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MAIN DECISIONS OF MSC 107

The scope of the Marine Information Notice publication is to provide the Shipping Sector with information relevant to RINA, its organization, initiatives and services as well as to disseminate information of a general nature which in RINA view may be of interest. The information provided does not intend to be exhaustive and is given for reference only.

The 107th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 107) was held from 31 May to 9 June 2023. The main decisions taken are summarized below on the basis of the information obtained while participating in the debate.

AMENDMENTS TO MANDATORY INSTRUMENTS

Amendments to the SOLAS Convention entering into force on 1 January 2026

The adopted SOLAS amendments include:

1. New Reg. II-1/3-13 "Lifting appliances and anchor handling winches" requiring:
 - lifting appliances installed on or after 1 January 2026 to be:
 - designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the requirements of a classification society which is recognized by the Administration or a standard acceptable to the Administration;
 - load tested and thoroughly examined after installation and before being taken into use for the first time and after repairs, modifications or alterations; and
 - permanently marked and provided with documentary evidence for the safe working load (SWL);
 - anchor handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026 to be designed, constructed, installed and tested to the satisfaction of the Administration based on the newly approved Guidelines for anchor handling winches (MSC.1/Circ.1662);
 - existing lifting appliances and anchor handling winches to be tested and thoroughly examined based on the newly approved Guidelines for lifting appliances (MSC.1/Circ.1663) not later than the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026;
 - existing lifting appliances to comply with above-mentioned SWL requirements by the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026;
 - all lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, regardless of installation date, and all loose gear utilized with any lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, to be operationally tested, thoroughly examined, inspected, operated and maintained, based on the above-mentioned Guidelines, as appropriate.

Existing lifting appliances with valid certificates of test and thorough examination under another international instrument (e.g. ILO Convention No.152) acceptable to the Administration and issued prior to the entry into force of these requirements, will be considered compliant.

2. Amendments to Reg. II-2/10 "Fire fighting", prohibiting the use or storage of extinguishing media containing perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) on new ships (i.e. constructed on or after 1 January 2026) and requiring to deliver such substances to appropriate shore-based reception facilities. Existing

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- ships shall comply with the requirements not later the first survey on or after 1 January 2026.
3. Amendments to Reg. V/19 “Carriage requirements for shipborne navigational systems and equipment”, requiring container ships and bulk carriers of 3.000 GT and above, constructed on or after 1 January 2026, to be fitted with an electronic inclinometer, or other means, to determine, display and record the ship's roll motion. Such requirement will not apply to cargo ships occasionally carrying cargoes in bulk and general cargo ships carrying containers on deck.
 4. Amendments to Ch. XIV “Safety measures for ships operating in polar waters”, requiring
 - fishing vessels of 24 m in length overall and above,
 - pleasure yachts of 300 GT and above not engaged in trade, and
 - cargo ships of 300 GT and above but below 500 GToperating in polar waters to comply with the provisions of the Polar Code relevant to safety of navigation (new Ch. 9-1) and voyage planning (new Ch. 11-1). For fishing vessels and ships of 300 GT and above but below 500 GT, it is left to the Administration to determine the extent of the application of the provisions on “Nautical information” (9-1.3.1) and “Navigational equipment functionality” (9-1.3.2).
 5. Amendments to the Forms of the Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form E), the Record of Equipment for Passenger Ship Safety (Form P), the Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form C), to align the “Details of life-saving appliances” to the expression used in the LSA Code regarding the type of immersion suits.
 6. Amendments to the Forms of the Record of Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form E), the Record of the Equipment for Cargo Ship Safety (Form C) and the Form of Nuclear Cargo Ship to add “containership” in the list of the ship type and a new entry “Electronic inclinometer” in the “details of navigational systems and equipment”, in line with the above-described amendments to Reg. V/19 (see item 3 above).

Amendments to 1978 and 1988 SOLAS Protocol entering into force on 1 January 2026

Forms of the Safety Equipment Certificate for Cargo Ships and Safety Certificate for Cargo Ships were amended to include “containership” in the list of the type of ships in line with the above-described modifications to the SOLAS Forms.

