ABS REGULATORY NEWS
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IMSBC CODE AMENDMENTS 08-25 — NEW & REVISED CARGO SCHEDULES

This Regulatory News informs shipowners, operators, managers and masters of ships carrying solid bulk cargoes that Amendments 08-25 to the International Maritime Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code, adopted by Resolution MSC.575(110), will enter into force on **1 January 2027** and will apply to both new and existing ships. The amendments introduce 12 new individual cargo schedules and revise 11 existing ones.

KEY NOTES

- **Effective date:** 1 January 2027 for all ships loading solid bulk cargoes (new and existing vessels).
- **Voluntary early application:** Permitted from 1 January 2026 at the discretion of Contracting Governments.
- **Cargo schedules:** 12 new schedules added and 11 existing schedules revised.
- **Certificates:** Existing IMSBC Certificates of Fitness remain valid until expiry but must be re-issued to include newly added cargoes.

BACKGROUND

The IMSBC Code is mandatory under SOLAS Chapter VI and establishes requirements for the safe stowage and shipment of solid bulk cargoes other than grain. The key element of the Code is the individual cargo schedule, which identifies a cargo's hazards, assigns it to Group A, B, or C, and specifies the precautions required for loading, carriage and discharge. Cargoes without a schedule may be shipped only under the provisional procedures of Section 1.3, which require agreement between competent authorities. The Code is amended on a regular two-year cycle so that its requirements remain aligned with emerging cargoes, operational experience, incident findings, and updated test data.

The IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 110th session held on 26 June 2025, adopted Resolution MSC.575(110), which contains Amendments 08-25 to the IMSBC Code. These succeed Amendments 07-23 adopted by Resolution MSC.539(107). The amendments were deemed accepted on 1 July 2026 and will enter into force on 1 January 2027. Contracting Governments may, however, apply the amendments, in whole or in part, on a voluntary basis from 1 January 2026.

Amendments 08-25 have four primary objectives:

- **Introducing new cargo schedules.** 12 additional cargoes have been assigned individual schedules, providing specific requirements for safe carriage.
- **Revising hazard classifications.** The most significant change is the reclassification of fish meal as a Class 9 dangerous goods cargo (UN 2216).
- **Tightening acceptance criteria for higher-risk cargoes.** For example, Direct Reduced Iron (A) now has quantified limits that the shipper must certify before loading.
- **Removing duplication and updating references.** This covers self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) provisions, fumigation circulars and amendments to the segregation table.

SUMMARY OF CHANGES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SHIPS IN SERVICE

Item	Change under Amendments 08-25	Practical implication
Section 3.6 - Cargo under in-transit fumigation	Footnotes now refer to MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1, including paragraphs 3.3.2.4 and 3.3.2.10	Before this change, the fumigation guidance was split between the original circular and the MSC.1/Circ.1396 amendments. MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1 brings it together in one document, so that crews and fumigators can work from a single reference.
Section 9.3.3 - Segregation between bulk materials possessing chemical hazards and packaged dangerous goods	First column is re-titled to "Bulk materials (classified as dangerous goods)". "MHB"(materials hazardous only in bulk) deleted from the second column. Division "1.6" added alongside "1.3". Editorial corrections made.	The changes clarify which bulk materials the table applies to. They also close a gap for Division 1.6 explosives, which were not explicitly listed. Cargo planners should use the revised table when packaged dangerous goods are carried with Group B cargoes.
Section 13.2 - Reference list	MSC.1/Circ.1395/Rev.6 replaced by Rev.7. Fumigation references updated to MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1.	Keeps the Code's references consistent with the latest exemption lists and fumigation guidance

NEW INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULES

Twelve new schedules establish specific carriage requirements for previously unscheduled cargoes.

Eleven of the new schedules are summarized in the table below. The twelfth schedule, *FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED UN 2216*, is discussed separately due to its classification as a dangerous goods cargo. Without an individual schedule, a cargo may only be shipped under the provisional procedures of Section 1.3. Those procedures require agreement between the competent authorities of the loading port, the flag State and the unloading port, a process that typically adds time and uncertainty.

