



Ship Type: Bulk carriers Trade Area: Worldwide

Bulletin 276 - 12/02 - Bulk Carrier Safety - New IMO Requirements (MSC 76)

The following is a brief summary received from Intercargo of the outcome of this week's IMO Marine Safety Committee meeting (MSC 76) on bulk carrier safety.

Double Hulls

Double side-skin (DSS) construction for new builds over 150 m LOA will be required, probably after 2007. No decision was taken on the minimum width of the double hull space or any other specifications.

Coatings

For new builds, dedicated seawater ballast tanks and void spaces within double hull arrangements will need to be coated according to current SOLAS requirements. Uniform international standards for DSS construction and for coatings will need to be developed. The coatings of cargo holds will be left for class and owners.

For existing ships, the Committee felt that there was sufficient control by class / owners through the enhanced survey programme (ESP).

Ship-repair standards (steel repair standards)

Owners will be reminded via IMO MSC circulars that ships shall be maintained in accordance with the structural requirements of IACS recognised classification societies.

Corrosion margins of hold frames

The Committee agreed not to progress the proposal given its decision on the double hulls listed above.

Forecastle

Not required. It was noted that IACS had adopted and issued UR S28. Reference was made to the draft Load Line protocol 39 "Minimum bow height and reserve buoyancy" which requires additional reserve buoyancy forward consistent with the provision of sheer and/or forecastle.

Bulwarks / Breakwaters

Have not been recommended.

Ballast Water systems

Changes have not been recommended.

Protection of foredeck fittings

Effectively no changes given that these measures have been incorporated in various other proposals, namely the implementation of UR S26 and S27. These UR's will apply to new and existing bulk carriers.

i) Strengthening of hold frames to UR S12;

ii) Corrosion progress of hold frames through maintenance and repainting;

iii) Earlier replacement of hold frames

For existing ships built of a single side-skin construction, while noting that IACS had just adopted and issued UR S31 and which concerns renewal criteria for side frames on bulk carriers not built in accordance with UR S12, it was agreed that UR S31 should be applied.

To cover the small percentage of bulk carriers not classed with IACS members – probably less than 5% of all 10,000 dwt+ bulk carriers, flag states have been asked to ensure that UR S31 is applied – irrespective of the class society concerned.

Hatch cover strengthening on existing bulk carriers

Existing ships will not be required to replace or reinforce their hatchcovers forward of 0.25L.

Redesign of hatch covers & closing mechanisms

Ship owners will be made aware of the need for maintenance and inspection for closing mechanisms. New standards will be produced building on the existing IACS UR S21.

Hatch cover open or closed monitor

Changes have not been recommended given that water ingress alarms would make such features redundant.

Water ingress alarms for cargo holds and dry spaces

Adopted (under SOLAS) for all bulk carriers from 1 July 2004. Performance standards will be developed before this date with international organisations invited to submit their views.

Immersion suits

Required on all ships.

Free-fall lifeboats

Will be required for all new ships.

Terminal interface improvements, communications, stevedore training

Initially, many of these issues will be improved via an increased take-up and better recognition by all parties of the IMO BLU Code.

ESP Inspection targeting

Existing IACS activities in this area were deemed sufficient.

Specialised training for port State control inspectors

Training for PSC inspectors in bulk carrier design and operation will be developed.

Weather routing

No further action required.

Improved loading / stability information (hull stresses)

Guidelines will be developed on this matter for new ships.

BC Code and Bulk Carrier endorsements for officers qualifications.

Making the BC Code mandatory will be referred back to the relevant sub-committee. No further action on the issue of B/C endorsements given the relevant changes to STCW coming into effect on 1 January 2003.

Early implementation of SOLAS XII using 10 years instead of 15 years for existing ships.

This to be progressed via UR S23 (Rev 3) relating to the re-inforcement of the corrugated transverse bulkhead between the two foremost cargo holds.

The structural strength provisions of SOLAS X11/5 including single hold floodability should be applied to new bulk carriers and of a DSS construction.

Alternate hold loading

The proposal to ban this practice was referred back to the relevant IMO Committee which will look at the possibility of banning from a certain age (either 10 plus or 15 years plus) unless condition assessed.

Bulkhead structural standards

For new ships, double skin vessels will also be required to have sufficient strength to withstand flooding of any one cargo hold.

For existing ships, this option will not be progressed except that the relevant sub-committee will be asked to consider the possible restriction of some heavy cargoes.

Shipbuilding practices

Lessons learnt from the "Lake Carling" incident will be taken into account for new ships.

Early abandonment

Masters' judgement in issuing orders to abandon ship will be maintained but IMO will issue advice on suggested techniques following the flooding of holds.

Definition of a "Bulk Carrier"

The SOLAS definition is paramount but this may be amended at a later stage following the planned revisions of the various SOLAS chapters and the decision to move to DSS construction.

Load line Conventions – design wave loads & hatch cover strengths for New Ships

An amended draft regulation 16-1 under the 1988 LL Convention will apply. Adoption of the amendments to the LL Protocol are expected in May 2003 and will cover all ship types but will affect only new ships. IACS S21 will be amended as appropriate.

On the matter of hatchcover strengths for new ships, the Load Line Convention changes mean that a rigorous formula for calculating vertical design loads will result in bulk carriers assigned B-60 freeboard having to fit hatchcovers of double the strength than are required today.

It was noted that double hull construction will decrease the possibility of flooding of the foremost cargo hold in extreme sea conditions

Hatch cover loads applicable to ships of up to 100 m in length will be amended.

Changes have been made to terminology relating to reserve buoyancy.

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