BULK CARRIER SAFETY

The Committee dealt with this matter under three separate headings: (1) agreed recommendations for decision making, including the outcome of DE 46; (2) FSA studies of bulk carriers less than 150 m in length; and (3) other matters related to bulk carrier safety.

AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION MAKING

Performance standards for water level detectors (NEW and EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 adopted Resolution MSC.145(77) on performance standards for water level detectors on bulk carriers. The standard is the draft as submitted by DE 46 but amended as follows:

“3.6.6. An override visual indication capability should be provided throughout the deactivation of the water level detector for the hold or tank referred to in 3.3.5 above. Where such an override capability is provided, cancellation of the override condition and reactivation of the alarm should automatically occur after the hold or tank has been deballasted to a level below the lowest alarm indicator level.”

Concern was expressed by one non-governmental organisation with observer status that, due to the close proximity of the implementation date, owners may face a situation where the required equipment is not available. If such a situation seems to be likely when approaching implementation date, the industry will request flag states, with full consensus of the MSC, to issue waivers to owners in order to avoid problems with port state control (PSC) inspections.

Interpretation of SOLAS regulation XII/13 (NEW and EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ.1069 on Interpretation of SOLAS regulation XII/13 as submitted by DE 46.

Guidance on early abandonment of bulk carriers (NEW and EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 noted that DE 46 had referred a draft ‘Guidelines on early assessment of hull damage and possible need for abandonment of bulk carriers’ to NAV 49 and STW 35 for concurrence prior to approval by MSC 78.

Application of IACS URs S26, S27, S30 and S31 (NEW and EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 adopted Resolution MSC.146(77) urging governments to ensure, inter alia, that these International Association of Classification Societies (IACS) URs are applied to ships flying their flags, whether or not they are classed by a classification society being a member of IACS, as submitted by DE 46. IACS informed the Committee that it is conducting work on UR S31 to further mitigate side-shell failure on existing bulk carriers. MSC 77 agreed that any such revision to UR S31, as may be submitted by IACS, should be considered by DE 47.
Steel repair standards and shipbuilding practices (NEW and EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ.1070 reminding all those involved in the operation of ships of their obligations with respect to ship design, construction, repair and maintenance, in compliance with the applicable SOLAS and ILLC requirements and taking into account other related guidelines and recommendations, as submitted by DE 46.

Guidance for hatch cover survey and owners’ inspections and maintenance

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ. 1071 on Guidelines for bulk carrier hatch cover surveys and owners’ inspections and maintenance, as submitted by DE 46.

The Committee agreed that the provisions of sections 2 and 3 of the Guidelines should be made mandatory under SOLAS chapter XII and invited interested parties to submit proposals to DE 47.

The Committee also agreed that provisions of section 4 of the Guidelines should be made mandatory under resolution A.744(18) and invited interested parties to submit proposals to DE 47.

Banning bulk carriers from sailing with any hold empty – alternate hold loading ban (EXISTING ships)

MSC 77 having noted DE 46 preference for Option III referred the following banning provisions to DE 47 for appropriate action when preparing relevant amendments to SOLAS chapter XII:

“Banning bulk carriers from sailing with any hold empty: Bulk carriers in the full load condition (90% of the ship’s deadweight at the relevant freeboard) of single-side skin construction and 150 m in length and over, constructed before July 1, 1999, after reaching 10 years of age, or constructed after July 1, 1999 if not in compliance with SOLAS chapter XII and IACS UR S12 Rev.2.1, shall be banned from sailing with any hold empty. The ban shall not apply to ships constructed before July 1, 1999 if they comply with SOLAS chapter XII and IACS UR S12 Rev. 2.1.”

Double side skin construction of bulk carriers and application of chapter XII thereto (NEW ships)

MSC 77 having considered the definition of “bulk carrier” developed by DE 46 agreed to add the word “primarily” to the proposed text. With respect to the definition of “bulk carrier with single side skin construction”, the Committee excluded “ore carriers” from the proposal by DE 46.

Concerning the definition of “double-side skin” the Committee agreed broadly that a minimum clearance of 600 mm should be allowed where the inner and outer skins are transversely framed, and of 800 mm in the case of longitudinal framing. Additionally, the minimum distance between the outer and inner shells should be not less than 1000 mm. Any exceptions regarding specialised ship types, such as pure woodchip carriers, should be addressed within the appropriate technical regulations in chapter XII.

MSC 77 referred the agreed working definitions to DE 47 in order that they may serve as a basis in the development of the other amendments to chapter XII.

One delegation reiterated its concerns for the agreement at MSC 76 to making double-side skin construction mandatory for all new bulk carriers of 150 m in length and upwards. It intends to conduct a relevant study, the results of which are expected to be presented to MSC 78.

Strength of bulkheads on existing bulk carriers (EXISTING ships)

The majority of the Committee was of the opinion that the package of measures applicable to existing bulk carriers already agreed by MSC 76 (in particular, banning of alternate hold loading, maintenance and survey standards for hatch cover securing devices and the new water level detector requirements) would bring about a significant improvement in the safety of existing bulk carriers (figures from 40% to 60% risk reduction were cited according to rough estimates). The majority of the Committee agreed that no further action should be taken on this matter for the time being.
Overall risk reduction on new bulk carriers
MSC 77 noted with satisfaction the encouraging high level of risk reduction (a mean reduction in potential loss of life of 74.9%) in new bulk carriers that was expected to be achieved with the introduction of the package of the risk control measures agreed by MSC 76.