Bulk Cargo Shipping Name (BCSN)	Group	MHB	Status
APATITE CONCENTRATE	A	-	May liquefy above its transportable moisture limit (TML). Hold must not be ventilated during the voyage. Cargo surfaces must be monitored for free water.
PHOSPHATE ROCK FINES (uncalcined)	A	-	May liquefy above its TML. The dust may cause eye, nose and respiratory irritation.
ALUMINIUM SULPHATE GRANULAR	B	CR	Corrosive; causes serious eye damage. Hygroscopic, cakes and becomes acidic when wet. Must be kept "separated from" most cargoes because it is a drinking-water treatment product.
FERRIC SULPHATE GRANULAR	B	CR	Corrosive to metals when moist. Harmful if swallowed and may decompose under strong heat to release toxic sulphur oxides. Must be kept "Away from" aluminium, zinc and heat sources.
ASPHALT GRANULATES	C	-	Recycled road material containing no more than 10% asphalt. Must be kept "away from" acids, alkalis, oxidizers and foodstuffs. Contaminated wash water must be retained and disposed of appropriately.
CRUSHED GRANODIORITE, COARSE	C	-	Schedule applies only where respirable quartz is below 0.1% and particles under 2 mm are below 7%. Risk of tank-top overstress at stowage factors of 0.56 m³/t or less.
FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED	C	-	Applies only to fish meals that do not meet the dangerous goods or MHB criteria in Sections 9.2.2 and 9.2.3. May cause oxygen depletion in the cargo space. Loading temperature must not exceed 35°C, or ambient + 5°C if higher. The shipper must certify that the cargo is not self-heating.
IRON ORE BRIQUETTES	C	-	Very high density (1,800–2,400 kg/m³), with a risk of tank-top overstress unless the cargo is evenly spread across the tank top to equalize the weight distribution. High loading rates mean ballasting

			must be built into the SOLAS VI/7.3 loading plan. May affect magnetic compasses.
PEA PROTEIN CONCENTRATE PELLETS	C	-	Risk of dust explosion if loaded with cargo blowers. Flows freely like grain, so trimming matters. Cakes when wet.
TUFF, COARSE	C	-	Applies only below 0.1% respirable quartz and within the defined particle size limits. The dust is abrasive.
ZINC SLAG (coarse)	C	-	Abrasive and highly permeable, so bilge water must be removed regularly during voyage. Risk of tank-top overstress at low stowage factors.

PRINCIPAL AMENDMENTS TO INDIVIDUAL SCHEDULES

Schedule	Key Change
CASTOR BEANS UN 2969	BCSN changed from "CASTOR BEANS or CASTOR MEAL or CASTOR POMACE or CASTOR FLAKE UN 2969" to "CASTOR BEANS UN 2969", with Appendix 4 (Index) and Appendix 5 (BCSNs in three languages) updated to match. Castor meal, pomace and flake remain prohibited from carriage in bulk.
FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED UN 2216	Reclassified from MHB (SH) to Class 9. The moisture and fat limits have been deleted from the cargo description.
DIRECT REDUCED IRON (A), Briquettes, hot-moulded	DRI (A) is now defined as hot-molded briquettes with a total iron (Fe) content of at least 88% by weight, formed at a temperature greater than 650°C. Before loading, the shipper must provide a certificate from a competent person recognized by the port State authority confirming that the cargo meets all of the following limits: apparent density greater than 5,000 kg/m³ (determined in accordance with ISO 15968:2016); fines and small particles under 6.35 mm not exceeding 5% by weight; moisture content not exceeding 1.0%; and temperature not exceeding 65°C. Cargo that falls outside any of these limits shall not be loaded. The cargo must consist essentially of whole, intact briquettes, and adding fines, dust or loose pellets is prohibited.
DIRECT REDUCED IRON (B)	For cargoes in briquette form, DRI (B) is now defined as briquettes with a total iron (Fe) content of at least 88% by weight that either were molded at a temperature not greater than 650°C or have an apparent density not greater than 5,000 kg/m³.
UN 1395, UN 1398, UN 1408 (Appendix, paragraph 1), UN 2793 and UN 3170	Duplicate sentences on SCBA and equipment deleted.

