

News from IMO

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The paper presents current work of selected IMO bodies in the period preceding the publication of this issue of ToMs. The outcome of IMO bodies responsible for safety and environment protection has been covered, aiming at informing seafarers and shipping industry at large on the decisions taken, as well as on the IMO instruments and/or their amendments that have entered into force.

KEY WORDS

- ~ IMO
- ~ Safety
- ~ Environment protection

1. INTRODUCTION

IMO Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu has launched this year's World Maritime Day theme, "Sustainable development: IMO's contribution beyond Rio+20", calling on Governments and the shipping industry to join together and provide a positive contribution towards formulating sustainable maritime development goals. Also, the Secretary-General expressed his vision that halving lives lost at sea and eradicating pirate attacks, as well as ensuring the release of all hostages can, and should, be legitimate targets, for the Organization and for shipping in the years to come.

Since the last issue of ToMs, the Maritime Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 64th session from 1 to 5 October 2012, and the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) held its 91st session from 26 to 30 November 2012. Their selected decisions and outcome of discussions have been presented in this review of the current work of IMO bodies.

2. 64th SESSION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION COMMITTEE (MEPC 64)

Work on energy-efficiency measures for ships

Following adoption of the new chapter 4 of MARPOL Annex VI, in July 2011, the MEPC continued its work on further developing technical and operational measures relating to energy-efficiency measures for ships, based on a work plan agreed at the previous session. The MEPC adopted amendments to the 2012 Guidelines on the method of calculation of the attained EEDI for new ships (resolution MEPC.212(63)) and approved an amendment to the 2012 Guidelines on survey and certification of the EEDI (resolution MEPC.214(63)). The MEPC also approved a number of

related guidance and interpretations.

Update on GHG emissions estimate endorsed

The MEPC, endorsed, in principle, the outline for an update of the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions estimate, which is considered necessary as the current estimate, contained in the Second IMO GHG Study (2009), does not take account of the economic downturn experienced globally since 2008.

Ballast water management systems approved

The MEPC granted basic approval to five, and final approval to three, ballast water management systems that make use of Active Substances. The MEPC noted that there are now 28 type-approved ballast water management systems available.

The MEPC also addressed a number of issues relating to implementation of the BWM Convention and urged those States, which have not yet done so, to ratify the Convention to achieve its entry into force at the earliest opportunity.

Recycling of ships - guidelines adopted

The MEPC adopted the 2012 Guidelines for the survey and certification of ships under the Hong Kong Convention and the 2012 Guidelines for the inspection of ships under the Hong Kong Convention. These two sets of guidelines, together with the four sets of other guidelines previously adopted, complete the development of all guidelines referred to in the text of the Hong Kong Convention, which was adopted in May 2009.

Amendments to the IBC Code adopted

The MEPC adopted amendments to chapters 17, 18 and 19 of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), which had been concurrently approved by the MSC.

- Mandatory audit scheme: draft III Code and MARPOL amendments approved

In line with the time frame and schedule of activities for the institutionalization of the Audit Scheme (resolution A.1018(26)), the MEPC approved the draft IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), which sets the standard for the IMO audit scheme, and approved draft amendments to MARPOL to make the III Code and auditing mandatory under that treaty. The aim is to adopt the MARPOL amendments in 2014, once the III Code has been formally adopted by the IMO Assembly, in 2013, which is coordinated with the adoption of amendments to the relevant IMO instruments under the purview of MSC, for their entry into force by 1 January 2016.

Code for Recognized Organizations (ROs) approved

The MEPC approved the draft Code for Recognized Organizations (ROs) and related draft amendments to MARPOL

(Annexes I and II) to make it mandatory, for adoption, at a future session. The Code will provide a consolidated text containing criteria against which ROs (which may be authorized by flag States to carry out surveys and issue certificates on their behalf) are assessed and authorized/recognized, and give guidance for subsequent monitoring of ROs by Administrations.

3. 91st SESSION OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC 91)

Passenger ship safety

MSC 91 agreed that rules to require passenger safety drills to take place prior to, or immediately upon, departure, instead of “within 24 hours”, as stated in current SOLAS regulation III/19, should be made mandatory, in the wake of the Costa Concordia incident and approved a draft amendment, which will now be circulated with a view to adoption, at the next session, MSC 92, in June 2013.

New mandatory requirements to reduce noise on board ships

The MSC adopted a new mandatory requirement for new ships to be constructed to reduce on-board noise and to protect personnel from noise (new SOLAS regulation II-1/3-12), in accordance with the revised Code on noise levels on board ships. The Code supersedes the previous non-mandatory Code, adopted in 1981 by resolution A.468(XII) and will come into effect when the new regulation enters into force, on 1 July 2014.

