IMO’S MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC 93)
14TH TO 23RD MAY 2014

The MSC, which met in its 93rd session from 14th to 23rd May, also adopted important SOLAS amendments related to inert gas systems as well as amendments to a number of treaties to bring into force the mandatory IMO audit scheme. Work on passenger ship safety also continued.

Polar Code and SOLAS amendments approved
The MSC approved, for consideration with a view to adoption at its November 2014 session (MSC 94), the draft new SOLAS chapter XIV “Safety measures for ships operating in polar waters”, which would make mandatory the Introduction and part I-A of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (the Polar Code).

The MSC also approved, in principle, the draft Polar Code, with a view to adoption in conjunction with the adoption of the associated draft new SOLAS chapter XIV.

Matters related to the safety of navigation and communication were referred to the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR), which meets in July, for finalization of the relevant chapters.

The draft Polar Code covers the full range of design, construction, equipment, operational, training, search and rescue and environmental protection matters relevant to ships operating in the inhospitable waters surrounding the two poles.

The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) is expected to further consider the environmental chapter at its next session in October (MEPC 67).

Mandatory audit scheme amendments adopted
The MSC completed the legal framework for the implementation of the mandatory IMO audit scheme, with the adoption of amendments to the following treaties to make mandatory the use of the IMO Instruments Implementation Code (III Code) and auditing of Parties to those treaties:

- SOLAS, 1974, as amended (adding a new chapter XIII)
This follows the adoption, by the IMO Assembly at its twenty-eighth session, of similar amendments to:


The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its 66th session, in April 2014, adopted similar amendments to MARPOL Annexes I through to VI. The amendments will make the auditing of Member States mandatory, once they enter into force in 2016.

**Adoption of other amendments**

The MSC also adopted the following amendments to SOLAS:

- amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1/29 on steering gear, to update the requirements relating to sea trials

- amendments to SOLAS regulations II-2/4, II-2/3, II-2/9.7 and II-2/16.3.3, to introduce mandatory requirements for inert gas systems on board new oil and chemical tankers of 8,000 dwt and above, and for ventilation systems on board new ships; related amendments to the International Code for Fire Safety Systems (FSS Code) on inert gas systems were also adopted

- amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/10, concerning fire protection requirements for new ships designed to carry containers on or above the weather deck

- amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13.4, mandating additional means of escape from machinery spaces

- new SOLAS regulation II-2/20-1 *Requirement for vehicle carriers carrying motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or natural gas for their own propulsion*, which sets additional requirements for ships with vehicle and ro-ro spaces intended for the carriage of motor vehicles with compressed hydrogen or compressed natural gas in their tanks as fuel

The above SOLAS amendments are expected to enter into force on 1st January 2016.
The MSC also adopted:

- amendment 37-14 to the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code, together with the approval of relevant supplements (entry into force date of 1st January 2016)

- amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliance (LSA) Code related to the testing of lifejackets (entry into force date 1st January 2016).

**Passenger ships safety: revised action plan agreed**

The MSC agreed a revised long-term action plan on passenger ship safety, following extensive discussion in a working group on passenger ship safety.

A number of matters relating to damage stability and survivability of passenger ships were referred to the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC) for further work, including those related to the operation of watertight doors and consideration of double hull requirements in way of engine rooms. The SDC was also instructed to consider the need to develop new SOLAS amendments to require damage control drills for passenger ships.

The Sub-Committee on Human Element and Training (HTW) was instructed to include enhanced damage stability training in its planned outputs.

Meanwhile, the Committee instructed the Sub-Committee on Implementation of IMO Instruments (III) to complete its consideration of the report on the grounding, in 2012, of the *Costa Concordia*, as a matter of priority, to upload the lessons learnt on IMO’s Global Integrated Shipping Information System (GISIS) and to bring to the attention of MSC 94 the contributing factors, issues raised/lessons learnt and observations on the human element factors involved.

**Revised IGC Code adopted**

*The revised International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk* (the IGC Code) was adopted by the MSC. The completely revised and updated Code has been developed following a comprehensive five-year review and is intended to take into account the latest advances in science and technology. It will enter into force on 1st January 2016, with an implementation/application date of 1st July 2016.

