

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 106), 02-11 November 2022

Action Required: IR Commission members are invited to note the relevant outcomes of MSC 10.

Maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS)

The MSC made further progress on the development of a goal-based instrument regulating the operation of maritime autonomous surface ships (MASS). This follows the completion of a regulatory scoping exercise. The aim is to adopt a non-mandatory goal-based MASS Code to take effect in 2025, which will form the basis for a mandatory goal-based MASS Code, expected to enter into force on 1 January 2028.

The Joint Working Group developed a table – intended as a living document – to identify preferred options for addressing common issues, such as: role of MASS master and crew; responsibilities of MASS master and crew; competencies required for MASS master and crew; identification and meaning of terms "remote operator" and "remote control station/centre".

Recognition of the BeiDou Message Service System for use in the GMDSS

Following the assessment and evaluation of an application by the China Transport Telecommunication Information Group Co. Ltd. (CTTIC) to recognize the BeiDou Message Service System (BDMSS) for use in the GMDSS, the MSC adopted an MSC resolution on Statement of recognition of the maritime mobile satellite services provided by CTTIC through BDMSS.

The recognition is currently limited to a coverage area within 75°E to 135°E longitude and 10°N to 55°N latitude.

IMSO will continue to monitor the implementation of BDMSS and will report to the Committee when the Public Services Agreement with CTTIC has been concluded and the Letter of Compliance has been issued to mark the commencement of services.

Safety measures for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters - Polar Code amendments

The MSC approved, with a view to adoption at the next session, a first set of draft amendments to the Polar Code, together with associated amendments to the SOLAS Convention, to incorporate new requirements for certain non-SOLAS ships concerning safety of navigation and voyage planning. The amendments will be applicable to fishing vessels of 24 m in length overall and above, pleasure yachts of 300 GT and upwards not engaged in trade and cargo ships of 300 GT and upwards but below 500 GT.

The amendments aim to enhance the safety of ships operating under the special conditions the polar areas present, as well as that of the persons on board.

IMO's Polar Code sets out requirements to ensure the safety of ships operating under the harsh conditions of the Arctic and Antarctic areas, taking especially into account extremes of temperature, and that critical equipment remains operational under those conditions.

Ships in polar waters - revision of Interim guidelines on life-saving appliances and arrangements

The MSC approved amendments to the Interim guidelines on life-saving appliances and arrangements for ships operating in polar waters (MSC.1/Circ.1614). The Interim Guidelines outline possible means of mitigating hazards in order to comply with the Polar Code and are intended to assist ship designers and shipowners/operators, as well as Administrations, in the uniform implementation of relevant provisions of the Polar Code, complementing existing requirements of the International Life-saving Appliance (LSA) Code.

The amendments to the Interim Guidelines introduce a methodology for the calculation of the maximum time of rescue, set out in an appendix, so that ships can find out how much supply, such as food rations and fresh water, and which type of equipment they should carry on board.

Revision of Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance

The MSC approved a revision of the Guidelines on places of refuge for ships in need of assistance (resolution A.949(23)). The draft revised Assembly resolution will subsequently be submitted to the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) and the Legal Committee (LEG), for concurrent approval, with a view to adoption by the Assembly (A 33) in 2023.

The guidelines were first adopted in 2003 to provide guidance for cases where a ship is in need of assistance, but are not intended to address the issue of operations for the rescue of persons in distress at sea (where SAR provisions shall be followed).

The proposed revision recognizes that various organizational, operational and technological developments have taken place in a rapidly changing global maritime domain. Experience in handling situations of ships in need of assistance has increasingly been gained around the world and informed the revision of the guidelines.

The revised guidelines aim to provide the basis of an operational framework for coastal States, ships' masters, operators and/or salvors as well as other involved parties on how to handle and take a decision when a ship is in need of assistance and seeks a place of refuge.

Among other changes, a new section on media information and management is proposed, recommending that States include in their administrations the capacities (including training) for dealing with media and requests for information in connection with managing a ship in need of assistance seeking a place of refuge.

Piracy and armed robbery against ships

The MSC considered the latest update on global trends relating to piracy and armed robbery against ships. Figures, based on reports submitted to IMO, show an overall 69 incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships as having occurred or been attempted from January to June 2022, a decrease of approximately 22% at the global level compared to the same period last year.

However, there has been an increase in the number of incidents in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore with 36 incidents reported from January to June 2022, compared to 27 incidents in the same period last year. The number of incidents that took place in the Gulf of Guinea decreased to 13 from 27 incidents in the same period last year, thanks to the enforcement agencies of coastal States in the region and ongoing international support. The number of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships reported in the South China Sea is nil, compared to 11 incidents in the same period in 2021 – following the downward trend in the area since 2013, when 142 incidents were reported. No incidents were reported off the coast of Somalia during the reporting period.

The MSC requested Member States to continue to report incidents of piracy and armed robbery to IMO and to complete and keep updated the Questionnaire on information on port and coastal State requirements related to privately contracted armed security personnel on board ships (PCASP) ([MSC-FAL.1/Circ.2](#)).

The MSC noted the efforts undertaken to ensure continued implementation of the [Djibouti Code of Conduct](#) and encouraged Member States to continue to support the DCoC Trust Fund; and called upon Member States, in line with resolution A.1159(32), in cooperation with the Organization and as may be requested by Member States of the region, to assist efforts in the Gulf of Guinea and to consider making financial contributions to the West and Central Africa Trust Fund.

There were no other issues raised of relevance to World Sailing.