

SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN ELEMENT,  
TRAINING AND WATCHKEEPING  
1st session  
Agenda item 20

HTW 1/20/2  
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## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats

Submitted by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

#### SUMMARY

*Executive summary:* This document comments on the outcome of the ninety-second session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 92/26), specifically paragraph 13.14 that refers to *Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats*

*Strategic direction:* 5.1

*High-level action:* 5.1.2

*Planned output:* 5.1.2.1

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 12

*Related documents:* DE 57/WP.1; DE 44/18/1; MSC.1/Circ.1419, MSC.1/Circ.1327, MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1; MSC 92/26 and MSC 92/13/1

#### Introduction

1 This document is submitted in accordance with paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Guidelines on the organisation and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment and Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.4/Rev.2) and provides comments on the report of MSC 92 under agenda item 2.

2 In March 2001, at DE 44, Australia submitted 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.

3 The predominant reaction from flag States and the manufacturers was that the failings lie with inadequate training of 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, reducing or eliminating the chance of single point mechanical failure, single person error induced accidents and standardize seafarers training on lifeboat drills.

## Background

4 The primary problem identified by 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, correcting them and ensuring that there is a robust network of service providers to ensure the ongoing reliability.

5 However, other issues were addressed to eliminate the possibility of an accident initiated by human error or faulty equipment. These other issues include:

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

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

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

7 DE 57 forwarded the revised MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 (DE 57/WP.1) to MSC 92 for their consideration; however, they declined to forward this to the forty-fourth session of the Sub-Committee on Standards of Training and Watchkeeping. Although "Measures to Prevent Accidents with Lifeboats" was on the STW Sub-Committee's agenda from STW 35 to STW 37, it primarily dealt with freefall 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 seafarer's drills.

8 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 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.

9 MSC 92 approved in principle the draft MSC circular on *Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats*, for final approval at MSC 93 in conjunction with the adoption of the associated draft MSC resolution. In this regard, in MSC 92/26, paragraph 13.15, the Committee considered document MSC 92/13/1 (ITF) suggesting that the draft Guidelines should be considered by the STW Sub-Committee taking into account all other guidance and amendments relevant to measures to prevent accidents with lifeboats, the need to give advice on standardization of drills and the possibility of making the Guidelines mandatory. The Committee, having noted that the next session of the STW (HTW) Sub-Committee was scheduled to take place before MSC 93, instructed it to consider the draft Guidelines, taking into account document MSC 92/13/1, so that any comments may be taken into account for their final approval at MSC 93.

10 It has been noted that, over a decade, the issue of lifeboat safety has been considered by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment with numerous changes and amendments and despite STW being an associated Sub-committee on the item, the matter has never been considered by this Sub-Committee. On numerous occasions at the Industry Lifeboat Group, training providers have raised concerns at a lack of clarity and standardization of operation of davit lifeboats that would enable effective training of crew. Clearly the issue of lifeboat safety was never just a technical issue and there is a compelling need for training providers to fully consider the changes made and the effect equipment such as fall preventative devices may have on drills. The issues of lowering or lifting boats in drills with a full complement of crew on-board is still contentious and often left to the masters discretion and can vary between ships in the same company. Ideally, having been trained ashore to safely launch and operate a davit lifeboat, seafarers should then encounter a standardized system that can be safely operated in an intuitive manner.

### **Proposal**

11 The ITF considers that the proposed *Guidelines on safety during abandoning ship drills in a lifeboat*, contained in annex 2 of the revised MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 should be fully considered by HTW 1, as directed by the Maritime Safety Committee. 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. The Sub-Committee may also consider whether the issue warrants ongoing consideration under agenda item 5 on development of guidance for the implementation of the 2010 Manila Amendments.

### **Action requested of the Sub-Committee**

12 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the above proposal and take action, as appropriate.

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