International Regulation News Update

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Maritime Safety Committee's

91st Session

26 to 30 November 2012

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(+ "ships" are all self propelled vessels)

IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) met at the Organization's London Headquarters for its 91st session from 26 to 30 November 2012. A significant number of SOLAS revisions which impact new and existing ships were adopted.

ADOPTED SOLAS REVISIONS

New Code on Noise Level Limits

A new Code specifying maximum levels of noise was adopted by the Committee via resolution MSC.337(91). The limits prevent the occurrence of potentially hazardous noise levels for spaces to which seafarers normally have access.

Compliance with the Code requires measurement of noise levels in work, navigation, accommodation and service spaces under simulated port conditions and at normal service speed (no less than 80% of the maximum continuous rating) with not more than a wind force 4 and 1m wave height. Deviation from this normal service condition may be permitted for ships with special propulsion and power configurations, such as diesel-electric systems. Where thrusters are fitted, noise levels are to be measured at 40% thruster power and the ship's speed associated with thruster operation.

The Code specifies a minimum weighted sound reduction index for sound insulation properties required for bulkheads and decks within the accommodations. Additionally, limits for noise levels (dB(A)) are specified for various spaces as per Table 1.

Designated Space	Ship Size (gt)	
	< 10k	≥10k
Machinery Spaces	110	
Machinery Control Rms	75	
Workshops	85	
Other Work Areas	85	
Bridge & Chartrooms	65	
Look-out Posts	70	
Radio Rooms	60	
Radar Rooms	65	
Cabins and Hospitals	65	55
Messrooms	65	60
Recreation Rooms	65	60
External Recreation	75	
Offices	65	60
Galleys w/o equipt oper	75	
Serveries & Pantries	75	
Normally unoccupied	90	

Table 1 – Noise Level Limits (dB(A))

Newly adopted SOLAS regulation II-1/13-2, as contained in resolution MSC.338(91), will apply the Code to new ships ≥ 1600 gt.

However, the Administration may deem that compliance with a particular provision is unreasonable or impractical.

New ships are those.

- with a building contract placed on or after 1 July 2014;
- or in the absence of a building contract, the keel of which is laid or which is at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2015; or
- regardless of the building contract date or keel laying date, the delivery is on or after 1 July 2018.

Certain types of ships are exempted: dynamically supported craft, high-speed craft, fishing vessels, pipe-laying barges, crane barges, MODUs, pleasure yachts, ships of war and troopships, non-self propelled, pile driving vessels, and dredgers.

Fire-fighting Arrangements

Means of communication

At least two (2) two-way portable radiotelephones are to be provided for each fire party designated onboard ships constructed on or after 1 July 2014. Ships constructed before 1 July 2014 are to comply no later than the first annual survey after 1 July 2018. These provisions apply to portable radios used on tankers and those intended to be used in hazardous areas of all ships which are to be of an explosion-proof or intrinsically-safe type.

Breathing apparatus

Self-contained compressed air-operated breathing apparatus of fire-fighter's outfits provided onboard all ships shall, no later than 1 July 2019, have a capacity of at least 1,200 liters, or be capable of functioning for at least 30 minutes.

These amendments do not phase-out existing pump and hose breathing systems which were permitted on ships constructed before 1 January 2002. Each compressed air breathing apparatus is to be fitted with an audible alarm and a visual or other device which will alert the user before the volume of the air in the cylinder has been reduced to no less than 200 liters. All air cylinders for breathing apparatus are to be interchangeable.

For further information, contact ABS Regulatory Affairs at tel 212-292-8806 | email: gshark@eagle.org

FSS Code Revisions

Revisions to the requirements in the Fire Fighting Systems (FFS) Code were adopted as contained in resolution MSC.339(91).

The revisions address fixed fire fighting systems of gas, deck-foam, water-spray and water-mist type and apply to ships constructed on or after 1 July 2014, and incorporate requirements previously in SOLAS for vehicle spaces and ro-ro spaces, which are either capable or not capable of being sealed from a location outside of the cargo spaces.

On ships constructed on or after 1 July 2014, starting requirements for the emergency source of power for fire detection and alarm systems were revised to allow use of accumulator batteries. Further, the Code now specifies that compressed air, electricity, or other sources of stored energy, including hydraulic power or starting cartridges, may be used as a means of starting the emergency fire pump where manual starting is impracticable.

LSA Code Amendments

All ships are to be provided with plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water. The plans and procedures (which do not need to be approved by the Administration) are to identify the equipment intended to be used for recovery purposes and measures to be taken to minimize the risk to shipboard personnel involved in recovery operations.

Ships constructed on or after 1 July 2014 are to comply at delivery. Ships constructed before 1 July 2014 shall comply by the first intermediate or first renewal survey of the ship to be carried out after 1 July 2014, whichever comes first. Ro-ro passenger ships which are fitted with an approved marine evacuation system are not required to comply with this regulation. Guidelines for the development of plans and procedures for recovery of persons from the water were also approved.

MISCELLANEOUS

Stability Assessments

The conditions for carrying out stability assessments under the Load Line Convention were revised by resolution MSC.345(91).

The initial condition of loading prior to flooding due to the specified damage is revised from 50% of each individual tank and space to 50% of the ship's total capacity of tanks and spaces fitted to contain each type of consumables and stores. Ballast water tanks are to be assumed empty with no free surface correction.

Additionally, two alternative methods for determining free surface corrections (an actual correction using the free surface moments according to the assumed tank fillings for each damage case and a virtual correction with an assumed tank loading specified) are now provided. Onboard stability software does not need to show compliance with the residual stability criteria specified in regulation 27(13).

ADOPTED SOLAS REVISIONS

Several revisions of SOLAS were approved during the 91st Session and are scheduled to be adopted at MSC 92 in June 2013. If adopted, the amendments would enter into force on 1 January 2015.

Entry Into Enclosed Spaces

The Committee approved draft amendments to SOLAS Chapter III, the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes, the DSC Code and the MODU Codes related to rescue and entry into enclosed spaces where there may be an oxygen-deficient, oxygen-enriched, flammable and/or toxic atmosphere. Crew members with assigned responsibility for rescue or enclosed space entry must participate in drills at least once every two months.

Such drills include a check of personal protective equipment, communication and rescue equipment with their associated procedures.

Guidance for planning, assessing the risk and conducting these drills is provided in resolution A.1050(27). Specific guidelines for entering tanks using nitrogen as an inerting medium are contained in MSC.1/Circ.1401.

Muster Drills

On passenger ships engaged on a voyage where passengers are scheduled to be on board for more than 24 hours, newly-embarked passengers are to be mustered prior to or immediately upon departure.

Currently, SOLAS allows such musters to take place within 24 hours after embarkation. During that muster, a safety briefing in languages understood by the passengers is to take place, using the ship's public address system. Information cards or video displays may be used to supplement the briefing, but cannot be used as a complete replacement.

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