

IMO MEETING SUMMARY

SUB-COMMITTEE ON NAVIGATION, COMMUNICATIONS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE

11th SESSION (NCSR 11)

4 - 13 JUNE 2024



INTRODUCTION

The eleventh session of the Sub-Committee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) was held from 4 to 13 June 2024. The session was chaired by Mr. J. Brouwers (Kingdom of the Netherlands), who was unanimously elected as Chair for the remainder of the year 2024 at the opening of the session. The Vice-Chair, Mr. C. Cerda Espejo (Chile), who was also unanimously elected at the opening of the session for the same period, was also present.

The first three daily sessions were spent in plenary discussing all agenda items followed by a further four daily working sessions which permitted delegates to attend the various Working, Expert and Drafting Groups. A final day's session of plenary enabled the Sub-Committee to examine the recommendations of each Group leading to approval of the final meeting report for submission to the Marine Safety Committee.

REVISION OF SOLAS REGULATION V/23 AND ASSOCIATED INSTRUMENTS TO IMPROVE THE SAFETY OF PILOT TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS

Accidents resulting in the tragic loss of pilots continue to happen worldwide despite previous efforts to improve pilot safety through amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 (resolution MSC.308(88)) and standards for pilot transfers (resolution A.1045(27)). Statistics published by the International Maritime Pilots Association (IMPA) over the past few years show that an unacceptably high rate of non-compliant pilot transfer arrangements installed on all types of ships, together with the improper use of pilot ladders and a lack of regular and effective maintenance and inspection, are major contributing factors to accidents.

Revision of MSC.1/Circ.1428

The Sub-Committee considered document NCSR 11/13/1 (IMPA) proposing a revision of MSC.1/Circ.1428 on Pilot Transfer Arrangements – Required boarding arrangements for pilots, and document NCSR 11/13/5 (Bahamas et al.) commenting on matters related to trapdoor and side door arrangements. During consideration, a view was expressed that the revised poster on required pilot transfer arrangements should be implemented in line with the entry-into-force date of the related SOLAS amendments and new performance

standards and that, in the meantime, the existing poster in MSC.1/Circ.1428 should continue to be applied. These matters were referred to WG 2 for detailed consideration and advice, in conjunction with the revision of SOLAS regulation V/23 and the draft performance standards.

NCSR 11:

- Agreed the draft amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23.
- Agreed the consequential draft amendments to the 1994 and 2000 HSC Codes and the 2008 SPS Code.
- Agreed the draft MSC resolution on Performance standards for pilot transfer arrangements (expected to be adopted as a mandatory instrument)
- Invited IMPA to make modifications to the proposed illustrations in NCSR 11/13/1 and NCSR 11/13/5 to address the outstanding issues concerning the draft revision of MSC.1/Circ.1428 and submit them to MSC 109 for approval; and, endorsed the Group's agreement that if a particular modification could not be included, IMPA should provide the Committee with an explanation;
- Agreed the draft MSC circular on Voluntary early implementation of the amendments to SOLAS regulation V/23 on pilot transfer arrangements;
- Noted the Group's consideration and invitation in approaching New Zealand to further consider the matter of maximum height of climb on a pilot ladder and recommend possible improvements;

The draft amendments to the regulations are expected to be approved by MSC 109, for adoption at MSC 110 (May 2025).

Application Details of the Draft Amendments to SOLAS Regulation V/23:

- Pilot transfer arrangements installed on or after 1 January 2028, shall be designed, manufactured, constructed, secured and installed in accordance with parts A, B and C of the performance standards. Installed on or after 1 January 2028 means a contractual delivery date for the pilot transfer arrangement or, in the absence of a contractual delivery date, the actual delivery date of the arrangement to the ship on or after 1 January 2028.
- Pilot transfer arrangements installed before 1 January 2028 on ships to which SOLAS chapter I applies, shall be designed, manufactured, constructed, secured and installed in accordance with parts A, B and C of the performance standards, not later than the first annual, periodical or renewal safety equipment survey after 1 January 2029, as referred to in MSC.1/Circ.1290.
- Pilot transfer arrangements installed before 1 January 2028 on ships to which SOLAS Chapter I does not apply, shall be designed, manufactured, constructed, secured and installed in accordance with parts A, B and C of the performance standards, no later than 1 January 2030.
- Regardless of installation date, all pilot transfer arrangements must undergo inspection, stowage, maintenance, replacement, and familiarisation in accordance with parts D and E of the performance standards.
- Pilot transfer arrangements shall be approved in accordance with part F of the performance standards.
- Accommodation ladders, together with any associated fittings intended for use in accordance with the performance standards shall meet the requirements for the means of embarkation on and disembarkation from ships as required by SOLAS regulation II-1/3-9. This includes those installed prior to 1 January 2010 which do not currently need to comply with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-9.
- Regardless of date of installation, maintenance and inspection of accommodation ladders used in the combination arrangement shall be carried out in accordance with SOLAS regulation II-1/3-9.3.

REVISED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS FOR A UNIVERSAL AUTOMATIC IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (AIS)

The Sub-Committee continued its work on possible measures to prevent manipulation of AIS transmissions and tampering of AIS transponders.