FSA STUDY OF BULK CARRIERS LESS THAN 150 m IN LENGTH

Consideration of the FSA study

MSC 77 concluded that the FSA study should be undertaken with a limited scope, say for ships between 130 m and 150 m in length and engaged in international voyages, and invited interested parties, collectively if necessary, to carry out the necessary work and report the results to MSC 78, with a view to finalizing at that session the on-going exercise on bulk carrier safety.

Concerning the proposal that small bulk carriers should be fitted with loading/stability computers, the Committee, acknowledging that proper calculation of the stability of small ships could be jeopardised by their typically tight port turnaround times, agreed that the proposed measure should be considered further and requested SLF 46 to look into the matter.

Safety of general cargo ships
MSC 77 having noted the results of a study of general cargo ships losses and fatalities as compared with other ship types agreed in principle that the data submitted justified a more detailed study into the safety of these ships.

IMO STRATEGIC PLAN

MSC 77 having heard the views of delegations on the proposals from Bahamas and Greece on IMO’s engagement in the development of goal-based new-building construction standards decided: to leave the decision on including this in the IMO Strategic Plan to IMO’s Council; include a new appropriate item in MSC’s work programme and agenda for MSC 78; and invited interested parties to submit to MSC 78 specific proposals on goal-based standards and design philosophy in order to clarify and define their meaning.

ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO MANDATORY INSTRUMENTS

Amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention
MSC 77 adopted amendments to chapter V by resolution MSC.142(77). The adopted amendments should be deemed to have been accepted on January 1, 2006 (unless, prior to that date, objections are communicated) and should enter into force on July 1, 2006.

Amendments to the 1988 Load Lines Protocol
MSC 77 adopted amendments to Annex B to the 1988 Load Lines Protocol by resolution MSC.143(77). The adopted amendments should be deemed to have been accepted on July 1, 2004 (unless, prior to that date, objections are communicated) and should enter into force on January 1, 2005.

The Committee approved the draft Assembly resolution on wider acceptance of the Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966 for submission to the 23 session of the Assembly for adoption.

Amendments to resolution A.744(18)
MSC 77 adopted amendments to the Guidelines on the enhanced programme of inspections during surveys of bulk carriers and oil tankers (resolution A.744(18)) by resolution MSC.144(77). The adopted amendments should be deemed to be accepted on July 1, 2004 (unless, prior to that date, objections are communicated) and should enter into force on January 1, 2005.
MARITIME SECURITY

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ.1072 on Guidance on provision of ships security alert systems (SSASs) and adopted resolution MSC.147(77) on Revised performance standards for SSASs.

MSC 77 agreed that neither of the two types of FPSOs and FSUs were ships subject to the provisions of the ISPS Code, but they should have some security procedures in place.

MSC 77 noted that paragraph 9.4 of part A of the ISPS Code required that in order for an ISSC to be issued, the guidance in part B would need to be taken into account and agreed that it was assumed that an ISSC would not be issued unless paragraphs 8.1 to 13.8 of part B of the ISPS Code had been taken into account. The Committee agreed that this should be included in an MSC circular on guidance relating to the implementation of the new SOLAS chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code. It will be developed soon after MSC 77 and issued as MSC/Circ.1097.

MSC 77 having noted the IACS proposals on the company audits of compliance with the ISPS Code and the concept of non-compliance and implementation considered them to be of interest in the longer term, but agreed to take no action in this regard before July 1, 2004.

The Committee noted that the majority of Member Governments had opposed the issuance of certificates in cases where minor deviations from the approved plan or the requirements of SOLAS chapter XI-2 and part A of the ISPS Code existed, even if these deviations did not compromise the ship’s ability to operate at security levels 1 to 3.

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ.1074 on Interim guidelines for the authorisation of recognised security organisations acting on behalf of the administration and/or designated authority of a contacting government.

The Committee further agreed that the ship identification number (SOLAS regulation XI-1/3) to be permanently marked on the hull of the ship is to be the prefix “IMO” followed by the seven digit number in accordance with resolution A.600(15).

LARGE PASSENGER SHIPS

MSC 77 agreed that the “Large passenger ship safety” item should be included in the agenda of MSC 78 for it to consider any recommendations forwarded from the sub-committees that have been assigned work on large passenger ship safety, providing additional guidance as necessary; further consider proposals on holistic approach to large passenger ship safety; and consider any submissions made on the issue. MSC 78 will establish an ad-hoc working group on large passenger ship safety.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Committee approved the proposed draft amendments to SOLAS regulation IV/15.9 clarifying the testing and maintenance requirements for satellite EPIRBs, with a view to adoption at MSC 78 and a proposed entry-into-force date of January 1, 2006.

MSC 77 approved MSC/Circ.1087 on Guidelines for partially weathertight hatchway covers on board container ships, having agreed to January 1, 2004 as their application date.