FISH MEAL – CRITICAL DISTINCTION

The schedule declared by the shipper now determines whether the ship is permitted to load the cargo:

Schedule	Key Change
FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED UN 2216, antioxidant treated	Class 9 (dangerous goods in solid form in bulk)
FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED (Group C)	Group C - does not meet the dangerous goods or MHB criteria

IMPACT ON OTHER CERTIFICATES

Under MSC.1/Circ.1395/Rev.7, the following cargoes have been added to the list for which a fixed gas fire-extinguishing system may be exempted:

- ALUMINIUM SULPHATE GRANULAR
- FERRIC SULPHATE GRANULAR
- CASTOR BEANS UN 2969

Ships carrying any of these cargoes should ensure that any exemption certificate for fixed gas fire-extinguishing arrangements is reissued concurrently with the IMSBC Code fitness certificate, where applicable. Aligning the validity of both certificates helps ensure continued compliance and avoids operational issues when transporting these cargoes.

ABS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Review Intended Trades Against Amendments 08-25:** Identify whether any cargoes the vessel carries ir is intended to carry are affected by new or revised IMSBC Code schedules and assess any resulting operational or compliance implications.
2. **Verify Dangerous Goods Coverage for Fish Meal:** Where FISH MEAL (FISH SCRAP), STABILIZED UN 2216 may be carried, verify that the vessel's Dangerous Goods Document of Compliance covers the carriage of Class 9 solid bulk cargoes.
3. **Verify Certification Requirements:** where necessary, Request re-issuance of IMSBC Certificates of Fitness to incorporate newly added cargoes and revised cargo schedules before loading affected cargoes.
4. **Review SOLAS Exemption Certificates:** For ships intending to carry ALUMINIUM SULPHATE GRANULAR, FERRIC SULPHATE GRANULAR or CASTOR BEANS UN 2969, confirm with the flag Administration whether the exemption certificate for fixed gas fire-extinguishing arrangements needs to be reissued in line with MSC.1/Circ.1395/Rev.7. Note that procedures may vary by flag Administration.
5. **Update Shipboard Procedures and References:** Ensure that vessels are provided with the updated IMSBC Code provisions and that cargo acceptance, segregation, fumigation, loading and monitoring procedures are revised as necessary.
6. **Brief Vessel Personnel:** Familiarize masters and relevant shipboard personnel with the new and revised cargo schedules, particularly the revised requirements for DRI cargoes, fish meal cargoes, and newly introduced Group A cargoes.
7. **Review Enclosed Space Entry Procedures:** Confirm that procedures for atmosphere testing and entry into cargo spaces remain aligned with the hazards identified in the amended schedules, including the potential for oxygen depletion in holds carrying fish meal cargoes. following the revised recommendations for entering enclosed spaces (MSC.581(110)) is also strongly advised.
8. **Verify Cargo Planning Data:** Review loading manuals, cargo databases in loading computers and voyage planning tools to confirm that stowage factors, density data, loading limitations and operational notes for new and amended cargo schedules are correctly reflected.
9. **Monitor Voluntary Early Application:** check whether loading ports are applying Amendments 08-25 prior to their mandatory entry into force. Shippers at those ports may already declare cargoes under the new schedules.

ABS SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

ABS is continuing to monitor the development of the next cycle of IMSBC Code amendments, currently referred to as Amendments 09-27. At the 12th session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC 12), several proposals were advanced for inclusion in the next amendment package, including new and revised schedules for additional bulk cargoes and updates to cargo declaration requirements. ABS will continue to provide updates as this work progresses through the IMO approval process.

Subject to approval by the IMO, Amendments 09-27 are expected to be adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee in 2027, with voluntary application anticipated from 1 January 2028 and mandatory entry into force on 1 January 2029, consistent with the IMSBC Code's established two-year amendment cycle. Refer to the ABS CCC 12 Brief.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local ABS Office or visit ABS Regulatory News.

REFERENCES

Resolution MSC.575(110)	Amendments to the IMSBC Code (Amendments 08-25)

Resolution MSC.539(107)	Amendments to the IMSBC Code (Amendments 07-23)
Resolution MSC.500(105)	Amendments to the IMSBC Code (Amendments 06-21)
Resolution MSC.268(85)	Adoption of the IMSBC Code
SOLAS Chapters VI and VII; Regulations II-2/10.7 and II-2/19	Carriage of cargoes and dangerous goods; fire-extinguishing arrangements; Document of Compliance for Dangerous Goods
MSC.1/Circ.1395/Rev.7	Lists of solid bulk cargoes for which a fixed gas fire-extinguishing system may be exempted or is ineffective
MSC.1/Circ.1264, as revised	Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships applicable to the fumigation of cargo holds
IMDG Code	International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code

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