

**IMO**

**MARITIME SAFETY  
COMMITTEE (MSC)**

**111<sup>th</sup> Session, 13 – 22 May 2026**

**Session Outcome**



**IRCLASS**  
Indian Register of Shipping

The 111<sup>th</sup> session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) was held at IMO Headquarters from 13<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026.

### **Concise Summary of Important Decisions made**

Following are the important outcomes of MSC 111:

- A. New Instruments and/or Amendments to the following mandatory instruments were adopted at MSC 111:
1. SOLAS Convention Chapters IV and V
  2. 1988 Load Lines Protocol
  3. LSA Code
  4. 2011 ESP Code
  5. 1994 HSC Code
  6. 2000 HSC Code
  7. IMDG Code
  8. Industrial Personnel (IP) Code
- (please see the relevant sections in this report for explanation of the amendments)
- B. In addition, relevant discussions and decisions taken by the Committee in regard to the following agenda items are further elaborated in this report which also includes relevant circulars approved at this session:
1. Agenda Item 5 – Adoption of a non-mandatory International Code for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code)
  2. Agenda Item 6 – Development of a Safety Regulatory Framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from Ships using New technologies and Alternative Fuels
  3. Agenda Item 11 – Revision of the financial architecture of the LRIT system
  4. Agenda Item 12 – Ship Design and Construction
  5. Agenda Item 13 – Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping
  6. Agenda Item 14 – Carriage of Cargoes and Containers
  7. Agenda Item 15 – Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue
  8. Agenda Item 17 – Implementation of IMO Instruments
  9. Agenda Item 19 – Work Programme

## A brief of relevant topics which were discussed at MSC 111

### **Consideration and adoption of amendments to mandatory instruments (Agenda Item 3)**

#### *Amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention*

The Committee adopted amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention, Chapter IV. These amendments will enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

- a. Part B Regulation 5 – A new paragraph 3 is added which obligates each Contracting Government to undertake use of all operational recognized mobile satellite services in their area of responsibility when disseminating safety and SAR information.

The Committee also adopted amendments to 1974 SOLAS Convention Chapter V. These amendments will enter into force on **1 January 2028** and are as follows:

1. Regulation 4 – This regulation is amended to indicate that communication of intelligence of danger when received should be communicated in accordance with the newly introduced paragraph SOLAS IV/5.3.
2. Regulation 5 – The chapeau of paragraph 2 is amended referring to the newly introduced paragraph SOLAS IV/5.3.
3. Regulation 18 – The footnote to paragraph 2 which lists the performance standards is amended and now includes reference to the newly adopted performance standards for shipborne VHF data exchange system. Further, paragraph 9 is amended and necessitates annual testing for the shipborne VHF data exchange system (in addition to the AIS).
4. Regulation 19 – Paragraph 2.4 is amended and mandates the installation of VHF data exchange system onboard in addition to the AIS.
5. Regulation 19-1 – Paragraph 4.2 is amended for ships to be fitted with a VHF data exchange system in addition to the AIS.
6. The Forms of the certificates in appendix to the convention are suitably amended to reflect the VHF data exchange system.

#### *Amendments to the 2011 ESP Code*

The Committee adopted amendments to the 2011 ESP Code with regard to enabling the use of Remote Inspection Techniques during the surveys of ESP Code vessels. The amendments also contain the requirements (specified in dedicated new annexes) for certification of firms engaged in close-up survey of hull structures of bulk carriers and oil tankers using remote inspection techniques.

These amendments will enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

#### *Amendments to the 1994 HSC Code*

The Committee adopted amendments to the 1994 HSC Code, Chapter 13. The amendments pertain to paragraphs 13.15.1 – 13.15.4 with regard to mandating the provision of VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) onboard in addition to the AIS. The Form of the High-Speed Safety Craft Certificate is also amended to include information regarding the VHF data exchange system. The amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Amendments to the 2000 HSC Code*

Similar amendments as above to the 1994 HSC Code, are made.