The Committee approved proposed amendments to SOLAS regulation III/20 concerning inspection of lifeboats and proposed amendments to SOLAS regulation III/19 concerning the conditions in which lifeboat training and drills should be conducted, with a view to adoption at MSC 78.
MSC 77 approved proposed amendments to SOLAS regulation III/32.3 and the 1988 SOLAS Protocol concerning carriage requirements for immersion suits, including consequential amendments relating to the records of equipment, with a view to adoption at MSC 78.

MSC 78

The 78th session of Maritime Safety Committee is scheduled to take place between May 12 and 21, 2004. MSC 77 agreed to establish the following Working Groups at MSC 78:

- large passenger ship safety
- maritime security
- human element.

MSC 77 agreed to establish the following drafting groups at MSC 78:

- bulk carrier safety
- amendments to mandatory instruments.

LIST OF ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution MSC.142(77) – Adoption of amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, as amended;

Resolution MSC.143(77) – Adoption of amendments to the Protocol of the 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966;

Resolution MSC.144(77) – Adoption of amendments to the Guidelines to the enhanced programme of inspections during surveys of bulk carriers and oil tankers (resolution A.744(18), as amended);

Resolution MSC.145(77) – Performance standards for water level detectors on bulk carriers;

Resolution MSC.146(77) – Application of IACS Unified Requirements S 26, S 27, S 30 and S 31 to bulk carriers;

Resolution MSC.147(77) – Adoption of the revised performance standards for a ship security alert system;

Resolution MSC.148(77) – Adoption of the revised performance standards for narrow-band direct-printing telegraph equipment for the reception of the navigational and meteorological warnings and urgent information to ships;

Resolution MSC.149(77) – Adoption of the revised performance standards for survival craft portable two-way VHF radiotelephone apparatus;

Resolution MSC.150(77) – Recommendation for material safety data sheets for MARPOL Annex I cargoes and marine fuel oils.

LIST OF APPROVED CIRCULARS

MSC/Circ.1069 – Interpretation of SOLAS regulation XII/13;

MSC/Circ.1070 – Ship design, construction, repair and maintenance;

MSC/Circ.1071 – Guidelines for bulk carrier hatch cover surveys and owners’ inspections and maintenance;

MSC/Circ.1072 – Guidance on provision of ship security alert systems (SSASs);
MSC/Circ.1073 – Revised directive for maritime rescue co-ordination centres (MRCCs);
MSC/Circ.1074 – Interim guidelines for the authorisation of recognised security organisations acting on behalf of the Administration and/or designated authority of a Contracting Government;
MSC/Circ.1075 – Granting exemptions from the provisions of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code;
MSC/Circ.1076 – Future withdrawal of Inmarsat-A services by Inmarsat Ltd.;
MSC/Circ.1077 – Procedure for evaluation and possible recognition of mobile-satellite systems notified for use in the GMDSS;
MSC/Circ.1078 – Guidelines to Administrations on reporting false alerts;
MSC/Circ.1079 – Guidelines for preparing plans for co-operation between search and rescue services and passenger ships (in accordance with SOLAS regulation V/7.3);
MSC/Circ.1080 – Amendments to the IAMSAR Manual;
MSC/Circ.1081 – Unified interpretations of the revised SOLAS chapter II-2;
MSC/Circ.1082 – Unified interpretations of the Guidelines for the approval of fixed water based local application fire-fighting systems (MSC/Circ.913);
MSC/Circ.1083 – Unified interpretation of SOLAS regulation II-2/15.2.11;
MSC/Circ.1084 – Principles for hot work on board all types of ships;
MSC/Circ.1085 – Use of smoke helmet-type breathing apparatus;
MSC/Circ.1086 – Code of practice for atmospheric oil mist detectors;
MSC/Circ.1087 – Guidelines for partially weathertight hatchway covers on board container ships;
MSC/Circ.1088 – Questionnaire on national data base standards, record systems and anti-fraud measures;
MSC/Circ.1089 – Guidance on recommended anti-fraud measures and forgery prevention features for seafarers’ certificates;
MSC/Circ.1090 – Guidance for Administrations, shipping companies, masters and manning agents for detecting and preventing unlawful practices associated with certificates;
MSC/Circ.1091 – Issues to be considered when introducing new technology on board ships;
MSC/Circ.1092 – Parties to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978, as amended, confirmed by the Maritime Safety Committee to have communicated information which demonstrates that full and complete effect is given to the relevant provisions of the Convention;
MSC/Circ.1093 – Guidelines for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats, launching appliances and on-load release gear;
MSC/Circ.1094 – Application of SOLAS regulation III/26 concerning fast rescue boat systems on ro-ro passenger ships;
MSC/Circ.1095 – Revised minimum safety standards for ships carrying liquids in bulk containing benzene;
MSC/Circ.1096 – Guidelines on the prevention and management of sever acute respiratory syndrome (SARS);
COMSAR/Circ.32 – Harmonization of GMDSS requirements for radio installations on board SOLAS ships;
STCW.6/Circ.6 – Amendments to Part B of the STCW Code.