

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
92nd session
Agenda item 13

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SHIP DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT

Making the provisions of MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 mandatory

Submitted by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document comments on the report of the fifty-seventh session of the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment and specifically the revision of MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 and related agenda items on lifeboat safety

Strategic direction: 5.1

High-level action: 5.1.2

Planned output: 5.1.2.1

Action to be taken: Paragraph 8

Related documents: DE 57/WP.1; DE 44/18/1; MSC.1/Circ.1419; MSC.1/Circ.1327 and MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1

Introduction

1 In March 2001, Australia submitted to the forty-fourth session of the Ship Design and Equipment Sub-Committee, document DE 44/18/1, drawing attention to the high loss of life and injuries to seafarers' whilst conducting lifeboat drills with on-load release davit launched lifeboats. It was evident, at this time, that there was no international database being collated by the IMO, manufacturers or the maritime industry on fatalities, injuries or causes.

2 The predominant reaction from flag States and the manufactures was that the failing lies with inadequate training of the seafarers. The maritime industry, however, did not accept this assumption and formed the Industry Lifeboat Working Group to look into all possible factors. The ultimate objectives of the working group included to reduce or eliminate the chance of single point mechanical failure, single person error induced accidents and standardize seafarers training on lifeboat drills.

Background

3 The primary problem identified by the IMO was the multitude of on-load release blocks, often unrealistically complicated and in many cases unreliable. Much of the work done since at the IMO has concentrated on identifying the inherent mechanical faults, correct them and ensure there is a robust network of service providers to ensure the on-going reliability. However other issues were addressed to eliminate the possibility of an accident initiated by human error or faulty equipment.

4 These other issues include:

- .1 the standardization of the layout and controls on all lifeboats;
- .2 the fitting of "Fall Preventer Devices" and
- .3 safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats.

These were all addressed in MSC circulars but unfortunately as they remain non-mandatory guidelines there is a wide ranging application:

- .1 Guidelines for the standardization of lifeboat control arrangements (MSC.1/Circ.1419);
- .2 Guidelines on fitting a fall preventer device (MSC.1/Circ.1327); and
- .3 Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats, (MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1).

5 DE 57 has (in DE 57/WP.1) forwarded the revised MSC.1/Circ.1026/Rev.1 to the ninety-second session of the Maritime Safety Committee for their consideration, however, they declined to forward this to the forty-fourth session of the Standards of Training and Watchkeeping Sub-Committee. Although "Measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats" was on the agenda from STW 35 to STW 37, it primarily dealt with free-fall lifeboats and since then despite radical changes and despite the STW being an associated sub-committee on this item, there has been no further consideration of seafarers' drills.

6 There now exists a situation with a number of non-mandatory guidelines that could give greater confusion to the seafarer than previously and as some changes such as the fall preventative devices can be at the discretion of the manufacturers, rather than the Administration or owner, it is increasingly difficult for training providers to work to any level of standardized training.

Proposal

7 The ITF considers that the proposed Guidelines on safety during abandoning ship drills in a lifeboat, contained in appendix 2 of the revised MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1, should be considered by the forty-fifth session of the STW Sub-Committee (or its alternative). This should take into account all other guidance and amendments relevant to measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats, and give advice on the standardization of drills and possibility of making the relevant guidelines mandatory.

Action requested of the Committee

8 The Committee is invited to consider the above and in particular paragraph 7 and take action as appropriate.
