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CIRCULAR Amendments to SOLAS Chapter II-1

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 102th session, adopted SOLAS Amendments, entering into force on January 01, 2024.

Notice to: Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators | Surveyors/Auditors

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The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its 102th session, adopted the Amendments to the International Convention for the Safety Of life At Sea (SOLAS), through IMO Resolution [MSC.474\(102\)](#), which shall enter into force on **January 01, 2024**.

Towing and mooring equipment

Ships¹ shall be provided with arrangements, equipment and fittings of sufficient safe working load to enable the safe conduct of all towing and mooring operations associated with the normal operation of the ship. Arrangements, equipment and fittings provided shall meet the appropriate requirements of the Administration or the RO under regulation I/6. Each fitting or item of equipment provided under the regulation shall be clearly marked with any limitations associated with its safe operation, taking into account the strength of the supporting ship's structure and its attachment to it.

For ships² of 3,000 GT and above, the mooring arrangement shall be designed, and the mooring equipment including lines shall be selected, in order to ensure occupational safety and safe mooring of the ship, based on the guidelines developed by the RO. Ship-specific information shall be provided and kept on board.

Ships² of less than 3,000 GT should comply with the above paragraph as far as reasonably practicable, or with applicable national standards of the Administration.

For all ships, mooring equipment, including lines, shall be inspected, and maintained in a suitable condition for their intended purposes.

The Committee released two new Guidelines and revised an additional one, as per below:

¹ Applies to ships constructed on or after 1 January 2007.

² Only applies to ships .1 for which the building contract is placed on or after 1 January 2024; or .2 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 July 2024; or .3 the delivery of which is on or after 1 January 2027.

- [MSC.1/Circ.1619](#) – Guidelines on the design of mooring arrangements and the selection of appropriate mooring equipment and fitting for safe mooring
- [MSC.1/Circ.1620](#) – Guidelines for inspection and maintenance of mooring equipment including lines
- [MSC.1/Circ.1175/Rev.1](#) – Guidance on Shipboard Towing and Mooring Equipment

Doors, hatches and valves

Several regulations have been revised and restructured to cover the new requirements on doors, hatches and valves. More specifically Regulations 7-2, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 17-1, 21 and 22 have been modified. As a summary, below amendments are considered important.

[Regulation 7-2](#) refers that openings closed by means of watertight manhole covers and flush scuttles, remotely operated sliding watertight doors, side scuttles of the non-opening type as well as watertight access doors and watertight hatch covers required to be kept closed during navigation in accordance with regulations 22 to 24 need not be considered.

[Regulation 12](#) mentions that for ships constructed on or after 1 January 2024, the collision bulkhead may be pierced below the bulkhead deck of passenger ships and the freeboard deck of cargo ships by not more than one pipe for dealing with fluid in the forepeak tank, provided that the pipe is fitted with a remotely controlled valve capable of being operated from above the bulkhead deck of passenger ships and the freeboard deck of cargo ships.

The valve shall be normally closed. If the remote control system should fail during operation of the valve, the valve shall close automatically or be capable of being closed manually from a position above the bulkhead deck of passenger ships and the freeboard deck of cargo ships. The valve shall be located at the collision bulkhead on either the forward or aft side, provided the space on the aft side is not a cargo space. The valve shall be of steel, bronze or other approved ductile material. Valves of ordinary cast iron or similar material are not acceptable.

[Regulation 13](#) on the openings in watertight bulkheads below the bulkhead deck in passenger ships has been restructured and references that control handles shall be provided at each side of the bulkhead at a minimum height of 1.6 m above the floor and shall be so arranged as to enable persons passing through the doorway to hold both handles in the open position without being able to set the power closing mechanism in operation accidentally. The direction of movement of the handles in opening and closing the door shall be in the direction of door movement and shall be clearly indicated.

A central operating console for all power-operated sliding watertight doors shall be located in the safety centre in accordance with regulation II-2/23. If the safety centre is located in a separate space adjacent to the navigation bridge, a central operating console shall also be located on the navigation bridge. The central operating console(s) shall have a "master mode" switch with two modes of control: a "local control" mode, which shall allow any door to be locally opened and locally closed after use without automatic closure, and a "doors closed" mode, which shall automatically close any door that is open in not more than 60 s with the ship in an upright position.

For ships subject to the provisions of regulation 1.1.1.1 and constructed before 1 January 2024, the central operating console at the navigation bridge shall be provided with a diagram showing the location of each door, with visual indicators to show whether each door is open or closed. A red light shall indicate a door is fully open and a green light shall indicate a door is fully closed. When the door is closed remotely the red light shall indicate the intermediate position by flashing. The indicating circuit shall be independent of the control circuit for each door.

[Regulation 15](#) mentions that for ships subject to the provisions of regulation 1.1.1.1 and constructed before 1 January 2024, gangway, cargo and fuelling ports fitted below the bulkhead deck of passenger ships and the freeboard deck of cargo ships shall be watertight and in no case be so fitted as to have their lowest point below the deepest subdivision draught.

[Regulation 17](#) refers that for passenger ships subject to the provisions of regulation 1.1.1.1 and constructed before 1 January 2024, the Administration may require that all reasonable and practicable measures shall be taken to limit the entry and spread of water above the bulkhead deck. Such measures may include partial bulkheads or webs. When partial watertight bulkheads and webs are fitted on the bulkhead deck, above or in the immediate vicinity of watertight bulkheads, they shall have watertight shell and bulkhead deck connections so as to restrict the flow of water along the deck when the ship is in a heeled damaged condition. Where the partial watertight bulkhead does not line up with the bulkhead below, the bulkhead deck between shall be made effectively watertight. Where openings, pipes, scuppers, electric cables, etc. are carried through the partial watertight bulkheads or decks within the immersed part of the bulkhead deck, arrangements shall be made to ensure the watertight integrity of the structure above the bulkhead deck.

Regulation 22 on watertight doors fitted in watertight bulkheads dividing cargo spaces on tween decks in accordance with regulation 13.8.1 shall be closed before the voyage commences and shall be kept closed during navigation. The time at which such doors are opened or closed shall be recorded in such logbook as may be prescribed by the Administration.

For ships subject to the provisions of regulation 1.1.1.1 and constructed before 1 January 2024, gangway, cargo and fuelling ports fitted below the bulkhead deck of passenger ships and the freeboard deck of cargo ships shall be **effectively closed** and secured watertight before the voyage commences, and shall be kept closed during navigation. However, the master may permit a watertight hatch to be opened during navigation for a limited period of time sufficient to permit passage or for access. It shall then be closed.

For any ship that has one or more sidescuttles so placed that the requirements of paragraph 14 would apply when it was floating at its deepest subdivision draught, the Administration may indicate the limiting mean draught at which these sidescuttles will have their sills above the line drawn parallel to the bulkhead deck at side of passenger ships and the freeboard deck at side of cargo ships, and having its lowest point 1.4 m plus 2.5% of the breadth of the ship above the waterline corresponding to the limiting mean draught, and at which it will therefore be permissible for the voyage to commence without them being closed and locked and to be opened during navigation on the responsibility of the master. In tropical zones as defined in the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 in force, this limiting draught may be increased by 0.3 m.

Act now

Ship Owners/ Managers/ Operators should take into consideration the above SOLAS amendments coming into force on January 1st, 2024.