

Recent Topics at IMO

— Outline of Discussion at IMO Committees —

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1. INTRODUCTION

This article introduces recent topics discussed at IMO (International Maritime Organization). At the previous issue, a summary of the topics discussed at 75th Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 75) and 102nd Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 102) held in 2020 was provided.

This article provides a summary of the decisions taken at 103rd Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 103) held from 5 to 14 May 2021 as below. MSC 103 was held remotely in lieu of physical session at the headquarters of IMO, due to COVID-19 situation. Please bear in your mind that, since some relevant IMO Sub-Committee meetings were not held after MSC 102 and time constraints due to remote meeting, a number of proposals and comment papers were not considered at MSC 103 and thus postponed to MSC 104 to be held in October.

2. OUTCOMES OF MSC 103

2.1 Adopted Mandatory Requirements

Mandatory requirements were adopted at MSC 103 as follows:

- (1) Water level detectors on multiple hold cargo ships
Amendments to SOLAS regulation II-I/25-1 to require water level detectors on multiple hold cargo ships other than bulk carriers and tankers for cargo holds located below the freeboard deck, and intended for dry cargoes.
- (2) Amendments to SOLAS chapter III, LSA Code and resolution MSC.81(70)
Amendments to SOLAS regulation III/33, paragraph 4.4.1.3 of LSA Code and the “Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances” (resolution MSC.81(70), as amended), to exclude free-fall lifeboats from the scope of application of the requirements to launch lifeboats with the cargo ship of 20,000GT and above making headway at speeds up to 5 knots in calm water. As for early implementation of the amendments to SOLAS chapter III and LSA Code, refer to below item 2.2.(2).
- (3) Amendments to 2011 ESP Code
Amendments to 2011 ESP Code, which replace the provision of thickness measurements at the first renewal survey of double hull oil tankers.
- (4) Amendments to chapter 9 of the FSS Code
Amendments to chapter 9 of the FSS Code in respect of fault isolation requirements for cargo ships and passenger ship cabin balconies fitted with individually identifiable fire detector systems.

2.2 Approved Guidelines etc.

The following guidelines etc. were approved at MSC 103.

- (1) Amendments to the Guidelines for the maintenance and inspections of fixed carbon dioxide fire-extinguishing systems (MSC.1/Circ.1318)
Amendments to the Guidelines for the maintenance and inspections of fixed carbon dioxide fire-extinguishing systems (MSC.1/Circ.1318) were approved, aiming to clarify the hydrostatic testing regime for high-pressure CO₂ cylinders.
- (2) Early implementation Circular on the amendments to SOLAS chapter III and LSA Code
With regard to above item 2.1.(2), the Circular to urge Administrations’ early implementation on the amendments to SOLAS chapter III and LSA Code to exclude free-fall lifeboats from the scope of application of the requirements to launch lifeboats with the cargo ship of 20,000GT and above making headway at speeds up to 5 knots in calm water, was approved.

2.3 Consideration of Requirements for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

Taking into account recent investigation of automation surrounding a ship, it has been discussed at MSC on conventional

requirements of safety and environmental protection relating to MASS.

At this session, it was reported that the Regulatory Scoping Exercise (RSE) has been accomplished. In result of RSE, potential gaps between the current IMO instruments and requirements for MASS, and priorities for further work, were identified. In conclusion, it was agreed to consider a separate MASS instrument from existing IMO instruments.

2.4 Consideration of Safety Matters on Use of Low Sulphur Fuel

Triggered from the global 0.5% sulphur limit, which will enter into force on 1 January 2020, consideration of safety matters on use of low sulphur fuel was initiated, in order to develop SOLAS requirements in addition to requirements of MARPOL.

In conclusion at MSC 103, it was agreed to develop mandatory requirements and guidelines to address situations where the oil fuel supplied may not comply with SOLAS regulation II-2/4.2.1 at future sessions.

