

Subject :

Introduction of proposed amendments to
the international convention - Safe Access
(draft SOLAS Regulation II-1/12-2)

NKTECHNICAL INFORMATION

No. : 398

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To All shipowners and shipbuilders concerned.

At the IMO's DE (Design and Equipment) Sub-Committee held from 5 March to 9 March 2001, as one of the countermeasure to eliminate substandard ships in response to the ERIKA disaster, a draft amendment to SOLAS regulations was prepared.

The draft regulation was developed based upon the understandings that safe access arrangements are essential in order to ensure appropriate surveys. By this regulation, in addition to hatches required for the rescue of injured personnel, safe access facilities for inspections would be required on a mandatory basis. (the draft regulation is attached herewith for your information)

The date of the entry of the proposed amendment is considered to be harmonized with the date of the entry of the proposed amendments to the MARPOL regulation I/13G (acceleration of phasing out of single hull tankers). Thus, it is expected to be approved by MSC (Maritime Safety Committee) at its 74th session scheduled in May 2001 for adoption at MSC 75 scheduled in May 2002, in order to come into force on 1 January 2004.

With regard to the technical details of the requirements, they are expected to be further discussed at DE 45 will be held in next March for adoption at MSC 75 in May 2002.

Though the above decision is made at the Sub-Committee level, it's superior body, i.e., the Committee, will further discuss the issue. In the course of the discussion at the Committee, there may be some further modification to the decision introduced above, however, it is our purpose to introduce the decision for your advance information.

Attachment: Draft SOLAS regulation II-1/12-2

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ANNEX 1

REVISED PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SOLAS REGULATION II-1/12-2

Regulation 12-2

Access to and within spaces in the cargo area of oil tankers and bulk carriers

1 Application

This regulation applies to oil tankers and bulk carriers, as defined in regulation IX/1, [of 20,000 gross tonnage and over] [of 20,000 tonnes deadweight and over] [of 500 gross tonnage and over] [150 m in length and upwards] constructed on or after [1 January 2004].

2 Means of access to cargo and other spaces

2.1 Each space within the cargo area shall be provided with a permanent means of access to enable, throughout the life of a ship, overall and close-up inspections and thickness measurements of the ship's structures to be carried out by the Administration, the Company, as defined in regulation IX/1 and the ship's personnel and others as necessary. Provisions shall comply with the requirements of paragraph 4 and with Technical provisions for means of access for inspections adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee by resolution MSC...(...), as may be amended by the Organization, provided that such amendments are adopted, brought into force and take effect in accordance with the provisions of article VIII of the present Convention concerning the amendment procedures applicable to the annex other than chapter I.

2.2 Where a permanent means of access may be damaged during normal cargo loading and unloading operations [or where it is impracticable], the Administration may allow, in lieu, the provision of portable means of access such as staging, moveable platforms and ladders, provided the means of attaching, rigging, suspending or supporting the portable means of access forms a permanent part of the ship's structure. All portable equipment shall be capable of being readily erected by ship's personnel.

2.3 The construction and materials of all means of access and their attachment to the ship's structure shall be to the satisfaction of the Administration. The means of access shall be subject to survey prior to or in conjunction with its use in carrying out surveys in accordance with regulation XI/2.

2.4 Safe access* to cargo holds, cofferdams, ballast tanks, cargo tanks and other spaces in the cargo area shall be direct from the open deck and such as to ensure their complete inspection. Access to double bottom spaces may be from a pump-room, deep cofferdam, pipe tunnel, cargo hold, double hull space or similar compartment not intended for the carriage of oil or hazardous cargoes.

2.5 Tanks, and subdivisions of tanks, having a length of 35 m or more shall be fitted with at least two access hatchways and ladders, as far apart as practicable. Tanks less than 35 m in length shall be served by at least one access hatchway and ladder. When a tank is subdivided by one or more wash bulkheads or similar obstructions which do not allow ready means of access to the other parts of the tank, at least two hatchways and ladders shall be fitted.

* Refer to A.864(20) - Recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships.
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2.6 Each cargo hold shall be provided with at least two means of access as far apart as practicable. In general, these accesses shall be arranged diagonally, *e.g.* one access near the forward bulkhead on the port side, the other one near the aft bulkhead on the starboard side.

3 Ship Structure Access Manual

3.1 A ship's means of access to carry out overall and close-up inspections and thickness measurements shall be described in a Ship Structure Access Manual approved by the Administration, an updated copy of which shall be kept on board. The Ship Structure Access Manual shall include the following for each space in the cargo area:

- .1 plans showing the means of access to the space, with appropriate technical specifications and dimensions;
- .2 plans showing the means of access within each space to enable an overall inspection to be carried out, with appropriate technical specifications and dimensions. The plans shall indicate from where each area in the space can be inspected;
- .3 plans showing the means of access within the space to enable close-up inspections to be carried out, with appropriate technical specifications and dimensions. The plans shall indicate the positions of critical structural areas, whether the means of access is permanent or portable and from where each area can be inspected;
- .4 instructions for inspecting and maintaining the structural strength of all means of access and means of attachment, taking into account any corrosive atmosphere that may be within the space;
- .5 instructions for the rigging of any portable means of access in a safe manner; and
- .6 an inventory of all portable means of access.

[3.2 For the purpose of this regulation 'critical structural areas'* are locations which have been identified from calculations to require monitoring or from the service history of similar or sister ships to be sensitive to cracking, buckling, deformation or corrosion which would impair the structural integrity of the ship.]

4 General technical specifications

4.1 For access through horizontal openings, hatches or manholes, the dimensions shall be sufficient to allow a person wearing a self-contained air-breathing apparatus and protective equipment to ascend or descend any ladder without obstruction and also provide a clear opening to facilitate the hoisting of an injured person from the bottom of the space. The minimum clear opening shall not be less than 600 mm x 600 mm. When access to a cargo hold is arranged through the cargo hatch, the top of the ladder shall be placed as close as possible to the hatch coaming. Access hatch coamings having a height greater than 900 mm shall also have steps on the outside in conjunction with the ladder.

* DE 44 recommends that the MSC review the wording of this provision on "critical structural areas" in the light of the decision of MEPC 46 on this subject during the consideration of the Condition Assessment Scheme(CAS).
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4.2 For access through vertical openings, or manholes, in wash bulkheads, floors, girders and web frames providing passage through the length and breadth of the space, the minimum opening shall be not less than [600 mm x 800 mm] at a height of not more than 600 mm from the bottom shell plating unless gratings or other foot holds are provided.

[4.3 For ships of less than 5,000 tonnes deadweight, the Administration may approve, in special circumstances, smaller dimensions for the openings refer to in 4.1 and 4.2 above, if the ability to traverse such openings or to remove an injured person can be proved to the satisfaction of the Administration.]

VOID