



NEWS BRIEF  
**NCSR 9**





## NEWS BRIEF: NCSR 9

The IMO Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) held its 9th session from June 21 to 30, 2022. This Brief provides an overview of the more significant issues progressed at this session.

### KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- New Safety Measures for Non-SOLAS Ships Operating in Polar Waters
- Updates to ECDIS Standards and Guidance
- Updates to LRIT Standards
- Mandatory Carriage of Electronic Inclinometers in Containerships/Bulk Carriers
- Draft 2023 Edition of NAVTEX Manual

### ABS RESOURCES

- ABS Regulatory News [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Global Marine Services [\(link\)](#)
- IMO Polar Code Support Services [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Rapid Response Damage Assessment Program [\(link\)](#)
- ABS Rules and Guides [\(link\)](#)

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### NAVIGATION

#### Safety Measures for Non-SOLAS Ships Operating in Polar Waters

Following progress made by an intersessional correspondence group, the Sub-Committee finalized development of draft amendments to SOLAS Chapter XIV for the implementation of safety measures under the Polar Code, for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters. These amendments will add a new draft Regulation 3-1 within SOLAS Chapter XIV, to identify new requirements in the Polar Code which will be applicable to the non-SOLAS ships under consideration. Three specific ship profiles were targeted for application of these additional safety measures:

- 1) fishing vessels of 24 meters in overall length and above;
- 2) pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and above not engaged in trade; and
- 3) cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and above but below 500 gross tonnage.

The Sub-Committee also finalized the corresponding amendments to the Polar Code Part I-A to specify additional safety measures for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters. Amendments were made to chapter 9 (Safety of Navigation) and Chapter 11 (Voyage Planning) to insert new chapters 9-1 and 11-1 that specially address the above listed ship profiles. The new chapter 9-1 addresses the functionality of navigational equipment in low temperatures and latitudes over 80 degrees, and the new chapter 11-1 addresses the considerations that the master shall make when planning a route through polar waters.

For ships flying the flag of an Arctic state, these regulations will apply when the voyage is beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of that Arctic state. Additionally, because of the lack of SOLAS certification framework applicable to these types of ships, the Sub-Committee agreed that the certificate showing compliance with the newly introduced requirements of the Polar Code part I-A, chapters 9-1 and 11-1 should be left to discretion of the flag Administration.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft amendments will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval, and subsequent adoption at MSC 107 (Jun-2023). The currently anticipated date of entry into force for these amendments is January 1, 2026 for new vessels. These requirements will apply to existing vessels one year after entry into force.

#### Revision of Guidelines on Places of Refuge for Ships in Need of Assistance

The Sub-Committee finalized development of a draft revision of the *Guidelines on Places of Refuge for Ships in Need of Assistance*, Resolution A.949(23). Seeking to improve upon guidance adopted in 2003, the revised guidelines incorporate lessons



learned and an improved organization structure to provide clarity in the roles of the ship's master, the salvor and the Coastal State as parties involved with ships in need of assistance:

- Expected actions of the ship's master and the managing company after a maritime incident have been revised in greater detail to acknowledge and support compliance with the ISM Code.
- For situations in which the master has relinquished command of a vessel to a salvor, the revised guidelines detail additional responsibilities of the salvor in communicating vessel condition and salvage plans to the relevant Coastal Authority.
- For Coastal States or a designated Competent Authority, revised guidance is provided on the assessment of received alerts, regional/international cooperation in providing safe refuge for distressed ships, and management of information for media / key interest groups.
- The role of the classification society is acknowledged in the revised guidelines, for support in risk assessment to preserve hull integrity, stability and preventing environmental pollution.

**Next Steps:** The revised guidelines will be presented to the MSC 106 (Nov-2022), MEPC 79 (Dec-2022) and LEG 110 (Mar-2023) committee meetings for their approval before being presented to the Assembly (Nov-2023) for adoption of the revised resolution.

### **Revised Performance Standards for Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS)**

The Sub-Committee finalized revisions to ECDIS performance standards given in resolution MSC.232(82), introducing updates to acknowledge new technologies and updated standards. Revisions were made to include terminology recognizing Electronic Navigational Data Services (ENDS) as special-purpose database of nautical information, and to incorporate updated references to the latest standards of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) for electronic navigation data.

Regarding application of ECDIS performance standards:

- 1) equipment installed on or after January 1, 2029 must conform to these revised performance standards;
- 2) equipment installed on or after January 1, 2026 but before January 1, 2029 must conform to either these revised performance standards or the standards given in resolution MSC.232(82);
- 3) equipment installed on or after January 1, 2009 but before January 1, 2026 must conform to the performance standards given in resolution MSC 232(82); and
- 4) equipment installed on or after January 1, 1996 but before January 1, 2009 must conform to the performance standards given in resolution A.817(19), as amended by resolutions MSC.64(67) and MSC.86(70).

