The Maritime Safety Committee

1. The Maritime Safety Committee at its fifty-fifth session considered the request for clarification with respect to inert gas system requirements for tankers between 20,000 and 40,000 tonnes deadweight constructed before 1 September 1984.

2. In clarifying this matter the Committee noted that regulation II-2/1.2 of SOLAS 74 as amended by the 1983 amendments states that ". . . the Administration shall ensure that the requirements which are applicable under chapter II-2 of SOLAS 74, as amended by resolution MSC.1(XLV) adopted on 20 November 1981, are complied with". When reviewing Resolution MSC.1(XLV), the 1981 SOLAS amendments, regulation II-2/1.2.2 states that ". . . for tankers constructed before 1 September 1984, the Administration shall ensure that the requirements which are applicable under chapter II-2 of the Annex to the Protocol of 1978 relating to SOLAS 74, to new or existing ships as defined in that chapter are complied with". Therefore the Committee agreed that the installation of the inert gas system on tankers between 20,000 and 40,000 tonnes deadweight constructed before 1 September 1984 is governed by the requirements of the 1978 SOLAS Protocol.

3. In this regard, regulation II-2/60 of the 1978 SOLAS Protocol requires all tankers (i.e. tankers regardless of deadweight and date of construction) using a crude oil washing system to clean cargo tanks and tankers of 20,000 tonnes deadweight and upwards contracted for after 1 June 1979 or delivered after 1 June 1982 to have an inert gas system installed. For tankers contracted for and delivered before the above dates, the 1978 SOLAS Protocol requires an inert gas system on all such tankers of 20,000 tonnes deadweight and upwards except that:

.1 A tanker of 20,000 tonnes deadweight and above but less than 40,000 tonnes deadweight carrying crude oil is not required to have an inert gas system:

.1.1 if it is not fitted with tank washing machines having an individual throughput of greater than 60 cubic metres per hour, and

.1.2 if the Administration determines it is unreasonable and impracticable, due to the ship's design characteristics, to install an inert gas system;

.2 A tanker of 20,000 tonnes deadweight and above but less than 40,000 tonnes deadweight carrying oil other than crude oil is not required to have an inert gas system if it is not fitted with tank washing machines having an individual throughput of greater than 60 cubic metres per hour.

4. The Committee noted that the actual compliance dates in the 1978 SOLAS Protocol differ from the actual compliance dates in SOLAS 74, as amended in 1981. However, all of these compliance dates have passed and an inert gas system would be required on tankers as stated above.

5. In view of the above clarification, the Committee urged all Administrations to ensure consistent application of the inert gas system requirements as stated above.

Parent topic: MSC/Circular.485 – Clarification of Inert Gas System Requirements Under SOLAS 1974, as Amended – (Adopted on 9 May 1988)

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