IMO audit scheme: draft III Code and amendments approved

Further to the concurrent decision of MEPC 64 (see above), MSC 91 approved the draft III Code and draft amendments to the following treaties to make the III Code and auditing mandatory: SOLAS 1974 and 1988 Load Lines Protocol, for adoption by MSC 93; COLREG 1972, LL 1966 and TONNAGE 1969 Conventions, for subsequent adoption by the Assembly at its twenty-eighth session (following the procedures for adoption of amendments for these conventions). Similar draft amendments to STCW 1978 and the STCW Code are under development, with a view to their approval at the next session of the MSC. The aim is to adopt the treaty amendments in 2014, once the III Code has been formally adopted by the IMO Assembly, in 2013, which is coordinated with the adoption of amendments to MARPOL by MEPC, for their entry into force by 1 January 2016.

RO Code approved

Further to the concurrent decision of MEPC 64 (see above), MSC approved the draft RO Code and related draft amendments to SOLAS 1974 and the 1988 Load Lines Protocol, to make it mandatory, for adoption, at a future session.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships statistics reviewed

The MSC reviewed the latest statistics on piracy and armed robbery against ships and noted the encouraging downward trend in piracy attacks in the western Indian Ocean. However, there were still many innocent seafarers held hostage in Somalia, some for more than two years. The increase in the number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Guinea and the increasing level of violence of those attacks was also a major concern.

Other amendments adopted

The MSC adopted amendments to 1988 Load Lines Protocol, annex 1, regulations 27, 27(11) and 27(13), related to regulations for determining load lines; as well as amendments to 1978 SOLAS Protocol and 1988 SOLAS Protocol, related to forms of ships certificates. Other adopted SOLAS amendments, which are expected to enter into force on 1 July 2014, include:

- amendments to SOLAS regulation III/17-1 to require ships to have plans and procedures to recover persons from the water, as well as related Guidelines and the MSC resolution on Implementation of SOLAS regulation III/17-1 to ships to which SOLAS chapter III does not apply;
- amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/10 and II-2/15 and II-2/20 on fire fighting;
- amendments to update the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code), as amended, including revised specifications for breathing apparatus and revised chapter 14 on fixed deck foam systems; and
- amendments to chapters 17, 18 and 19 of the IBC Code, which have been concurrently adopted by MEPC, for their entry into force on 1 June 2014.

Other amendments, guidelines and circulars approved

The MSC approved, for adoption at MSC 92, SOLAS regulation III/19 and amendments to the International Safety Management (ISM) Code.

The MSC approved a number of other guidelines and circulars, including:

- revised Guidelines on the Medical Examination of Seafarers (STCW.7/Circ.19);

- STCW.7 circular providing Guidance on Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) Training; and
- guidance to STCW parties, including revised circulars on Procedures regarding the consideration of information communicated in accordance with article IV and regulation I/7 of the STCW Convention (MSC.1/Circ.796/Rev.2; Guidance on the preparation, reporting and review of independent evaluations and steps taken to implement mandatory amendments required by regulations I/7 and I/8 of the STCW Convention (MSC.1/Circ.997/Rev.1); and Guidance on arrangements between parties to allow for recognition of certificates under regulation I/10 of the STCW Convention (MSC.1/Circ.950/Rev.1).

4. AMENDMENTS TO IMO INSTRUMENTS THAT HAVE ENTERED INTO FORCE ON 1 JANUARY 2013

- SOLAS amendments on lifeboat safety aimed at preventing accidents during lifeboat launching, adding a new paragraph 5 to SOLAS regulation III/1, to require lifeboat on-load release mechanisms not complying with new International Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code requirements to be replaced, in accordance with the established deadlines.
- MARPOL Annex VI Emissions - a new chapter 4 Regulations on energy efficiency for ships, to make mandatory the Energy Efficiency Design Index (EEDI), for new ships, and the Ship Energy Efficiency Management Plan (SEEMP) for all ships. The EEDI is a non-prescriptive, performance-based mechanism that leaves the choice of technologies to use in a specific ship design to the industry. The SEEMP establishes a mechanism for operators to improve the energy efficiency of ships.
- Amendments to MARPOL designating the United States Caribbean Sea as a new emission control area (ECA); and designating the Baltic Sea as a Special Area with respect to pollution by sewage from ships; and
- The revised MARPOL Annex V related to the control of garbage, which has been developed following a comprehensive review to bring the Annex up to date.