**Next Steps:** The revised ECDIS performance standards will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval.

### **Revision of ECDIS Guidance for Good Practice**

The Sub-Committee finalized revisions to MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.1, *ECDIS – Guidance for Good Practice*, which address the need to clarify procedures and documentation for onboard ECDIS updates that are needed to demonstrate ongoing compliance. In these revisions, a new section specifically addressing onboard ECDIS updates has been added with guidance on the revision or reissuance of Type Approval certificates following an onboard ECDIS update. This guidance applies to cases where updates are initiated by the manufacturer to improve functions, as well as cases where updates are required to maintain compatibility with the latest standards of the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

The revisions to this guidance also instruct ECDIS manufacturers to notify flag Administrations, Recognized Organizations, and ECDIS users of any anomalies in hardware or software that may negatively affect maritime safety, including advisement of appropriate mitigating measures. An added Appendix 4 will provide examples of onboard



ECDIS updates and describes the documentation which should be provided in order to decide if recertification is necessary.

**Next Steps:** The draft Guidance will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval, and subsequent release as MSC.1/Circ.1503/Rev.2.

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## COMMUNICATIONS

### Updates to the LRIT System

The Sub-Committee received the report of the LRIT Operational Governance Body, in which the organization discussed matters related to the role of the International LRIT Data Exchange (IDE) Business Continuity Facility maintained by the European Maritime Safety Agency, connectivity issues with the IDE disaster recovery site maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard, validation of PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) certificates and removal of the functionality from the LRIT system for remote reprogramming of the LRIT shipborne equipment.

Based on this report, the Sub-Committee approved revisions to the following standards and guidance related to the LRIT system and LRIT equipment:

- 1) *Revised Performance Standards and Functional Requirements for the Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships* (resolution MSC.263(84), as amended);
- 2) *Long-Range Identification and Tracking System - Technical documentation (Part I)* (MSC.1/Circ.1259/Rev.8);
- 3) *Guidance on the Survey and Certification of Compliance of Ships with the Requirement to Transmit LRIT Information* (MSC.1/Circ.1307), and
- 4) *Continuity of Service Plan for the LRIT System* (MSC.1/Circ.1376/Rev.4),

**Next Steps:** The above noted revised resolutions and circulars will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and adoption/approval.

### Circular Revisions Related to SOLAS Amendments for Modernization of the GMDSS

As a result of the modernization of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS), and numerous amendments made to SOLAS Chapters II-1, III, IV and V related to GMDSS, the Sub-Committee has agreed to revisions of several supporting circulars:

- 1) Revised COMSAR/Circ.32, *Harmonization of GMDSS Requirements for Radio Installations on board SOLAS Ships*;
  - a. Subsequent to this revision, revoked circulars COMSAR/Circ.16, COMSAR/Circ.17, COM/Circ.110, COM/Circ.110/Corr.1 and COM/Circ.117, from the date of entry into force of the SOLAS amendments adopted by resolution MSC.496(105), concerning the modernization of the GMDSS;
- 2) Revised COMSAR/Circ.33, *GMDSS Coastal Station Operator's Certificate (CSOC) Model Course*;
- 3) Revised COMSAR/Circ.25, *Procedure for Responding to DSC Distress Alerts by Ships*;
- 4) Revised COMSAR/Circ.45, *Guidance on Distress Alerts*;
- 5) Revised MSC/Circ.892, *Guidance on Alerting of Search and Rescue Authorities*.

**Next Steps:** The above noted revisions to circulars will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval. The circulars are expected to become effective on January 1, 2024, in alignment with other amended regulations related to GMDSS modernization.



### Revision to Criteria for Provision of Mobile Satellite Communication Services in the GMDSS

The Sub-Committee considered a draft text for the revision of the *Criteria for the Provision of Mobile Satellite Communication Systems in the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS)*, resolution A.1001(25). Revisions to this standard are under consideration due to an increase in the number of potential GMDSS service providers, and due to the use of non-geostationary satellite systems by GMDSS service providers which the current resolution does not take into account. Due to time constraints, this subject was not able to be discussed fully at this session of the Sub-Committee, and a correspondence group has been established to continue work intersessionally.

**Next Steps:** Work on the revision of Resolution A.1001(25) will be progressed intersessionally and discussed further at NCSR 10 (May-2023).

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## SEARCH AND RESCUE

### Mandatory Carriage of Electronic Inclinometers on Container Ships and Bulk Carriers

The Sub-Committee finalized draft amendments to SOLAS Chapter V requiring the carriage of an electronic inclinometer on board newly constructed containerships and bulk carriers of 3,000 gross tonnage and upwards. Provision of this device will allow the Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) to record roll motion information for the purpose of incident investigation. It will additionally provide critical stability information to the navigational officer on board each ship, which may help to prevent shifting or loss of cargo in heavy weather.