The IGC Code was first adopted in 1983, to provide an international standard for the safe carriage by sea of liquefied gases (and other substances listed in the Code) in bulk, by prescribing the design and construction standards of ships carrying such cargoes, and the equipment they should carry. The IGC Code was made mandatory under the SOLAS convention for new ships built after 1986.
Various amendments have been adopted since then, but the new draft represents the first major revision of the IGC Code.

Safety of container ships - weight verification amendments approved
The MSC approved, for adoption at MSC 94 in November, draft amendments to SOLAS chapter VI to require mandatory verification of the gross mass of containers, either by weighing the packed container or by weighing all packages and cargo items and adding the tare mass. The Committee also approved related draft guidelines regarding the verified gross mass of a container carrying cargo, to be issued as an MSC circular.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships reviewed
The MSC reviewed the latest statistics on piracy and armed robbery against ships and discussed current initiatives to suppress piracy and armed robbery, noting that the number of worldwide piracy attacks had decreased and that no SOLAS ship had been hijacked in the western Indian Ocean area since May 2012, as a welcome result of the robust actions taken by the international naval forces in the region, the shipboard measures implemented by shipping companies, masters and their crews as well as the deployment of professional security teams.

However, the Committee noted with concern the situation in the Gulf of Guinea which had not substantially improved. Nine ships were reported hijacked in 2012 and another nine ships were reported hijacked in 2013. The MSC expressed appreciation for the contributions received for the IMO West and Central Africa Maritime Security Trust Fund from China, Japan and the United Kingdom as well as the financial support of Norway, noting that a revised and comprehensive IMO strategy for implementing sustainable maritime security measures in west and central Africa had been developed and was being implemented.

The MSC expressed its support, in principle, for draft interim guidelines on measures to support seafarers and their families affected by piracy incidents off the coast of Somalia, developed by Working Group 3 (WG3) of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), and agreed to forward them to the International Labour Organization (ILO), as many of the aspects fall under ILO’s purview, being complementary to the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention (MLC).

Lifeboat safety: amendments to SOLAS chapter III
The MSC, noting a number of inconsistencies between the requirements of the draft amendments to SOLAS regulations III/3 and 20 and the draft MSC resolution on Requirements for periodic servicing and maintenance of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear, agreed to refer these
draft amendments to the Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE) for further consideration.

Other issues
In connection with other issues arising from the reports of IMO sub-committees and other bodies, the MSC:

- approved, for future adoption, a new draft SOLAS regulation XI-1/7 on *Atmosphere testing instrument for enclosed spaces*, to require ships to carry an appropriate portable atmosphere testing instrument or instruments, capable of measuring concentrations of oxygen, flammable gases or vapours, hydrogen sulphide and carbon monoxide, prior to entry into enclosed spaces; also approved, in principle, a draft MSC circular on Early implementation of the new regulation;

- approved unified interpretations to the International Convention on Tonnage Measurement of Ships, 1969, intended to clarify the application of the Convention;

- approved unified interpretations relating to the application of the *Performance standard for alternative means of corrosion protection for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers* (resolution MSC.289(87)); and the application of the *Performance standard for protective coatings for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers* (PSPC-COT) (resolution MSC.288(87));

- approved the IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code);

- adopted a number of new traffic routeing systems, including traffic separation schemes, as well as amendments to existing systems;

- adopted performance standards for the shipborne Beidou satellite navigation system (BDS) receiver equipment;

- agreed to instruct the NCSR sub-Committee to consider the recognition of the global navigation satellite system (GNSS) established under the EU’s Galileo programme as a component of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS);

- approved guidance on the bridge navigational watch alarm system (BNWAS) auto function;
approved guidelines for the reactivation of the Safety Management Certificate following an operational interruption of the SMS due to lay-up over a certain period;

approved guidance on safety when transferring persons at sea;

considered the Secretary-General’s report on three countries whose independent evaluations have been completed since the previous MSC meeting and confirmed that those Parties continued to give full and complete effect to the provisions of the STCW Convention;

established a correspondence group tasked with reviewing and finalizing draft Guidance on Development of National Maritime Security Legislation; and

agreed to instruct the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC) to develop amendments to SOLAS and the Fire Safety Systems Code to make evacuation analysis mandatory for new passenger ships and to review the recommendation on evacuation analysis for new and existing passenger ships.