

GF21 CO₂ fire extinguishing systems in methyl/ethyl alcohol fuelled vessels machinery spaces

(Oct 2024)

Paragraph 11.7.1 of MSC.1/Circ.1621, the *Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using methyl/ethyl alcohol as fuel state*:

“11.7.1 Machinery space and fuel preparation space where methyl/ethyl alcohol-fuelled engines or fuel pumps are arranged should be protected by an approved fixed fire-extinguishing system in accordance with SOLAS regulation II-2/10 and the FSS Code. In addition, the fire-extinguishing medium used should be suitable for the extinguishing of methyl/ethyl alcohol fires.”

Interpretation

1. Where CO₂ fire extinguishing system are used as fixed gas fire-extinguishing system for Machinery space or fuel preparation space in methyl/ethyl alcohol fuelled vessels, the quantity of CO₂ carried is to be sufficient to give a minimum volume of free gas equal to 50% of the gross volume of the largest space protected, including the machinery space casing.
2. As an alternative to 1, aspects, such as, but not limited to the inventory of methanol and the expected duration of a potential methanol fire in the space considered, may be considered in the risk assessment to confirm the suitability of the fire-extinguishing arrangements in machinery space, including both the fixed gas fire-extinguishing system (required by SOLAS II-2/10.5.2) and the fixed local application fire-extinguishing system (required by SOLAS II-2/10.5.6). Such alternative may be subject to approval by the Administration.

Note:

1. This Unified Interpretation is to be uniformly implemented by IACS Societies on ships contracted for construction on or after 1 January 2026, to which the administration has required the application of MSC.1/Circ.1621.
2. The “contracted for construction” date means the date on which the contract to build the vessel is signed between the prospective owner and the shipbuilder. For further details regarding the date of “contract for construction”, refer to IACS Procedural Requirement (PR) No. 29.

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