

Subject :

Consideration at IMO regarding mandatory requirement of installing VDR on board existing ships

NKTECHNICAL INFORMATION

No. : 418

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To All shipowners and shipbuilders concerned,

A VDR (Voyage Data Recorder) is shipborne version of "black box" used for aircraft. It records conversations at the navigation bridge, VHF radio communication, speed, course and other information on the ship's condition for 12 hours. Installation of VDR became mandatory by the amendments made to the SOLAS Convention (MSC.99(73)) to the following ships:

(Matters already decided)

- (a) New ships (ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002)
 - i) Passenger ships engaged on international voyages
 - ii) Cargo ships of 3000 gt and over engaged on international voyages.
- (b) Existing ships
 - i) Roro passenger ships engaged on international voyages - to be fitted not later than the first survey on or after 1 July 2002.
 - ii) Passenger ships other than Roro passenger ships to be fitted with not later than 1 January 2004

(Matters for future consideration)

Application to existing cargo ship will be further considered by IMO's NAV Sub-Committee in accordance with Resolution MSC. 109(73).

The NAV Sub-Committee held in July 2001, instructed its technical working group to carry out feasibility study on the requiring installation of VDR on board existing cargo ships. The outcome of the study will be reproted to the Sub-Committee's next session scheduled in July 2002.

The NAV Sub-Committee is requested to conclude by 1 January 2004, and subsequently, the matter will be taken up by its senior body, i.e., the Maritime Safety Committee, where final decision will be made as to the amendments to the SOLAS convention be made.

Attachments: - Resolution MSC.109(73)
- SOLAS Regulation V/20 (entering into force on 1 July 2002)

Department in charge: External Affairs Division

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RESOLUTION MSC.109(73)
(adopted on 6 December 2000)

CARRIAGE OF VOYAGE DATA RECORDERS (VDRs) ON EXISTING CARGO SHIPS

THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,

RECALLING Article 28(a) of the Convention of the International Maritime Organization concerning the functions of the Maritime Safety Committee,

HAVING ADOPTED, by resolution MSC.99(73), amendments to chapter V of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (hereinafter referred to as the "Convention"), in particular, regulation V/20 concerning the carriage requirements of voyage data recorders (VDRs),

NOTING that the aforementioned amendments to the Convention do not include requirements for existing cargo ships to carry VDRs,

1. DECIDES that a study should be carried out, as a matter of urgency, to assess the feasibility of installing VDRs on existing cargo ships;
2. INVITES Member States concerned to:
 - .1 submit data to enable the NAV Sub-Committee to conduct a feasibility study of mandatory carriage of VDRs on existing cargo ships of sizes to be recommended; and
 - .2 encourage shipowners to install VDRs on existing cargo ships on a voluntary basis, so that wide experience may be gained from their use.
3. INSTRUCTS the NAV Sub-Committee, in co-operation with other sub-committees as appropriate:
 - .1 to carry out the feasibility study, taking into account such factors as:
 - .1 practicability;
 - .2 technical problems relating to the retrofitting of VDRs;
 - .3 adequacy of existing performance standards, including the possible development of simplified standards;
 - .4 experience in the use of VDRs on ships already fitted with them, including data that could not have been obtained without VDR; and
 - .5 relevant financial implications, including a cost benefit analysis.
 - .2 if the study clearly demonstrates the compelling need for mandatory carriage of VDRs on existing cargo ships, to prepare appropriate draft amendments to chapter V of the Convention and associated performance standards, for consideration by the Committee and action as appropriate; and
 - .3 finalize the study not later than 1 January 2004.

Regulation 20

Voyage data recorders

1 To assist in casualty investigations, ships, when engaged on international voyages, subject to the provisions of regulation 1.4, shall be fitted with a voyage data recorder (VDR) as follows:

- .1 passenger ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002;
- .2 ro-ro passenger ships constructed before 1 July 2002 not later than the first survey on or after 1 July 2002;
- .3 passenger ships other than ro-ro passenger ships constructed before 1 July 2002 not later than 1 January 2004; and
- .4 ships, other than passenger ships, of 3,000 gross tonnage and upwards constructed on or after 1 July 2002.

2 Administrations may exempt ships, other than ro-ro passenger ships, constructed before 1 July 2002 from being fitted with a VDR where it can be demonstrated that interfacing a VDR with the existing equipment on the ship is unreasonable and impracticable.

VOID