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UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF SOLAS CHAPTER II-2 AND THE FSS AND FTP CODES

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-second session (12 to 21 June 2013), with a view to providing more specific guidance for the application of the relevant requirements of chapter II-2 of the SOLAS Convention and the FSS and FTP Codes, approved unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2 (annex 1), of the FSS Code (annex 2) and of the FTP Code (annex 3), prepared by the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection at its fifty-sixth session (7 to 11 January 2013).

2 Member Governments are invited to use the annexed unified interpretations as guidance when applying relevant provisions of SOLAS chapter II-2 and the FSS and FTP Codes and to bring them to the attention of all parties concerned.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
IMO'S CONTRIBUTION BEYOND RIO+20

ANNEX 1

UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF SOLAS CHAPTER II-2

1 Gas measurement and detection – portable instruments (regulation II-2/4.5.7.1)

The requirement of regulation II-2/4.5.7.1 for one portable instrument for measuring oxygen and one for measuring flammable vapour concentrations, and spares for both, should be considered as being satisfied when a minimum of two instruments, each capable of measuring both oxygen and flammable vapour concentrations are provided on board. Alternatively, two portable instruments for measuring oxygen and two portable instruments for measuring flammable vapour concentrations could be provided on board.

2 Control stations on cargo ships – application to cargo ships (regulation II-2/7.5.5)

As no reference to control stations is made for any of the protection methods provided in accordance with SOLAS regulations II-2/7.5.5.1, 7.5.5.2 and 7.5.5.3, control stations on cargo ships do not need to be covered by a fixed fire detection and fire alarm system.

3 Suction and discharge piping of emergency fire pumps which are run through the machinery space (regulation II-2/10.2.1.4.1)

3.1 "The valve" in the second sentence means "sea inlet valve".

3.2 In cases where suction or discharge piping penetrating machinery spaces are enclosed in a substantial steel casing, or are insulated to "A-60" class standards, it is not necessary to enclose or insulate "distance pieces", "sea inlet valves" and "sea-chests". For this purpose, the discharge piping means piping between the emergency fire pump and the isolating valve.

3.3 The method for insulating pipes to "A-60" class standards" is that they are to be covered/protected in a practical manner by insulation material which is approved as a part of "A-60" class divisions in accordance with the FTP Code.

3.4 Where the sea inlet valve is in the machinery space, the valve should not be a fail-close type. Where the sea inlet valve is in the machinery space and is not a fail-open type, measures should be taken so that the valve can be opened in the event of fire, e.g. control piping, actuating devices and/or electric cables with fire-resistant protection equivalent to "A-60" class standards.

3.5 In cases where main fire pumps are provided in compartments outside machinery spaces and where the emergency fire pump suction or discharge piping penetrates such compartments, the above interpretation should be applied to the piping.

4 Location of the fire main isolation valves in tankers (regulation II-2/10.2.1.4.4)

The complete interpretation of the phrase "the isolation valves shall be fitted in the fire main at the poop front in a protected position" would be that the valve should be located:

.1 within an accommodation space, service spaces and control station; or

.2 at least 5 m aft of the aft end of the aftermost cargo tank in case the valve is located on the open deck; or

.3 if the above is not practical, within 5 m aft of the cargo area provided it is protected from the cargo area by a permanent steel obstruction.

5 Application of carbon dioxide or inert system for self-heating solid bulk cargoes (regulations II-2/10.7.1.3 and II-2/10.7.2)

This self-heating phenomenon should be regarded as an emergency condition such that it is not necessary to provide a separate fixed carbon dioxide fire-extinguishing system or inert gas system dedicated to the control of the self-heating of the cargo within the cargo holds. The fixed carbon dioxide or inert gas fire-extinguishing system complying with the provisions of the FSS Code required by SOLAS regulation II-2/10.7.1.3 or II-2/10.7.2 may be used for this purpose. Fixed gas fire-extinguishing systems or inert gas systems installed on board dedicated exclusively to the protection of spaces other than cargo spaces should not be used for this purpose.

6 Emergency exit hatches to open deck (regulation II-2/13.1)

To facilitate a swift and safe means of escape to the lifeboat and liferaft embarkation deck, the following provisions should apply to overhead hatches fitted along the escape routes addressed by regulation II-2/13:

.1 the securing devices should be of a type which can be opened from both sides;

.2 the maximum force needed to open the hatch cover should not exceed 150 N; and

.3 the use of a spring equalizing, counterbalance or other suitable device on the hinge side to reduce the force needed for opening is acceptable.

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ANNEX 2

UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FSS CODE

Controls for releasing carbon dioxide and activating the alarm in the protected space (chapter 5, paragraphs 2.1.3.2 and 2.2.2)

1 The pre-discharge alarm may be activated before the two separate system release controls are operated (e.g. by a micro-switch that activates the pre-discharge alarm upon opening the release cabinet door as per paragraph 2.1.3.2). Therefore, the two separate controls for releasing carbon dioxide into the protected space (i.e. one control to open the valve of the piping which conveys the gas into the protected space and a second control used to discharge the gas from its storage containers) as per paragraph 2.2.2 can be independent of the control for activating the alarm.

2 A single control for activation of the alarm is sufficient.

3 The "positive means", referred to in paragraph 2.2.2.1 for the correct sequential operation of the controls, should be achieved by a mechanical and/or electrical interlock that does not depend on any operational procedure to achieve the correct sequence of operation.

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ANNEX 3

UNIFIED INTERPRETATION OF THE FTP CODE

Test for vertically supported textiles and films (paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 of part 7 of annex 1 and paragraph 6.2.2 of appendix 1 to part 7 of annex 1)

The performance criteria for curtains, draperies of free-hanging product, as described in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2, are also applicable with an edge application of the pilot flame.

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