat once hoisted can be slewed out using stored mechanical power, then manually hoisting a rescue boat does not violate launching requirements.
2. Para 6.1.2.2: The term "launching mechanism" includes manual hoisting when necessary to position the boat for deployment ensuring a uniform application of the LSA Code, differentiating operational procedures and the regulatory compliance. The interpretation aims to eliminate inconsistencies as to how Administrations and ship operators apply the rule so that disputes over compliance standards are avoided.

- ✓ Unified interpretation of SOLAS regulation II-2/10.11 and regulation 7.9.4 of 1994/2000 HSC Codes on extinguishing media containing PFOS:

This unified interpretation aims to provide clarity on how to demonstrate compliance with the SOLAS and HSC Code requirements to prohibit the use and storage of extinguishing media containing PFOS. It clarifies that the term "fire-extinguishing media" includes firefighting foams, and that the phrase "containing perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)" means present in concentrations above 10 mg/kg (0.001% by weight).

Verification that extinguishing media do not contain PFOS requires reviewing the manufacturer's declaration or laboratory test reports provided to the administration or recognized organization, which should contain information such as foam type, production period, batch number, and reference to type approval/MED certificate.

For extinguishing media installed before 1 January 2026, where the manufacturer's declaration or test reports are not available, on-board sampling and testing according to a recognized standard is required.

- ✓ Unified interpretation of SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4 to facilitate uniform documentation of load testing and thorough examination for existing non-certified lifting appliances:

This revised unified interpretation is to provide a consistent approach for demonstrating compliance with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.4 for existing lifting appliances installed before 1 January 2026 that do not have valid certificates of test and thorough examination under another international instrument. Compliance can be demonstrated through a "factual statement" issued by a competent person approved by the Administration or a recognized organization (RO). The factual statement can be attached to the "Register of lifting appliances and cargo handling gear" to document the history of the test and thorough examination, and the annual thorough examination can be documented in the same register.

Any Other Business

Updates to ISO Survival Craft Equipment Standard (ISO)

As ISO 18813:2006 has been withdrawn and replaced by ISO 18813:2022, SSE 11 agreed to a minor correction to the LSA Code to update footnotes referencing ISO 18813:2022.

For any queries, you can reach out to:

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