



IMO MSC 103 Meeting Summary

03 June, 2021

The 103rd session of the Maritime Safety Committee was held remotely from 5 to 14 May 2021.

The Committee, taking into account the limited time available for this session and in order to ensure continuity of the work of the Sub-Committees, agreed to postpone the consideration of the following agenda items and the related documents to MSC 104:

1. agenda item 4: Capacity-building for the implementation of new measures
2. agenda item 7: Goal-based new ship construction standards
3. agenda item 11: Unsafe mixed migration by sea
4. agenda item 12: Formal safety assessment
5. agenda item 17: Application of the Committee's method of work

The following agenda items from MSC 102 were considered at this meeting:

1. agenda item 5: Regulatory scoping exercise for the use of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)
2. agenda item 6: Development of further measures to enhance the safety of ships relating to the use of fuel oil
3. agenda item 8: Measures to improve domestic ferry safety
4. agenda item 17: Application of the Committee's method of work

Adoption of Amendments to Mandatory Instruments

Amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention

New regulation II-1/25-1 requiring new multiple-hold cargo ships to be fitted with water level detectors in each cargo hold intended for cargo was adopted, harmonizing the requirements for bulk carriers and non-bulk carriers.

MSC 103 considered a proposal to revise the *Performance standards for water level detectors on bulk carriers and single hold cargo ships other than bulk carriers* (resolution MSC.188(79)), as a consequential amendment following the adoption of draft new SOLAS regulation II-1/25-1 and instructed the SDC Sub-Committee to review the Performance Standards to include provisions for detectors for multiple hold cargo ships and to consider the equivalency between bilge alarms and water level detectors, with an extended target completion year of 2022.

Amendment to **Regulation III/33.2** was adopted to exclude free-fall lifeboats from the regulation of being capable of launching and towing when a cargo ship of 20,000GT and above is making headway at a speed up to 5 knots in calm water.

The draft amendments enter into force on 1 January 2024.

Amendments to the Life-Saving Appliances (LSA) Code and Resolution MSC.81(70)

Amendment to paragraph 4.4.1.3 of the LSA Code and paragraph 5.4 of resolution MSC.81(70) was adopted to address the draft amendment to regulation III/33.2 above.

The draft amendments enter into force on 1 January 2024, with voluntary early implementation by flag States of SOLAS chapter III/33 on the launching of free-fall lifeboats.

Amendments to the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections during Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, 2011 (2011 ESP Code)

Amendments to the ESP Code were adopted revising the scope of required thickness measurements at the first renewal survey of double-hull oil tankers to only taking measurements in 'suspect areas' only, aligning the thickness measurement requirements for oil tankers with those of bulk carriers

The amendments enter into force on 1 January 2023.

Amendments to the Fire Safety Systems (FSS) Code

Amendments to chapter 9 of the FSS Code (Fixed fire detection and fire alarm systems) were adopted, concerning fault isolation requirements for cargo ships and passenger ship cabin balconies fitted with individually identifiable fire detector systems.

The amendment enters into force on 1 January 2024.

Amendment for Watertight Doors on Cargo Ships to LL, IBC Code and IGC Code

Amendments for watertight doors on cargo ships to LL regulation 27(13)(a), relevant parts of IBC Code and IGC Code were approved with a view to adoption at MSC 103 and MEPC 76, as applicable.

However, the Committee decided that the draft amendments warranted further consideration and agreed to defer the adoption of the proposed amendments to MSC 104 and inform MEPC 76 for further consideration of associated amendments to MARPOL and the IBC Code, as applicable.

Adoption of amendments to STCW Convention and Code

MSC 103 adopted the new definition of "high voltage" as an alternating current (AC) or direct current (DC) voltage in excess of 1,000 volts in the STCW Convention **Regulation 1/1.1**, and inclusion of "electro technical officer" in the definition for "operational level" in **Section A-1/1** of the STCW Code.

The draft amendments enter into force on 1 January 2023.

Approval of Amendments to Non-Mandatory Instruments

MSC 103 approved Guidelines for the following non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters:

- **Fishing vessels of at least 24 metres in length.**

These guidelines are aligned with the 2012 Cape Town Agreement

- **Pleasure yachts above 300 gross tonnage not engaged in trade**

The guidelines outline recommendations for mitigating hazards in polar waters, such as icing, low temperatures, darkness, high latitudes, and delays in emergency response.

Amendments to the "Guidelines for the maintenance and inspections of fixed CO2 fire-extinguishing systems" (MSC.1/Circ.1318/Rev.1).

The amendments represent a significant increase in the frequency of hydrostatic testing required for CO2 cylinders. Ten per cent (10%) of the total number of CO2 cylinders shall still be tested at the 10-year inspection and before the 20-year anniversary and every 10-year anniversary thereafter the test regime has been expanded from testing another 10% to testing all remaining cylinders. It is also clarified that when cylinders are removed for testing, they should be replaced such that the quantity of fire-extinguishing medium continues to satisfy the requirements of Chapter 5 of the FSS Code. Additionally, at least once every 5 years, internal inspection of all control valves should be performed.

Draft MSC circular on voluntary early implementation of the amendments to SOLAS chapter III and the LSA Code was approved.

Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)

MSC 103 finalized and concluded the regulatory scoping exercise (RSE) for autonomous ships and agreed on the development of an MSC Circular on the results of the regulatory scoping exercise, highlighting a number of key themes and common gaps in IMO instruments that would need to be addressed in order to support incorporation of MASS into the regulatory framework for shipping.

