

Latest IMSBC Code amendments entered into force 1st January 2017

Members are reminded that the International Solid Bulk Cargoes (IMSBC) Code amendment 03-15 as incorporated in IMO resolution MSC.393(95) entered into force on 1st January 2017. This amendment is the third to be applied to the Code since it was made mandatory under the provisions of the SOLAS Convention on 1st January 2011.

Government administrations have had the option of voluntarily applying amendment 03-15 from 1st January 2016 and may, therefore, be largely familiar to Members.

The amendments respond to the need to progressively update the Code to keep pace with the expansion in trade and developments in technical knowledge, and may be summarised as follows:

The most substantive changes are contained in Appendix 1 relating to amendments to existing schedules and the addition of 18 new schedules for materials carried as bulk cargo. The cargoes added to the Code are:

- Aluminium Fluoride – Group A
- Amorphous Sodium Silicate Lumps – Group B and MHB
- Boric Acid, classified – Group B cargo and MHB
- Chemical Gypsum – Group A
- Glass Cullet – Group C
- Iron and Steel Slag and its Mixture – Group A
- Iron Ore Fines – Group A
- Iron Oxide Technical – Group A
- Iron Sinter – Group C
- Manganese Component Ferroalloy Slag – Group C
- Manganese Ore Fines – Group A
- Scale Generated from the Iron and Steel Making Process – Group A
- Spodumene (Upgraded) – Group A
- Wood Pellets Containing Additives and/or Binders – Group B and MHB
- Wood Pellets not Containing any Additives and/or Binders – Group B and MHB

- Zinc Slag – Group A
- Zircon Kyanite Concentrate – Group A

The addition of new schedules for established bulk cargoes is most welcome and greatly assists in resolving uncertainties in carriage requirements and reducing the potential for disputes between Owners, Charterers and Shippers.

Notable additions include the schedules for Iron Ore Fines and Scale Generated from the Iron and Steel Making Process (of which mill scale is a main component). These Group A cargoes are shipped in large quantities worldwide, and have been associated with a significant number of ship casualties and cargo disputes over the years, due to liquefaction issues and unsuitability for safe carriage.

The pre-existing individual schedule for “Wood Pellets” has been deleted and replaced by the two schedules as noted above, differentiated by whether or not the material contains any additives and/or binders.

With regard to amendments to existing cargo schedules, probably the most significant is the replacement schedule for Group C Iron Ore. The application of the schedule to iron ore cargoes is defined in terms of particle size and goethite content, and correlates with the new entry for the Group A cargo Iron Ore Fines.

Significant amendments to the Code have been made for the purpose of incorporating the requirements of MARPOL Annex V as far as these regulations apply to the management of solid bulk cargo residues. A new Section 14 has been added to the Code in which the relevant text of the “2012 Guidelines for the implementation of MARPOL Annex V” has been reproduced. As responsibility for classifying cargoes as harmful to the marine environment (HME) or non-HME lies with the Shipper, an

applicable amendment has been made to Section 4 of the Code requiring this classification to be included in cargo information furnished by the Shipper. Furthermore, the “Form for cargo information for Solid Bulk Cargoes” (paragraph 4.2.3) now must expressly state whether or not the cargo is HME.

Section 9 has been supplemented in paragraph 9.2.3 “Materials hazardous only in bulk (MHB)”. This requires that a notational reference is to accompany the MHB designation in the “Class” cell of the Characteristics table for each individual schedule for cargoes classified as MHB. A summary of the notational references is included in a table within this section.

A new Appendix 5 has been added with Bulk Cargo Shipping Names (BCSN) listed in three languages (English, Spanish and French).

In Appendix 2, a Modified Proctor/Fagerberg test procedure has been added for use in determining the transportable moisture limit (TML) of Iron Ore Fines.

In Section 3 “Safety of personnel and ship” a new requirement for routine, on board, operational fire safety risk assessments for cargo handling areas on self-unloading bulk carriers with internally installed conveyor systems has been added.

Members are also reminded of the additional information resources contained in the IMSBC Code publication supplement, including the Code of Practice for the Safe Loading and Unloading of Bulk Carriers (BLU Code with BLU Manual), Recommendations on the safe use of pesticides in ships applicable to the fumigation of cargo holds [MSC.1/Circ.1264] and Revised recommendations for entering enclosed spaces aboard ships [Resolution A.1050(27)]. ■