Amendments to 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes entering into force on 1 January 2026

The adopted amendments to the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes include, in line with the above-mentioned modifications to SOLAS Reg. II-2/10:

- prohibition of the use or storage of extinguishing media containing PFOS on new craft (i.e. constructed on or after 1 January 2026) and existing craft (not later than the first survey after 1 January 2026);
- obligation to deliver PFOS to appropriate shore-based reception facilities when removed; and
- modifications to the Forms of the Record of Equipment to align the “Details of life-saving appliances” to the expression used in the LSA Code regarding the type of immersion suits and anti-exposure suits.

Amendments to the IMSBC Code entering into force on 1 January 2025

The adopted consolidated version of the IMSBC Code include - inter alia - the following new/revised schedules:

- Baryte, flotation chemical grade;
- Brown fused alumina;
- Crushed granodiorite fines;
- Direct reduced iron (D);
- Dunite and Dunite Fines;
- Electric arc furnace dust, pelletized;
- Fish meal (Fish Scrap), Stabilized anti-oxidant treated;
- Potassium nitrate;
- Sodium nitrate; and
- Sodium nitrate and potassium nitrate mixture.

The IMSBC-related Guidelines have also been approved (refer to the below list of the approved/adopted Circulars and Resolutions).

Amendments to the LSA Code entering into force on 1 January 2026

The adopted amendments to the LSA Code introduce new ventilation provisions for totally enclosed lifeboats (para.s 4.6.6 and 4.6.7) installed on or after 1 January 2029 and require means of ventilation to:

- be able of achieving a ventilation rate of at least 5 m³/h per person for the number of persons which the lifeboat is permitted to accommodate and for a period of not less than 24 hours;
- be operable from inside the lifeboat and arranged so that there is no stratification or formation of unventilated pockets;
- have a source of power different from the radio batteries, if electrically powered, or be provided with sufficient fuel if powered by the lifeboat engine;
- have opening provided with mean of closing, operable from inside and able to be kept closed before and during the launching of the lifeboat; and
- have inlet and outlet openings located and designed to minimize the ingress of water through the openings, without using the means of closing required.

The amendments also include specific requirements for the openings and their means of closing to be provided based on the type of totally enclosed lifeboat (i.e. free-fall lifeboat; lifeboat with a self-contained air support system; and fire-protected lifeboat).

Consequent amendments to the "Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances" (Res. MSC.81(70)) and the "Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (survival craft)" (MSC.1/Circ.1630/Rev.2) have been adopted/approved. Moreover, relevant amendments to the "Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear" (Res. MSC.402(96)) have been approved in view of adoption by MSC 108 in May 2024.

Amendments to the Polar Code entering into force on 1 January 2026

The adopted amendments to the Polar Code include - in line with the above-mentioned ones to SOLAS Ch. XIV - new provisions on safety of navigation (new Ch. 9-1) and voyage planning (new Ch. 11-1) to the following ships operating in polar waters: fishing vessels of 24 m in length overall and above; pleasure yachts

of 300 GT and upwards not engaged in trade; and cargo ships of 300 GT and upwards but below 500 GT.

Amendments to the STCW Convention and Code entering into force on 1 January 2025

The adopted amendments to the STCW Convention and Code include modifications for allowing the use of electronic certificates. Relevant Guidelines on the use of electronic certificates of seafarers have been also approved (MSC.1/Circ.1665).

DRAFT AMENDMENTS APPROVED IN VIEW OF THEIR ADOPTION AT MSC 108

Draft amendments to SOLAS Convention

The draft amendments include modifications to:

- Reg. II-1/3-4, extending the application of the emergency towing arrangements requirements to ships other than tankers of not less than 20.000 GT. The requirements will be applicable to new ships only (i.e. constructed on or after the date of entry into force which will probably be 1 January 2028). A new set of guidelines for emergency towing arrangements on new ships other than tankers, as well as consequential amendments to the existing guidelines for tankers, will be developed.
- Reg. II-2/4, specifying that oil fuel delivered to and used on board ships shall not jeopardize the safety of ships or adversely affect the performance of the machinery or be harmful to personnel.
- Reg. II-2/7, requiring all control stations and cargo control rooms of cargo ships constructed on or after 1 January 2026 to be fitted with a fire detection and fire alarm system according to the applicable method (i.e. IC; IIC; IIIC). The relevant unified interpretation in Circular MSC.1/Circ.1456 has been revised accordingly and agreed in principle in view of its approval at MSC 108 in May 2024.
- Ch. V, introducing mandatory reporting of lost/observed freight container(s).