For the purpose of the RSE, MASS is defined as a ship, which to a varying degree can operate independently of human interaction. Four 'degrees of autonomy' have been identified and defined as:

1. Degree One: Ship with automated processes and decision support
2. Degree Two: Remotely controlled ship with seafarers on board

3. Degree Three: Remotely controlled ship without seafarers on board
4. Degree Four: Fully autonomous ship

MSC 103 noted that the best way forward to address MASS in the IMO regulatory framework could, preferably, be addressed in a holistic manner through the development of a goal-based MASS instrument and invited Member States to submit output proposals on how to achieve the best way forward in development of the MASS instrument; while also inviting Member States and international organizations to submit reports on the experience gained in the operation of MASS.

Development of further measures to enhance the safety of ships relating to the use of fuel oil

MSC 101 had adopted *Recommended interim measures to enhance the safety of ships relating to the use of oil fuel* (resolution MSC.465(101)).

MSC 103 agreed to an updated action plan which calls for an extended target completion to 2023 for the output "Development of further measures to enhance the safety of ships relating to the use of fuel oil.". A correspondence group (CG) was re-established with a view towards progressing and finalizing the work intersessionally and drafting amendments on:

1. Reporting of confirmed cases where oil fuel suppliers have failed to meet the flashpoint requirements of the Organization, taking into account that feedback should also be provided to the supplier;
2. Actions against oil fuel suppliers that have been found to deliver oil fuel that does not comply with minimum flashpoint requirements;
3. Mandatory requirements regarding the documentation of the flashpoint of the actual fuel batch when bunkering; and

The CG will also further develop guidelines for ships to address situations where indicative test results suggest that the oil fuel supplied may not comply with SOLAS regulation II-2/4.2.1.

Measures to improve domestic ferry safety

MSC 103 agreed that the **draft model regulations** while supported in general, needed further work, and further agreed to establish a Working Group on Domestic Ferry Safety at MSC 104 to further develop the model

regulations. In this regard the Committee also invited Member States and interested parties to make submissions on amendments to the model regulations.

Measures to enhance maritime security

The dissemination of the fourth version of the industry-developed "**Guidelines on cyber security onboard ships**" was approved as an MSC circular. MSC 103 noted the voluntary nature of *The Guidelines on cyber security onboard ships* and that issuing them under cover of an MSC circular should not be taken to mean that it had endorsed every detail, but rather recognized the helpfulness of the Guidelines and promoted their availability. Regarding the upcoming cybersecurity guidelines for ports and port facilities, MSC 103 noted that a future session would need to carefully consider any legal implications for ports of such guidelines, which might be outside the scope of the Organization's work.

It was also agreed to update the "**Guidelines on maritime cyber risk management**" (MSC-FAL.1/Circ.3) and to include the consolidated IACS "**Recommendation on cyber resilience**" (**Recommendation 166**), subject to concurrent decision by the FAL Committee.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

MSC 103 adopted a **draft MSC resolution on recommended action to address piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea**.

MSC 103 agreed to finalize a **draft Assembly resolution updating the previous resolution A.1069(28)** on Prevention and suppression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illicit maritime activity in the Gulf of Guinea with a view to approval at MSC 104 and submission to A 32 for adoption.

The draft resolution calls on Member States, national authorities, the United Nations and other relevant organizations to:

- .1 consider strengthening law enforcement and harmonization of criminal penalties across coastal States to arrest and prosecute pirates in relevant jurisdictions in accordance with international law and national legal frameworks;
- .2 consider options and international best practices for improved governance of available protection solutions such as security escort vessels for assisting other vessels, in accordance with international law, and with due respect for the sovereignty, sovereign rights and territorial integrity of coastal States; and

.3 support and encourage wider participation in the International Framework (GoG-MCF/SHADE GoG) as well as other platforms, such as G7++FOGG, with a view to improving maritime security and safety in the region and facilitating the strengthening of cooperation mechanisms for regional maritime patrol and protection.

develop plans, where feasible, to provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities to support the vaccination of seafarers.

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MSC 103 noted that the IMO Secretariat will update MSC.1/Circ.1601 on Revised Industry Counter Piracy Guidance, replacing annex 3 with the [BMP West Africa guidance](#).

MSC 103, discussed the need for cooperative mechanisms for countering piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Guinea region, and the international framework as announced by Nigeria and the ICC; and discussions on the status of regional and international efforts to arrest and prosecute suspected pirates and the encouragement for future updates.

Navigation, communications and search and rescue

MSC 103 approved [the draft amendments to the IAMSAR Manual](#) finalized by the ICAO/IMO Joint Working Group, and taking into account ICAO's concurrence with the inclusion of the draft amendments in the 2022 edition of the IAMSAR Manual.

It should be noted that the IAMSAR Manual is a surveyable item and ships are required to carry the most up to date edition (expected to be published 1 June 2022).

The Committee also noted the information provided regarding the implementation of the Iridium SafetyCast service and agreed that the implementation of mobile satellite services recognized by the Organization was of utmost importance to protect the integrity of the GMDSS, providing not only advance information necessary for safe navigation, but also essential information for SAR operations and timely assistance to persons in distress at sea;

Recommended action to prioritize COVID-19 vaccination of seafarers

MSC 103 adopted a resolution on "[Recommended action to prioritize Covid-19 vaccination of seafarers](#)" recommending that Member States prioritize seafarers in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes, consider exempting seafarers from any national policies requiring proof of vaccination during travels, and to