

SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP SYSTEMS AND  
EQUIPMENT  
4th session  
Agenda item 4

SSE 4/4  
27 January 2017  
Original: ENGLISH

## **MAKING THE PROVISIONS OF MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 MANDATORY**

### **Comments on the Guidelines on simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats**

**Submitted by Liberia, the Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Panama,  
ICS, BIMCO, OCIMF, IFMA, INTERTANKO, P & I Clubs,  
INTERCARGO, InterManager, IPTA, IMCA, ITF and NI**

#### **SUMMARY**

*Executive summary:* This document intends to clarify the definition of simulated launching as contained in the draft *Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats* (SSE 3/WP.3, appendix to annex 4)

*Strategic direction:* 5.1

*High-level action:* 5.1.2

*Output:* 5.1.2.1

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 12

*Related documents:* MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1; SSE 3/WP.3; MSC 97/19/4 and MSC 97/INF.3

#### **General**

1 This document is submitted in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6.12.5 of the *Organization and method of work of the Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee and their subsidiary bodies* (MSC-MEPC.1/Circ.5), and provides comments on document SSE 3/WP.3 (Report of the Working Group), specifically on the appendix to annex 4.

#### **Introduction**

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-seventh session, considered documents MSC 97/19/4 and MSC 97/INF.3 in relation to the "Draft amended guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats" developed by the Industry Lifeboat Group (ILG), and agreed to forward these documents to SSE 4 for its consideration.

## Discussion

3 Seafarers perform drills on board and maintenance is carried out, including testing on a regular basis, in accordance with SOLAS regulations III/19 and III/20, respectively. However, serious accidents continue to occur, such as those in 2014 on the **MV Aquarosa**, as reported by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau (ATSB 307-MO-2014-002), and the **MV Da Dan Xia**, as reported by the New Zealand Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) (MO-2014-202). Therefore, the co-sponsors consider it necessary to address the causes of such accidents and to clarify the scope of the activities being conducted.

4 Abandon ship drills, in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/19, are focused on the provision of knowledge and understanding to seafarers in relation to the procedures to launch a lifeboat.

5 Testing of lifeboats and associated mechanisms in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/20 is conducted with the purpose of ensuring that the equipment is in working order and is ready for immediate use.

6 As described in paragraphs 4 and 5 above, drills and testing are separate activities. Consequently, the co-sponsors consider that they should be performed separately in order to reinforce the existing safety barriers and to reduce the risk of serious injury or death.

7 Drills conducted in compliance with SOLAS regulation III/19 and the draft *Guidelines for simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats* should avoid the physical activation of the release mechanism in order to avoid exposing the crew to the risk of accidental release of the lifeboat.

8 The annex to document MSC 97/INF.3 provides a practical example on how the principle in paragraph 6 above can be achieved in practice by developing on board procedures in two parts, namely:

- .1 part 1 – drills; and
- .2 part 2 – testing.

9 This is consistent with the approach taken when making the provisions of MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 mandatory. The *Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats* have been incorporated in a draft MSC circular and the provisions of maintenance and operational testing have been incorporated in an MSC resolution.

## Proposal

10 In view of the discussion in paragraphs 3 to 9 above, the co-sponsors propose to:

- .1 clarify the definition of simulated launching in the draft *Guidelines* (SSE 3/WP.3, appendix to annex 4) in order to avoid the physical activation of the release mechanism during drills conducted in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/19.3.3.4; and
- .2 separate drills from testing in order to reduce the risks of accidental release of the lifeboat with crew on board.

11 The annex provides proposed amendments to the full text of the appendix to annex 4 to document SSE 3/WP.3 in order to assist in the consideration of this proposal.

**Action requested of the Sub-Committee**

12 The Sub-Committee is invited to consider the foregoing information, in particular the proposal in paragraph 10 above and the proposed amendments in the annex, and take action as appropriate.

\*\*\*



## ANNEX\*

### DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR SIMULATED LAUNCHING OF FREE-FALL LIFEBOATS

Appendix to the annex to the draft MSC circular on *Guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats* is amended as follows:

#### "1 DEFINITION

1.1 Simulated launching carried out during drills, in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/19, is a means of training the crew in the free-fall release procedure of free-fall lifeboats without the physical activation of the release mechanism.

1.2 Simulated launching for the purpose of testing, in accordance with SOLAS regulation III/20, is a means of verifying the satisfactory function of the free-fall release system without allowing the lifeboat to fall into the sea.

#### 2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

2.1 The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a basic outline of essential steps to safely carry out simulated launching. These Guidelines are general; the lifeboat manufacturer's instruction manual should always be consulted before conducting simulated launching. Simulated launching should only be carried out with lifeboats and launching appliances designed to accommodate it, and for which the manufacturer has provided instructions. Simulated launching should be carried out under the supervision of a responsible person who should be an officer experienced in such procedures and be conducted without the physical activation of the free-fall release system.

#### 3 CONDUCT OF DRILLS – TYPICAL SIMULATED LAUNCHING SEQUENCE (SOLAS REGULATION III/19)

3.1 Check equipment and documentation to ensure that all components of the lifeboat and launching appliance are in good operational condition.

3.2 Ensure that the restraining device(s) provided by the manufacturer for simulated launching are installed and secure and that the free-fall release mechanism is fully and correctly engaged.

3.3 Establish and maintain good communication between the assigned operating crew and the responsible person.

3.4 Disengage lashings, gripes, etc. installed to secure the lifeboat for sea or for maintenance, except those required for simulated free-fall.

3.5 Participating crew board the lifeboat and fasten their seatbelts under the supervision of the responsible person.

3.6 All crew, ~~except the assigned operating crew,~~ disembark the lifeboat.

---

\* Tracked changes are created using "strikeout" for deleted text and "grey shading" to highlight all modifications and new insertions, including deleted text.

#### **4 CONDUCT OF TESTS (SOLAS REGULATION III/20)**

**3.64.1** The assigned operating crew fully prepares the lifeboat for free-fall launch and secures themselves in their seats for the release operation.

**3.74.2** The assigned operating crew activates the release mechanism when instructed by the responsible person. Ensure that the release mechanism operates satisfactorily and, if applicable, the lifeboat travels down the ramp to the distance specified in the manufacturer's instructions.

**3.84.3** Re-secure the lifeboat to its stowed position, using the means provided by the manufacturer and ensure that the free-fall release mechanism is fully and correctly engaged.

**3.94.4** Repeat procedures from paragraph 3.7 4.2 above, using the back-up release mechanism applicable.

**3.104.5** The assigned operating crew disembarks the lifeboat.

**3.114.6** Ensure that the lifeboat is returned to its normal stowed condition. Remove any restraining and/or recovery devices used only for the simulated launch procedure.

**4.7** Some free-fall lifeboats have test launching facilities that can be operated from outside of the boat. Where such facilities exist, the test should be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions once all crew, including the assigned operating crew, have disembarked from the lifeboat."

---