### *Amendments to the International Maritime Dangerous Cargoes Code (IMDG Code)*

The Committee adopted amendments to the IMDG Code. The amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships carrying Industrial Personnel (IP Code)*

The Committee adopted amendments to the IP Code. The amendments are with regard to Part IV, Regulation 2 (Subdivision and Stability). The mass of each IP is prescribed to be 90kg (instead of the earlier 75kg) for ships for which building contract has been placed on or after 1 January 2028 or ships whose delivery is on or after 1 January 2028 or the keel is laid or which is at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2028.

The amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Amendments to the Life Saving Appliances Code (LSA Code)*

The Committee adopted amendments to the LSA Code. The amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Amendments to the Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats, rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear (MSC.402(96))*

The Committee adopted amendments to resolution MSC.402(96) with regard to the annual thorough examination and operational test for lifeboats, rescue boats and fast rescue boats (Section 6.2) – their arrangement to test the release system without launching the lifeboat into water (free-fall lifeboats only).

These amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Amendments to the 1988 Load Lines Protocol*

The Committee adopted amendments to the Protocol of 1988 relating to the International Convention on Load Lines, 1996. Chapter II of Annex 1 of Annex B is amended to provide additional requirements pertaining to provision of guard rails. With these amendments, guard rails are to have at least three courses.

These amendments enter into force on **1 January 2028**.

### *Approval of amendments to related non-mandatory instruments*

The Committee adopted the following resolutions:

1. MSC.509(105)/Rev.2 on provision of radio services for the GMDSS
2. MSC.XXX(111) on Introduction of the VHF data exchange system (VDES) into the IMO regulatory framework
3. MSC.XXX(111) on Performance standards for shipborne VHF data exchange system (VDES)

4. MSC.XXX(111) on draft amendments to the LSA Code and resolution MSC.402(96) on simulated launching of free-fall lifeboats

The Committee approved the following circulars:

1. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Guidelines for the onboard operational use of shipborne VHF data exchange system (VDES)
2. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Revised emergency response procedures for ships carrying dangerous goods (EmS Guide)
3. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Revised guidelines for developing operation and maintenance manuals for lifeboat systems
4. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Unified interpretations of paragraphs 4.4.7.6 and 4.7.7 of the LSA Code, as amended by resolutions MSC.320(89) and MSC.XXX(111)
5. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Revised guidelines on safety during abandon ship drills using lifeboats
6. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Revised standardized life-saving appliance evaluation and test report forms

#### **Development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) (Agenda Item 5)**

The Committee adopted the International Code of Safety for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS Code) as a non-mandatory instrument, with entry into effect on 1 July 2026.

The Code is intended to address safety aspects not fully covered by SOLAS and other IMO instruments, particularly where autonomous or remotely operated ships do not fit the conventional ship framework.

A key outcome is the establishment of dedicated certification formats, including the Maritime Autonomous Surface Ship Safety Certificate, the MASS-ROC Certificate, provisional certificates and associated records. The MASS certificate focuses on safety matters and avoids duplicating information already covered by existing SOLAS certificates. The associated Record is expected to document key information such as the ship's operational envelope, autonomous and remote functions, task allocation, fallback states and contingency plans. These elements will be central to design review, approval in principle, plan appraisal, survey, flag Administration acceptance and future port State control considerations.

The adopted Code also introduces a clearer framework for Remote Operations Centres (ROCs). The MASS-ROC Certificate will apply to each MASS that a ROC is authorized to operate. The Code includes the concept of a ROC identifier, although its detailed specification will be developed further during the Experience-Building Phase. The Committee also noted that future work may consider whether a separate ROC management certification regime is required, similar in concept to the ISM Company Document of Compliance and shipboard Safety Management Certificate.

Training and watchkeeping standards under the STCW Convention and Code may be considered by Administrations for assigned roles within a ROC. Administrations may also designate a ROC as a directly associated location to the navigational bridge or machinery space for the purpose of meeting relevant STCW requirements. While this provides a pathway for implementation, further harmonization will be important to avoid inconsistent interpretations across Administrations.

On maritime security, the adopted framework brings the ROC within the ISPS-related security regime through the ship's security assessment and ship security plan, rather than requiring a separate ROC security assessment and plan at this stage. The Code also requires consideration of predefined fallback states where ROC security is compromised, and safe or secure remote operation cannot be maintained. Data logging and access provisions have been refined so that MASS data is shared with Administrations and marine investigation authorities upon request.

