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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP DESIGN AND
EQUIPMENT
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Agenda item 8

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MEASURES TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS WITH LIFEBOATS

Training of a ships' officers and crew in respect of LSA equipment on board ships

Submitted by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

SUMMARY

Executive summary: The International Transport Workers' Federation express concerns at the comments and proposals contained in document DE 51/8/3 submitted by ILAMA.

Action to be taken: Paragraph 7

Related documents: DE 51/8/3 and MSC.1/Circ.1206

1 This document provides comments on document DE 51/8/3 and is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.10.5 of the Guidelines on the organization and method of work of the MSC and the MEPC and their subsidiary bodies (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.1).

Introduction

2 Document DE 51/8/3 submitted by ILAMA suggests the solution to accidents with on-load release hooks in lifeboats lies in increasing the level of training of ships' officers and crew in respect to the LSA equipment on board their ships and in particular, familiarization with the type of on-load release fitted onboard.

3 This seems to ignore that regular drills and familiarization have always been a requirement onboard and a number of past circulars of the IMO have advised of the dangers of the on-load release mechanisms. This is again covered in MSC.1/Circ.1206, annex 2, and is a requirement of all Administrations on at least a monthly basis.

4 Training ashore is already contained within the basic safety training and retraining on a five yearly basis is currently on the agenda of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping. Clearly, shore training under the control of instructors is the safest way to instill the basic skills; however, the confidence to trust the equipment in an emergency is more difficult.

5 The real problem remains the 72 types of different on load release mechanisms on the market with countless combinations of other equipment and numerous operating configurations. The training establishments can only give general guidance and would find it impossible to set up

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effective courses that cover every contingency including their risks or failings. Any training cannot take into account the accidents that occur, not due to faulty operation but inherently poor design. Tests on release boat mechanisms after an accident have in some cases failed before the rated loading of the boat with only minimum wear on crucial parts.

6 The ITF has no doubt that if the manufacturing industry cannot come up with a standard, easily operated, fail safe system with a consistent arrangement that every seafarer is familiar with, then the on-load release mechanism should be removed from all vessels. The decision must be made based on the safety of all seafarers and not the competitive pressures of the manufacturing industry.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

7 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider these comments and take action as appropriate.