This new regulation will not apply to cargo ships occasionally carrying cargoes in bulk, and general cargo ships carrying containers on deck. Additionally, the Sub-Committee determined that electronic or mechanical back-up systems for inclinometers would not be needed, as they were not considered as critical equipment for safety of navigation but rather, an operational one.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft amendments will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval, and subsequent adoption at MSC 107 (Jun-2023). The currently anticipated date of entry into force for these amendments is January 1, 2026.

### Revised NAVTEX Manual

The Sub-Committee finalized a new revision to circular MSC.1/Circ.1403, providing the 2023 Edition of the NAVTEX Manual. NAVTEX is an international automated direct-printing service for promulgation of maritime safety information, navigational and meteorological information, and other urgent safety-related messages to ships. In this edition, a number of clarifications were made to the list of definitions, as well as the inclusion of the term Enhanced Group Call, and the insertion of subsequent references to replace the use of SafetyNET where required. The most significant amendment is the addition of a new section on withdrawing NAVTEX stations and/or service, clearly detailing the process and timelines that should be observed. Other minor editorial revisions were also made.

**Next Steps:** The above noted revised circular will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval. The circular is expected to become effective on January 1, 2023, and to be published as circular MSC.1/Circ.1403/Rev.2.



### **Guidance for the Dissemination of Search and Rescue Related Information Through the International Enhanced Group Call Service (EGC)**

The Sub-Committee finalized a draft circular providing guidance to search and rescue (SAR) authorities needing to disseminate SAR-related information to ships that receive information through the international Enhanced Call Group (EGC) service. The circular provides guidance on how SAR authorities can obtain authorization through the IMO to broadcast SAR-related information through the international EGC service, and also advises recognized mobile satellite service providers to facilitate training on the use of their international EGC services.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft circular will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval.

### **Procedure for Routing Distress Alerts**

The Sub-Committee finalized a draft circular providing guidance on the routing of distress alerts in order to merge the requirement of global maritime distress and safety system (GMDSS) with the established international operational search and rescue (SAR) procedures. This guidance for member States advises that the shore station nearest to the reported distress position should, whenever possible, acknowledge the alert and maintain communications with the unit in distress until relieved of its duty. The rescue coordination centers (RCC) of this state should assume responsibility for subsequent coordination of search and rescue until that responsibility is accepted by another RCC which may be better able to assist. Other shore stations receiving the alert should acknowledge it if the nearest station does not appear to respond.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft circular will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval. The circular is expected to be published as a COMSAR.1 circular.

### **Guidance on the Training on and Operation of Emergency Personal Radio Devices in Multiple Casualty Situations**

The Sub-Committee finalized a draft guidance circular for ships carrying large numbers of crew or passengers in the event of a multiple casualty evacuation, to improve the effective use of emergency personal radio devices (EPRD). This circular provides guidance to crew on characteristics of EPRDs, and guidance to be given to passengers regarding the appropriate use of EPRDs so that the activation of many EPRDs in the same area does not prevent search and rescue services from locating signals effectively. This guidance is recommended to be included and addressed in the safety management system pursuant to the ISM Code of ships that could require a multiple casualty evacuation.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft circular will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval.

### **Revised List of Documents and Publications to be Held by a Maritime or Joint Rescue Coordination Center**

The SAR.7 circular provides Maritime and Joint Rescue Coordination Centers (MRCCs and JRCCs) with a minimum list of documents and publications which are essential for such centers to have in their possession for their operational use. The Sub-Committee approved a draft circular proposed by the IMO Secretariat providing an updated list of documents and publications which should be kept available by MRCCs and JRCCs. This circular was last updated in February 2019.

**Next Steps:** The above noted draft circular will be presented to MSC 106 (Nov-2022) for further consideration and approval. The circular is expected to be published as circular SAR.7/Circ.15.



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## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

### Postponement of Agenda Items

Due to reduced capacity of the IMO Building and limitations of the virtual meeting format utilized at this session, the Committee agreed to postpone consideration of several proposals and work items, including the following items below. Related submissions will be referred to NCSR 10 (May-2023).

- 1) Development of generic performance standards for shipborne satellite navigation system receiver equipment (Agenda Item 5)
  - a. As this work consists of consolidating existing performance standards for shipborne satellite navigation system receiver equipment, it has been considered non-urgent.
  
- 2) Development of amendments to VDR performance standards and carriage requirements (Agenda Item 17)
  - a. No submittals were received under this agenda item.



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