ABS REGULATORY NEWS
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# REPORTING OF THE LOSS OF CONTAINERS

This Regulatory News provides information on the latest mandatory requirement for reporting freight containers lost at sea or observed adrift at sea.

**KEY NOTES**

Applicable Vessel Types:
All

Entry into force date:
1 January 2026

References:

- MSC.550(108)
- MEPC.384(81)

## BACKGROUND

The Maritime Safety Committee adopted amendments to SOLAS Chapter V (Resolution MSC.550(108)), requiring the reporting of freight containers lost at sea or observed drifting at sea. Additionally, the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) 81 adopted amendments to Article V of Protocol I of MARPOL (Resolution MEPC.384(81)), introducing reporting procedures for the loss of containers that align with the reporting requirements under the SOLAS regulations V/31 and V/32.

These amendments aim to mitigate the navigation hazards posed by freight containers lost at sea and enhance the position tracking and recovery of such containers.

## APPLICATION

The amendments will enter into force on **January 1, 2026**, and will apply to any ship carrying one or more containers or observing container(s) lost at sea.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### 1.Loss of Freight Containers

Under Regulation 31 of SOLAS Chapter V, the master of a ship involved in the loss of freight containers is required to promptly report the incident to:

- Other ships in the vicinity.
- The nearest coastal State.
- The flag State.

If the ship is abandoned or otherwise unable to fulfill this requirement, the ship's ISM management company must assume responsibility for the reporting to the fullest extent possible.

Once informed, the flag State must report the incident via the Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS).

An initial report may be prepared due to unavailability of all required reporting elements at the time of the incident. The master must update the report with all the required information, at the earliest opportunity. The

number or estimated number of lost freight container(s) shall be verified through inspection, and a message marked as “final”, containing this verified number, shall be sent to the same recipients. The report shall include:

1. General Information, such as ship’s identity, time and date.
2. Information on the ship’s position.
3. The total number of freight containers lost.
4. Details on the type of goods in freight containers, indicating whether they are dangerous or not and the UN number if known.
5. Description of the lost freight containers, such as their dimension and type (e.g. reefer).
6. Additional information, if available, such as wind direction and speed, any cargo spill.

### 2.Observation of Drifting Containers

Under Regulation 31 of SOLAS Chapter V, if a ship is not involved in a loss incident but observes freight container(s) adrift at sea, the master of the ship shall communicate the particulars of such an observation by appropriate means without delay and to the fully extent possible to:

- Other ships in the vicinity.
- The nearest coastal State.

The report shall include:

1. General Information, such as ship’s identity, time and date.
2. Information on the observed containers’ position.
3. The total number of freight containers observed.
4. Additional information, if available, such as dimension and type of observed containers, wind direction and speed, any cargo spill.

For additional information to be reported in danger messages, in case of either loss or observation of drifting freight container(s), refer to SOLAS Regulation V/32.

## ACTIONS FOR COMPLIANCE

- Shipowners, Operators, and Masters need to be aware of the mandatory reporting requirement of the loss of freight containers.
- Review and update the Safety Management Systems (SMS) to incorporate the new reporting obligations.
- Ensure the crew is adequately trained to respond effectively in the event of a container loss or its observation at sea.

## REFERENCES

| Document | Title |
|---|---|
| SOLAS Convention | Chapter V, Regulations 31 and 32 |
| MARPOL Convention | Protocol I, Article V |
| MSC. 550(108) | Amendments to Chapters II-2 and V of SOLAS |
| MEPC.384(81) | Amendments to Protocol I of MARPOL |

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