

## I. IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) 109th session (MSC 109)

MSC 109<sup>th</sup> session was held from 2 to 6 December 2024 at IMO Headquarters in London. MSC 109 meeting highlights are as follows:

### 1. The Committee adopted amendments:

#### (1) Amendments adopted to IGC Code

MSC 109 adopted the amendments to the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk, (IGC Code) This enables the use of ammonia cargo, which is identified as a toxic product, to be conditionally used as fuel in the context of alternative fuels and new technologies. The amendments may enter into force on or after 1 July 2026.

MSC 109 adopted an MSC circular on the voluntary early application of Chapter 16 of the IGC Code.

#### (2) Amendments adopted to the IGF Code

Adopted amendments to the IGF Code regarding parts A and A-1 of the International Code of Safety for Ship Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code) to enable ammonia as a marine fuel. The amendments are related to ship design, fire safety, ventilation, and other safety issues; they are expected to enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### (3) MSC 109 adopted the amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliance Code (LSA Code):

- ①. Adopted amendments to the Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances (resolution MSC.81(70)) concerning assumed weight used to represent each person in self-righting tests for totally enclosed lifeboats.
- ②. For the Revision of SOLAS Chapter III and the International Life-Saving Appliance Code (LSA Code), MSC 109 endorsed the road map to facilitate the draft of related functional requirements and expected performances for SOLAS Chapter III and the LSA Code.

### 2. The Committee approved amendments:

- (1) The Committee agreed on the draft amendments to SOLAS II-1/56 to apply the IGF code to all gaseous fuels, not just low-flashpoint fuels (IGF code), which was approved, the term “gaseous fuels” was added to the definitions in SOLAS Regulation II-1/2 and the application provisions of SOLAS Regulations II-1/56.

The draft is subjected to adoption by MSC 110 (June 2025) and is expected to be to enter into force on 1 January 2027.

- (2) MSC 109 considers the potential new technologies and alternative fuels to support the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from ships. The Committee agreed to add “swappable traction lithium-ion battery containers” to the list.

### **3. New technologies and alternative fuels:**

- (1) MSC 109 approved MSC.1/Circular on Interim Guidelines for the safety of ships using ammonia as fuel.
- (2) The Committee received an update on the work of the Correspondence Group on the Development of a Safety Regulatory Framework to Support the Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships using New Technologies and Alternative Fuels (GHG safety).

The Interim guidelines for the safety of ships using ammonia as fuel (do not include vessels using ammonia cargo as fuel (IGC code)), considering ammonia is toxicity and flammability, the guidelines mainly focus on the classification of toxic areas and spaces, shelters, ammonia release mitigation systems, and ammonia effluent discharge, etc.

### **4. Pilot transfer arrangement:**

MSC 109 approved the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 and the draft MSC resolution on performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements to ensure safe arrangements for pilots and other personnel embarking and disembarking ships. The draft may enter into force on 1st January 2028 and encourages Member States to implement as required in time.

### **5. Code on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code):**

To advance the non-mandatory MASS Code, which is planned to be finalized by 2026.

The MASS working group had completed drafting the MASS Code in Chapter 7, Risk Assessment, Chapter 12, Connectivity, and Chapter 18, Remote Operations. The chapters on remote operation and connectivity will apply depending on the mode of operation and the functionality being used, which, for example, would open for a manned MASS with a periodically unmanned bridge without the support of a remote operation center.

There are still other remaining works to be done; therefore, MSC 109 agreed to a revised road map for developing the MASS Code, subject to further revision when necessary:

- (1) Planned to finalize and adopt non-mandatory MASS Code by May 2026;
- (2) Planned to develop a framework for an Experience-building phase (EBP) post-adoption of the non-mandatory MASS Code by December 2026;
- (3) Develop the mandatory MASS Code, based on the non-mandatory Code and result from the EBP and review conducted by the relevant sub-committees, and consider amendments to SOLAS (new chapter) for the Code's adoption by 2028;
- (4) Planned to adopt the mandatory Code by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2030 for entry into force on 1 Jan 2032.