Draft amendments to SOLAS Convention and FSS Code for fire safety of ro-ro passenger ships

The draft amendments to SOLAS Reg. II-2/20 include fire protection requirements for ro-ro ships constructed on or after 1 January 2026, requiring – inter alia:

- passenger ships to be provided with an individually identifiable fixed fire detection and fire alarm system in vehicle, special category and ro-ro spaces (open and close), complying with the relevant FSS Code requirements. The system shall be designed with a system interface with logical and unambiguous presentation of the information, to allow a quick and correct understanding and decision-making;
- passenger ships to be provided with a fixed fire detection and fire alarm system and a fixed water-based fire-extinguishing system for the area on the weather deck intended for the carriage of vehicle;
- cargo ships to be provided with a fixed fire detection and fire alarm system in vehicle spaces, special category spaces and ro-ro spaces;
- passenger ships to have an effective video monitoring in vehicle, special

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- category and ro-ro spaces for continuous monitoring;
- passenger ships to comply with structural fire protection provisions for the special category space and ro-ro space sub-divided with internal decks;
- passenger ships to comply with the arrangement of opening in ro-ro spaces and special category spaces and the arrangement of weather deck intended for the carriage of vehicles; and
- passenger ships to be fitted with suitable signage and marking on deckhead and bulkhead in vehicle, special category and ro-ro spaces where fixed pressure water-spraying systems are fitted.

Ro-ro passenger ships constructed before 1 January 2026 will be requested to:

- comply with the video monitoring requirements,
- have a fixed fire detection and fire alarm system in special category space, open and closed ro-ro and vehicle spaces, and
- have a fixed water-based fire-extinguishing system on weather decks intended for carriage of vehicles

not later than the first survey after 1 January 2028.

In line with the above, the approved draft amendments to the FSS Code - applicable to new ships - include new requirements for fixed water-based fire-extinguishing on ro-ro passenger ships' weather decks intended for the carriage of vehicles; linear heat detectors; and visual and audible fire signals.

Draft amendments to LSA Code

The draft amendments include the revision of:

- lifejackets' in-water performance,
- single fall and hook systems requirements, and
- minimum and maximum lowering speed of fully loaded survival craft or rescue boats (para. 6.1.2.8 and 6.1.2.10).

Consequent amendments to the "Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances" (Res. MSC.81(70)) and the "Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (personal life-saving appliances)" (MSC.1/Circ.1628/Rev.2) will be adopted at MSC 108.

Draft amendments to the IGF Code

The draft amendments include – inter alia – the following which will be applicable to new ships (i.e. constructed on or after 1 January 2026):

- design requirements for pressure relief system;
- corrections to the minimum wall thickness formula, in relation to parameter "a" (i.e. negative manufacturing tolerance for thickness);
- redundancy and segregation requirements for fuel supply system of single fuel installations;
- ventilation requirements for the gas supply pipe, when the master gas fuel valve is automatically shut down;
- requirements for the design pressure of the outer pipe or duct of fuel system;
- clarification of application of SOLAS Reg. II-2/9 for fuel preparation rooms which are to be considered as a machinery space of category A; and
- modifications to the list of spaces/equipment/ducts/tank included in the hazardous area zones 0 and 1.

Moreover, the draft amendments include additional requirements for the bunkering manifold which will be applicable to new and existing ships.

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Draft amendments to 2011 ESP Code

The draft amendments modify the “Procedures for approval and certification of a firm engaged in thickness measurement of hull structures”, permitting Administrations – and not only Recognized Organizations - to exercise the right to audit a firm conducting thickness measurement of hull structures.

Draft amendments to the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Grain in Bulk (resolution MSC.23(59))

The draft amendments introduce a new class of loading conditions for "specially suitable compartment, partly filled in way of the hatch opening, with ends untrimmed" and specify the requirements under which grain could be carried in such compartments.