Three documents of substance on this item were submitted for consideration (and subsequently sent to the Working Group) in which the following views were expressed:

- AIS is an open system that can be subject to spoofing and manipulation; AIS transmissions can also be simulated by using a separate equipment;
- proposals concerning the enforced entry of the IMO ship identification number and the introduction of a tamper-proof identification code into the AIS equipment should be considered as a way of deterring manipulation of AIS transmissions;
- issues related to spoofing and manipulation of AIS should be addressed by the corresponding Administrations;
- VDES could enhance the integrity and security of AIS in the long term through authentication and encryption of AIS transmissions; and,
- risk mitigation methods presented in IALA Guideline G1181 on VDES VDL Integrity Monitoring and complementary use of the LRIT system will assist in identifying cases of AIS manipulation and ensuring integrity of the information transmitted.

The Sub-Committee agreed to a draft MSC resolution revising the Performance standards for a universal shipborne automatic identification system (AIS) (resolution MSC.74(69)), which enhances the existing requirement for providing the IMO ship identification number as part of the static AIS information (or an "official flag State number", where the ship has no IMO number).

The resolution also introduces a new requirement for broadcasting a "unique manufacturer equipment identification number", which should also be physically marked on the equipment. The draft resolution will be submitted for adoption by MSC 109.

DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC NAUTICAL PUBLICATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered document NCSR 11/12 (Republic of Korea) proposing draft guidelines on installation and use of Electronic Nautical Publications (ENPs). During the ensuing consideration, delegations that took the floor supported the proposed draft guidelines, in principle. However, views were expressed on matters that required further consideration, such as:

- making the draft guidelines more technologically neutral and addressing the use of portable devices (i.e. tablets) and cybersecurity;
- determining whether installation should be part of the guidelines or if they should refer instead to carriage of ENPs; and,
- considering whether section 5.1 (record of Equipment in relevant SOLAS Safety Certificates) should be removed from the draft guidelines and addressed instead as part of the unified interpretations contained in MSC.1/Circ.1496.

The observer from IHO was of the view that the scope of the draft guidelines is not clear in terms of applicable navigation systems and expressed concerns that expending resources to advance ENP standards outside the ECDIS environment could divert focus away from an integrated approach to managing nautical publication information, such as S-100.

Report of WG 2

The Sub-Committee noted the considerations of the Group on the development of guidelines for the use of electronic nautical publications (ENP); established a correspondence group on Guidelines for the use of electronic nautical publications (ENP) under the coordination of the Republic of Korea, and instructed it to finalize the draft guidelines for ENP use and submit a report to NCSR 12.

VHF DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM (VDES)

VDES is a digital communication system that operates over the very high frequency (VHF) band to provide secure and reliable data exchange, for example between ships and between ships and shore.

VDES includes four components:

1. Automatic identification system (AIS) for the identification and tracking of vessels as well as additional communication capabilities
2. Application specific message (ASM)
3. Terrestrial component for VHF data exchange (VDE-TER)
4. Satellite component for VHF data exchange (VDE-SAT)

NCSR 11 considered the development of amendments to SOLAS Chapters IV and V, and associated performance standards and guidelines, to introduce the carriage of VDES.

It was agreed that VDES should be introduced as a possible alternative to AIS in SOLAS Chapter V on shipborne navigational systems, i.e. as a voluntary carriage provision. Amendments to introduce VDES as communication equipment under SOLAS Chapter IV will not be pursued at this stage.

The work with amendments to Chapter V/19.2.4 and finalization of the proposed performance standards for VDES will continue in a Correspondence Group until NCSR 12 in May 2025.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

S-100 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ROUTE EXCHANGE

MSC 106 had adopted resolution MSC.530(106) on Performance Standards for electronic chart display and information systems (ECDIS). In doing so, the Committee invited the IHO to keep the IMO informed on the process of development and implementation of the IHO Universal Hydrographic Data Model (S-100) framework standard.

The IHO is actively working on several S-100-based products and services intended for use in the new generation of S-100 ECDIS. The S-100 Implementation Road Map ensures the smooth integration of S-100 standards into end-user devices such as ECDIS. Key milestones in MSC.530(106) included the voluntary installation of S-100 ECDIS from 1

January 2026 and mandatory installation in all new ECDIS from 1 January 2029. Furthermore, MSC 108 adopted resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1 to facilitate a standardised digital exchange of ships' route plans, and further instructed NCSR 11 to consider the development of appropriate operational guidance for route exchange.

The Sub-Committee considered document NCSR 11/18/7 (IHO) providing information regarding the progress on the development and implementation of the IHO Universal Hydrographic Data Model (S-100).

NCSR 11 noted the considerations for developing operational guidance for route exchange as per operative paragraph 4 of resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1, and invited Member States to submit a proposal for a new output to MSC 109 or include it in MSC 109's post-biennial agenda, as this work follows from the adoption of resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1. NCSR 11 also noted the considerations on S-100 implementation and seafarer training needs, and:

- Encouraged Member States to share their experiences with the IMO.
- Invited Member States to submit an urgent proposal for a new output on S-100 implementation to MSC 109, related to the operational guidance in resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1.
- Invited HTW to revise model course 1.27 on ECDIS to include updates from resolution MSC.530(106)/Rev.1.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting, NCSR 12 has been scheduled from 11 to 22 May 2025.

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