The adoption of the non-mandatory Code initiates the next phase of regulatory development through the Experience-Building Phase (EBP). Areas expected to receive further attention include terminology for remote operators and remote crew, human oversight and control, modes of operation, ROC identifiers, cargo-related provisions, security arrangements, reporting templates, data repositories and the future development of a mandatory MASS Code.

Shipowners, operators, designers, system integrators and technology providers should now begin aligning MASS concepts, operational profiles, system architectures, fallback arrangements, data logging, cybersecurity and ROC interfaces with the adopted Code. Early engagement with flag Administrations and Class will be essential to establish approval and certification pathways. Class societies will play a central role in converting the non-mandatory Code into practical assurance, survey and certification processes, supporting safe innovation while preparing industry for the transition toward a future mandatory MASS regulatory regime.

The Committee noting the establishment of the experience building phase and the intended outcome of adopting a mandatory MASS Code extended the target completion year of the output to 2030. The Committee also endorsed the revised roadmap for developing the goal-based code for MASS.

The Committee also agreed to re-establish the MASS Working Group at MSC 112 and with terms of reference to develop a framework for the experience building phase.

### **Development of Safety Regulatory Framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from Ships using New Technologies and Alternative Fuels (Agenda Item 6)**

The Committee agreed on the following decisions with regard to this agenda item:

- .1 Transfer the work item "consider development of draft amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1/41 to allow for batteries to be used as the main source of electrical power and lighting systems" to the Ship Design and Construction Sub-Committee
- .2 Approved MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on the Interim Guidelines for Safety of ships using hydrogen as fuel
- .3 Approved MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on the Interim Guidelines for Safety of Ships using ammonia cargo as fuel
- .4 Approved draft amendments to SOLAS Chapter II-1 and the IGF Code related to the "one ship one code" policy for gas carriers as well as terminology such as "gaseous fuel", "low flashpoint fuel" and "IGF Code" with view to adoption at MSC 112 and entry into force on **1 July 2028**
- .5 Approved draft amendments to the IGC Code with regard to various topics with view to adoption at MSC 112 and entry into force on **1 July 2028**

### **Revision of the financial architecture of the LRIT system (Agenda Item 11)**

The Committee approved the draft amendments to SOLAS Chapter V, regulation 19-1 with regard to introduction of the free of charge policy for provision of the LRIT information to entitled coastal states with a view to adoption at MSC 112 and entry into force on **1 January 2032**.

The Committee approved in principle, the draft revisions to Performance standards and functional requirements for the long-range identification and tracking of ships (resolution MSC.263(84)/Rev.1) with view to adoption at MSC 112.

### **Ship Design and Construction (Agenda Item 12)**

The Committee approved the following:

1. Explanatory Notes for Safe return to port and orderly evacuation and abandonment after a fire or a flooding casualty (MSC.1/Circ.1369/Rev.1). These contain amendments and additions on system operability, steering and propulsion redundancy, documentation and verification requirements, and provide improved criteria for which systems must support evacuation and abandonment or "remain operational" after a fire or flooding casualty
2. Guidelines on the use of remote inspection techniques for ESP Code Surveys (MSC.1/Circ.XXXX)
3. Revised interim guidelines for use of fiber reinforced plastic (FRP) elements within ship structures: fire safety (MSC.1/Circ.XXXX)
4. Revisions to the Circular on Escape Arrangements from the lower part of Machinery Spaces vide MSC.1/Circ.1689/Rev.1

The Committee adopted vide resolution MSC.XXX(111), the amendments to the 2009 MODU Code with regard to Chapter 6 containing amendments to clarify requirements for electrical equipment that must remain operational after an emergency shutdown.

### **Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW) (Agenda Item 13)**

The Committee approved the following:

- .1 STCW.7/Circ.26 on Interim Guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using methyl and ethyl alcohol as fuel
- .2 STCW.7/Circ.27 on Interim Guidelines on training for seafarers on ships using ammonia as fuel
- .3 MSC.1/Circ.797/Rev.43 which contains the list of competent persons maintained by the Secretary-General pursuant to section A-I/7 of the STCW Code

### **Carriage of Cargo and Containers (Agenda Item 14)**

The Committee took the following actions:

- .1 Approved MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on Unified Interpretations of the IGC Code
- .2 Adopted the Revised Interim Recommendations for Carriage of Liquefied Hydrogen in Bulk. These revisions enable the carriage of liquefied hydrogen in membrane type tanks.