Draft revised 1995 STCW for fishing vessel personnel (STCW-F) Convention and new draft STCW-F Code

The draft comprehensive revision of the STCW-F Convention has been carried out to include – inter alia – the necessary modifications due to the GMDSS modernization. A new edition of the STCW-F Code has consequently also been developed.

RECOMMENDATORY INSTRUMENTS ADOPTED/APPROVED

Amendment to the 1983 and 2008 SPS Codes

The amendments to the SPS Code include modifications to the Forms of the Record of Equipment to align the “Details of life-saving appliances” to the expression used in the LSA Code regarding the type of immersion suits.

Amendments to the 1979, 1989 and 2009 MODU Codes entering into force 1 January 2024

The amendments to the MODU Codes - in line with the already-in-force SOLAS requirements - prohibit new installations of materials containing asbestos on or after 1 January 2024. In this regard, the approved Unified Interpretation (MSC.1/Circ.1671) clarifies the following:

1. "new installation" means that on or after 1 January 2024:
 - materials containing asbestos should be prohibited from being installed on board; and
 - any repairs, replacements, maintenance or additions to working parts of a MODU should be documented with an asbestos-free declaration for the materials used (a non-exhaustive list is provided in the Appendix).Notwithstanding the above, existing materials stowed on board before 1 January 2024 are not prohibited from being retained on board but should not be installed unless they can be documented to be asbestos-free before use/installation.
2. During surveys required by the MODU Codes, the Administration in consultation with the person responsible to control asbestos-containing material on board, should:
 - audit available documentation, including asbestos-free declarations and other supporting documentation, based on the Guidelines for maintenance and monitoring of onboard materials which contain asbestos onboard MODUs (approved by MSC 107); and

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- verify that materials which are documented to contain asbestos have not been installed on board after 1 January 2024.

Revised performance standards for water level detectors on ships subject to SOLAS regulations II-1/25, II-1/25-1 and XII/12

The amended revised performance standards (Res. MSC.188(79)/Rev.2) clarify how to measure the installation height of bilge level sensors, specifying that if the bottom of the bilge well is below the upper surface of the inner bottom, the heights of those sensors are to be measured from the bottom of the bilge well.

Delays affecting the availability of new GMDSS equipment compliant with the revised performance standards

Amendments to SOLAS, HSC and MODU Codes entering into force on 1 January 2024 will require radio installations to comply with the adopted revised performance standards. However, due to delays in the availability of the compliant equipment, until 1 January 2028, according to MSC.1/Circ.1676, the following equipment - conforming to the performance standards not inferior to the old ones - is still permitted to be installed onboard:

- shipborne VHF radio installations;
- shipborne MF and MF/HF radio installations; and
- Inmarsat-C ship earth stations.

The Guidance on the validity of radiocommunications equipment installed and used on ships has been revised accordingly (MSC.1/Circ.1460/Rev.4) to extend the deadline for updating VHF radiocommunication equipment to 1 January 2028.

International Code of safety for diving operations, 2023 (2023 Diving Code)

The new Code will be applicable to all ships of 500 GT and above fitted with a diving system installed on or after 1 January 2024.

Ships having a diving system installed prior to 1 January 2024 should be certified according to the Code by the due date of the next Safety Construction Renewal Survey or equivalent.

The Code includes a "Diving Unit Safety Certificate" (DUSC) and provides a minimum international standard for the design, construction, installation and survey of diving systems integrated on ships, floating structures and MODUs engaged in diving operations.

Interim Guidelines for the safety of ships using Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) fuels

The interim guidelines (MSC.1/Circ.1666) provide an international standard for ships using LPG as fuel, including provisions for the arrangement, installation, control and monitoring of machinery, equipment and systems to minimize the risk to the ship, its crew and the environment.

Interim Guidelines on safe operation of onshore power supply (OPS) service in port for ships engaged on international voyages

The Interim Guidelines on the safe operation of OPS service in port on ships engaged on international voyage (MSC.1/Circ.1675) cover the safety operational aspects:

- communication;
- verification and testing;

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- personal protecting equipment;
- procedures for pre-connection, connection, supply of power, disconnection in case of high or low voltage power supply;
- safety precautions before maintenance;
- documentation;
- personnel familiarization.

