

Preliminary Report of IMO MSC 111

The 111th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 111) was held at the IMO in London, U.K. from 13 to 22 May 2026. A summary of the outcome is given hereunder for your information.

1. Adopted mandatory requirements

Mandatory requirements adopted at MSC 109 were as follows:

- (1) Amendments to SOLAS Chapter V and HSC Code
Amendments to SOLAS Chapter V and HSC Code to allow the VHF Data Exchange System (VDES), which has function of VHF data exchange in addition to Automatic Identification System (AIS), to install ships as an alternative to AIS. In addition, the performance standards for shipborne VDES were adopted.

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.
- (2) Amendments to 2011 ESP Code
Amendments to 2011 ESP Code to regarding Remote Inspection Technique (RIT). This includes the procedures for certification of a firm engaged in close-up survey of hull structures using RIT. In addition, the guidelines on the use of RIT for ESP Code surveys were approved, to ensure a standardized and safe approach of the use of RIT (see 3.2(1)).

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.
- (3) Amendments to IP Code
Amendments to Part IV of IP Code to change the assumed mass of each industrial personnel from 75 kg to 90 kg in the ship stability

calculation.

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.

- (4) Amendments to LSA Code
Amendments to LSA Code to introduce arrangement requirements for the arrangement to test the release system under load without launching the free-fall lifeboat into the water, and to incorporate into the main text of the LSA Code the scope of application of amendments that were previously specified only in the text of the relevant resolutions.

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.

- (5) Amendments to 1988 Load Lines Protocol
Amendments to 1988 Load Lines Protocol regulation 25 to require having guard rails with 3 bars and openings not exceed 230 mm below the lowest course of the guard rails and 380 mm at the other courses for all exposed decks same as for superstructure and freeboard decks.

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.

- (6) Amendments to 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))

Amendments to Resolution MSC.402(96) to add the newly required release system under load without launching the free-fall lifeboat into the water under LSA Code 4.7.7 to the items for thorough examination and operational testing.

Entry into force: 1 January 2028.

2. Approved mandatory requirements

The following draft amendments were approved at this session, and are expected to be adopted at MSC 112 to be held in December 2026.

(1) Amendments to IGC Code

Amendments to Chapter 1 to 5, 8 to 13 and 15 to 19 of the IGC Code regarding the filling limit, requirements of using cargo other than LNG as a fuel, special requirements for carbon dioxide, etc.

3. Approval of unified interpretations, etc.

The following unified interpretations (UIs), guidelines and guidance etc. were approved during MSC 110.

3.1 Unified interpretations

(1) Unified interpretation of the IGC Code

Unified interpretation of chapter 4 of the IGC Code regarding the secondary barrier testing and effectiveness assessment.

3.2 Guidelines and guidance etc.

(1) Guidelines on the use of remote inspection techniques (RIT) for ESP Code surveys

Guidelines to provide technical guidance for the use of Remote Inspection Technologies (RIT) as an alternative means of access to support the surveyors during the close-up survey and thickness measurement required by the ESP Code, including requirements for

certification of firm, planning and preparation.

(2) Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using hydrogen as fuel

Interim guidelines specifying provisions for the arrangement, installation, control and monitoring of machinery, equipment and systems using hydrogen as fuel in order to minimize the risk to the ship, persons on board and the environment.

(3) Interim guidelines for use of ammonia cargo as fuel

Interim guidelines specifying technical guidance to ensure a level of safety equivalent to that achieved when using natural gas cargo as fuel, in cases where ammonia cargo is used as fuel.

(4) Revised interim recommendations for carriage of liquefied hydrogen in bulk (resolution MSC.565(108))

Revised interim recommendations for carriage of liquefied hydrogen in bulk, including the addition of cargo containment systems of a membrane-type cargo tank maintaining the insulation spaces under vacuum.

4. Consideration of requirements for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

In the recent development of MASS, it has been discussed at MSC on an international instrument of MASS (MASS Code). The non-mandatory MASS Code had been developed, including, for example, goal-based and functional requirements for areas such as safety, operation, and security.

At this session, based on the report by the intersessional working group (ISWG-MASS 4) and the meeting outcome arranged by the related working group, the non-mandatory MASS Code was finalized and adopted. In the future, mandatory MASS Code will be considered with a

view to entering into force on 2032 after reviewing the non-mandatory MASS Code at sub-committee and Experience-building phase (EBP). development of a framework for an EBP was commenced at this session. Specific instructions to the Sub-Committees and the framework for the EBP, including the data collection formats, is scheduled to be discussed at the next session.

The structure of the non-mandatory MASS Code is as follows.

Part 1: Introduction (purpose and application of the code)

Part 2: Main principles for MASS and remote operations centres (ROC) functions (certificate and survey, approval process, risk assessment, operational context, human element, etc.)

Part 3: Specific requirements (functional requirements and expected performance for each detailed item such as navigation and remote operations)

5. A safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels

At MSC 107, identification and updating a list of new technologies and alternative fuels to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and their technical assessment, as well as a review of safety obstacles and gaps in the current IMO instruments that may impede the use of the alternative fuel or new technology, were initiated.

At the previous session, based on the recommendations to address each of the identified barriers and gaps in current IMO instruments reported by the correspondence group, amendments to conventions or cords,

development of guidelines, etc. were instructed to each sub-committee.

At this session, draft work plans were submitted by CCC and SDC sub-committee and approved.

For example:

- Develop safety requirements for onboard carbon capture and storage systems on ships: finalize development of interim guidelines at 2028 (CCC)
- Develop requirements for the Safety of Ships Using Lithium-ion Battery Installations: finalize amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1/41 to allow for batteries to be used as the main source of electrical power and lighting systems at 2027 (Transfer of work from SSE to SDC)
- Update the Code of Safety for Nuclear Merchant Ships (Resolution A.491(XII)): finalize the revised Nuclear Code and amendments to SOLAS chapter VIII at 2030 (SDC)
- Develop Interim guidelines for the Safety of Ships Using Wind Propulsion and Wind Assisted Power: finalize interim guidelines at 2029 (SDC)

6. Consideration of cybersecurity standards

At the previous session, it was discussed about newly develop cybersecurity standards for ships and port facilities, and agreed to develop a non-mandatory cybersecurity Code of which requirements are goal-based and include risk management. As the development of the Code would be subject to the approval of a future session of the committee, preliminary work on the Code would be undertaken by an informal group of

experts.

However, as MSC is faced with a large number of agenda items, the new work plan for this matter was submitted to, and approved by, the 50th session of the IMO Facilitation Committee (FAL 50) held in

March this year, in order to ensure that consideration would commence.

At the present meeting, the results of the deliberations at FAL 50 were reported, and the road map including the holding of intersessional working groups (ISWG), was endorsed.

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