## **Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue (Agenda Item 15)**

The Committee took the following actions:

1. Adopted vide resolution MSC.XXX(111) on *Mandatory ship reporting system "In the Adriatic Sea" (ADRIREP)* revising and superseding the existing mandatory ship reporting system contained in resolution MSC.139(76), annex 2, to be implemented six months after its adoption
2. Adopted resolution MSC.314(88)/Rev.1 on *Mandatory ship reporting system "In the Sound between Denmark and Sweden" (SOUNDREP)*, revising and superseding the existing mandatory ship reporting system adopted by resolution MSC.314(88), to be implemented six months after its adoption.
3. Adopted resolution MSC.332(90)/Rev.1 on *Mandatory ship reporting system "In the Storebælt (Great Belt) traffic area" (BELTREP)*, revising and superseding the existing mandatory ship reporting system adopted by resolution MSC.332(90), to be implemented six months after its adoption.
4. Adopted amendments to the Worldwide Radionavigation System (resolution A.1046(27)), revising the annex to resolution A.1046(27) to include relevant requirements for augmentation systems
5. adopted resolution MSC.379(93)/Rev.1 on *Performance standards for shipborne BeiDou Satellite Navigation System (BDS) receiver equipment*
6. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on *Guidelines for software maintenance of shipboard computer-based navigation and communication equipment and systems*
7. MSC.1/Circ.XXXX on *Guidelines on carriage and use of electronic nautical publications (ENP) system*
8. MSC.1/Circ.1657/Rev.1 on *Procedure for responding to DSC distress alerts by ships*

## **Implementation of IMO Instruments (Agenda Item 17)**

The Committee approved the circular MSC-MEPC.5/Circ.XXXX which contains Guidance on assessments and applications of remote surveys, ISM Code audits and ISPS Code verifications.

The Committee approved MSC-MEPC.5/Circ.3/Rev.1 on the Revised unified interpretation of the date of completion of the survey and verification on which the certificates are based.

## **Work Programme (Agenda Item 19)**

The Committee agreed to include in it's post biennial agenda, the following key new outputs:

1. Revision of paragraph 4.6.3.1 of the LSA Code for free-fall lifeboat safety harness with the Ship Systems and Equipment sub-committee tasked to complete the work within one session. The output will apply to new ships.
2. Revision of paragraph 3.5.4 and table 19.1 of SOLAS regulation II-2/19 (amend paragraph 3.5.4 and table 19.1 of SOLAS regulation II-2/19 to clarify the cases where reduced ventilation rates are allowed in container cargo spaces carrying dangerous goods) with the Ship Systems and Equipment sub-committee tasked to complete the work within one session. The output will apply to new installations.

3. Amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1264/Rev.1 and MSC.1/Circ.1358/Rev.1 to provide for additional equipment and safety measures with the Carriage of Cargo and Containers Sub-Committee tasked to complete the work by 2027.
4. Revision of MSC-MEPC.3/Circ.4/Rev.1 on casualty-related matters in the context of reports on marine casualties and incidents to be carried out by the Implementation of IMO Instruments Sub-Committee with two sessions necessary to complete the work.

***NB:*** Please note that the number of new Resolutions and Circulars were not finalised at the time of preparing this report and are indicative only.

For any queries, you can reach out to:

***External Affairs Department***

*Indian Register of Shipping*

*52A, Adi Shankaracharya Marg*

*Opp Powai Lake, Powai*

*Mumbai - 400072*

*Email: [exad@irclass.org](mailto:exad@irclass.org)*

*Whilst the utmost care has been taken in the compilation of this information, neither Indian Register of Shipping, its affiliates and subsidiaries if any, nor any of its directors, officers, employees or agents assume any responsibility and shall not be liable to any person for any loss, damage or expense caused in any manner whatsoever by reliance on the information in this document.*