The Interim Guidelines do not apply to the electrical power supply during docking periods, e.g. dry docking and other out-of-service maintenance and repair; and further considerations are necessary to apply them to semi-automatic and fully automatic OPS processes.

Thermal performance of immersion suits

The amendments to the following instruments covering the thermal performance of immersion suits have been approved:

- “Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances” (Res. MSC.81(70)), including a 15-minute time frame in the thermal protective tests, so that a test would be stopped if the skin temperature of the hand, foot or lumbar region should fall below 10°C for more than 15 minutes;
- “Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms (personal life-saving appliances)” (MSC.1/Circ.1628/Rev.1).

MARITIME AUTONOMOUS SURFACE SHIPS (MASS)

The Committee progressed the development of the draft non-mandatory MASS Code which is expected to be finalized by the second half of 2024. The draft Code consists of three Parts: Part 1 “General”, Part 2 “Main principles for MASS and MASS functions”, and Part 3 “Goals, functional requirements and provisions” and will be further intersessionally developed by the re-established Correspondence Group. However, the Committee agreed to:

- limit the development of Code to SOLAS cargo ships with a view to consider the feasibility for application to passenger ships at a future stage; and
- incorporate the risk assessment methodologies without recommending specific risk assessment methodology so to allow for flexibility. Further development of the Risk Assessment section will be intersessionally carried out.

The adoption of the mandatory MASS Code - based on the approved non-mandatory one - is expected to be by 1 July 2026 in view of its entry into force on 1 January 2028.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS AND CIRCULARS ADOPTED/APPROVED

- Res. MSC.529(107) – Strengthening measures for ensuring the safety of international shipping
- MSC.1/Circ.1664 - Revised form for cargo information for solid bulk cargoes
- MSC.1/Circ.1667 - Unified interpretation of requirements in the IGF Code for fuel preparation rooms not located on an open deck
- MSC.1/Circ.1668 - Unified interpretation of bunkering manifold arrangements fitted on LNG bunkering ships in the IGC Code (as amended by Res. MSC.370(93))
- MSC.1/Circ.1669 - Unified interpretation of the IGC Code (as amended by Res. MSC.370(93))

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- MSC.1/Circ.1670 - Unified interpretation of the IGF Code
- MSC.1/Circ.1672 - Guidelines for maintenance and monitoring of materials containing asbestos on board MODUs
- MSC.1/Circ.1673 - Unified interpretation of SOLAS regulation II-1/1.1.3
- MSC.1/Circ.1674 - Unified interpretations of the LSA Code, the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes
- MSC.1/Circ.797/Rev.39 - List of competent persons maintained by the Secretary-General pursuant to section A-I/7 of the Seafarers' Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code
- MSC.1/Circ.1164/Rev.27 - Promulgation of information related to reports of independent evaluation submitted by Parties to the 1978 STCW Convention confirmed by the Maritime Safety Committee to have communicated information which demonstrates that Parties are giving full and complete effect to the relevant provisions of the Convention
- MSC.1/Circ.1276/Rev.1 - Revised unified interpretations of SOLAS Ch. II-2
- MSC.1/Circ.1362/Rev.2 - Unified interpretation of SOLAS chapter II-1
- MSC.1/Circ.1395/Rev.6 - Lists of solid bulk cargoes for which a fixed gas fire-extinguishing system may be exempted or for which a fixed gas fire-extinguishing system is ineffective
- MSC.1/Circ.1430/Rev.3 - Revised guidelines for the design and approval of fixed water-based fire-fighting systems for ro-ro spaces and special category spaces
- MSC.1/Circ.1453/Rev.2 - Guidelines for the submission of information and completion of the format for the properties of cargoes not listed in the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code and their conditions of carriage
- MSC.1/Circ.1454/Rev.2 - Guidelines for developing and approving procedures for sampling, testing and controlling the moisture content for solid bulk cargoes which may liquefy or undergo dynamic separation
- MSC.1/Circ.1537/Rev.2 - Unified interpretations of the 2008 IS Code
- MSC.1/Circ.1557/Rev.1 - Revised hazardous area classification (application of SOLAS regulation II-1/45.11)
- MSC.1/Circ.1613/Rev.2 - Iridium SafetyCast service manual

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