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## II. IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction 11th Session (SDC 11) Meeting Highlights

IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction 11th session (SDC 11) was held from 13th to 17th January 2025. Summarize highlights of the meeting:

### 1. Emergency towing arrangements :

SDC 11 finalized the interim Guidelines for emergency towing arrangements for ships other than tankers.

MSC 108 (May 2024) adopted amendments to SOLAS II-1/3-4 related to the SOLAS requirements for emergency towing devices to all new ships over 20,000 GT to facilitate emergency assistance and towing operations and thereby reduce the risk of ship wreckage and pollution.

The requirements currently include tankers of 20,000 DWT and above, which are required to have an emergency towing device, while other cargo ships and passenger ships must have a towing procedure only. The new requirements may enter into force on 1st January 2028.

SDC 11 identified a new set of interim guidelines that are intended to provide standards for the design and construction of emergency towing devices, applying for emergency towing arrangements on new ships other than tankers.

### 2. Towing and Mooring Equipment:

SDC 11 agreed on draft amendments to the “Revised Guidance on Shipboard Towing and Mooring Equipment” (MSC.1/Circ.1175/Rev.1), addressing fittings and supporting hull structures associated with normal towing and mooring operations, in addition to emergency towing operations for tankers.

The draft amendments will align the guidance with IACS unified requirements, which were revised in 2022, UR A1 and A2, and IACS Recommendation No. 10, ‘Chain Anchoring, Mooring and Towing Equipment.’

### 3. Industrial Personnel :

SDC 11 agreed on draft amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code) to align the weight used for stability calculations for ships certified according to SOLAS Chap I with that for ships certified according to the High-speed craft Code. These amendments state that "the mass of each industrial personnel shall be assumed to be 90 kg instead of 75 kg in the ship stability calculation."

#### 4. 2011 ESP Code:

SDC 11 agreed to the draft amendments to the International Code on the Enhanced Programme of Inspections during Surveys of Bulk Carriers and Oil Tankers, 2011 (2011 ESP Code) to allow the use of remote inspection techniques (RITs) for close-up surveys of existing ships.

In addition, SDC 11 also agreed on a correction of MSC.1/Circ.1502 on “Guidance on Pressure Testing of Boundaries of Cargo Oil Tanks Under Direction of the Master” to reflect the tank pressure testing provisions as per the latest 2011 ESP Code (Resolution MSC.525(106)), the draft amendment may submit to MSC 110 (June 2025) for approval.

#### 5. 2009 Code on Alerts and Indicators:

Completed the draft amendments to the 2009 Code on Alerts and Indicators (Resolution A.1021(26)) following the recommendations of updated IMO instruments approved since 2009 to eliminate contradictions, ambiguities, and unnecessary redundancies in the Code and introduce some editorial changes.

The draft will be submitted to MEPC 83 (April 2025) and MSC 110 (June 2025) for approval and then be adopted by the Assembly 34 (A 34) (November 2025).

#### 6. Safe Return to Port (SRtP):

The concept of Safe Return to Port (SRtP) was introduced in SOLAS in 2010 to increase the robustness and fault tolerance of passenger ships.

Finalized a revision of the “Interim Explanatory Notes for the Assessment of Passenger Ship Systems’ Capabilities After a Fire or Flooding Casualty” (MSC.1/Circ.1369) to facilitate uniform implementation of the concept, taking into account experience gained. The intersessional work will continue, and SDC 12 (January 2026) is expected to complete it. Once it is finalized, several related instruments have also been identified, potentially needing amendments in line with the revision to MSC.1/Circ.1369.

#### 7. Steering and propulsion:

SDC 11 progressed a revision of SOLAS Chapter II-1, which addresses traditional steering gear arrangements with a propulsion system and a rudder. The new requirements will apply goal-based principles to all steering and propulsion systems, both existing traditional steering gear systems and modern combined steering and propulsion systems.

SDC 11 also considered draft amendments to Resolution MSC.137(76), Standards for Ship Manoeuvrability. Considering the appropriateness of the current manoeuvring criteria

provided in Resolution MSC.137(76) SDC 11 agreed by collecting and comparing sea trial data. Member States and organizations were invited to submit relevant trial data for consideration by SDC 12 in 2026.

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