
4 ALBERT EMBANKMENT
LONDON SE1 7SR
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7735 7611 Fax: +44 (0)20 7587 3210

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**UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF SOLAS CHAPTERS II-1 AND
SAFE RETURN TO PORT REQUIREMENTS FOR FLOODING DETECTION SYSTEMS**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-sixth session (11 to 20 May 2016), in order to facilitate global and consistent implementation of the requirements of SOLAS chapter II-1, approved *Unified Interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-1* (MSC.1/Circ.1539), prepared by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction, at its third session.

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 101st session (5 to 14 June 2019), approved amendments to MSC.1/Circ.1539 to include additional text in the unified interpretations of SOLAS regulation II-1/7-2 on the calculation of the factor s_i , as well as new interpretations of regulations II-1/22-1 and II-2/21.4.13 on the safe return to port requirement for flooding detection systems. The amended text of the unified interpretations is set out in the annex.

3 Member States are invited to bring the annexed unified interpretations to the attention of all parties concerned, noting that the unified interpretation of regulations II-1/22-1 and II-2/21.4.13 on the safe return to port requirement for flooding detection system should only be applied to ships contracted for construction on or after 1 July 2019.

4 This circular supersedes MSC.1/Circ.1539.

ANNEX

UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS OF SOLAS CHAPTER II-1

Regulation 2.21 – Definition of the term "Lightweight"

1 The weight of mediums on board for the fixed fire-fighting systems (e.g. freshwater, CO₂, dry chemical powder, foam concentrate, etc.) should be included in the lightweight and lightship condition.

Regulation 3-2 – Protective coatings of dedicated seawater ballast tanks in all types of ships and double-side skin spaces of bulk carriers

2 The following tanks should not be considered to be dedicated seawater ballast tanks and should, therefore, be exempted from the application and requirements of the *Performance standard for protective coatings for dedicated seawater ballast tanks in all types of ships and double-side skin spaces of bulk carriers* (resolution MSC.215(82)), provided the coatings applied in the tanks described in sub-paragraphs .2 and .3 below are confirmed by the coating manufacturer to be resistant to the media stored in these tanks and provided such coatings are applied and maintained according to the coating manufacturer's procedures.

- .1 ballast tanks identified as "Spaces included in Net Tonnage" in the International Tonnage Certificate (1969);
- .2 seawater ballast tanks in passenger ships also designated for the carriage of grey water or black water; and
- .3 seawater ballast tanks in livestock carriers also designated for the carriage of livestock dung.

Regulation 7-2 – Calculation of the factor s_i

3 In applying θ_v , openings which cannot be or are incapable of being closed weathertight include ventilators (complying with regulation 19(4) of the *International Convention on Load Lines, 1966*) that for operational reasons have to remain open to supply air to the engine-room, emergency generator room or closed ro-ro and vehicle spaces (if the same is considered buoyant in the stability calculation or protecting openings leading below) for the effective operation of the ship. Where it is not technically feasible to treat some closed ro-ro and vehicle space ventilators as unprotected openings, Administrations may allow an alternative arrangement that provides an equivalent level of safety.

Regulation II-1/22-1 – Flooding detection systems for passenger ships carrying 36 or more persons constructed on or after 1 July 2010ⁱ

"A flooding detection system for watertight spaces below the bulkhead deck shall be provided based on the guidelines developed by the Organization.*

* Refer to *Guidelines for flooding detection systems on passenger ships* (MSC.1/Circ.1291)."

ⁱ SOLAS regulations II-1/22-1 and II-2/21.4.13 amendments were adopted by resolution MSC.216(82)

Regulation II-2/21.4 – Safe return to port*

"When fire damage does not exceed the casualty threshold indicated in paragraph 3, the ship shall be capable of returning to port while providing a safe area as defined in regulation 3. To be deemed capable of returning to port, the following systems shall remain operational in the remaining part of the ship not affected by fire:

(...)

.13 flooding detection systems; and (...)

* *Refer to Interim Explanatory Notes for the assessment of passenger ship systems' capabilities after a fire or flooding casualty (MSC.1/Circ.1369 and Add.1)."*

Guidelines for flooding detection systems on passenger ships (MSC.1/Circ.1291)

"7 Any watertight spaces that are separately equipped with a liquid level monitoring system (such as fresh water, ballast water, fuel, etc.), with an indicator panel or other means of monitoring at the navigation bridge (and the safety centre if located in a separate space from the navigation bridge), are excluded from these requirements."

Interpretation

For passenger ships carrying 36 or more persons and subject to SOLAS regulation II-1/8-1, the Safe Return To Port (SRTP) requirements of SOLAS regulation II-2/21.4 apply to both:

- .1 the flooding detection systems in the spaces as defined in paragraph 6 of MSC.1/Circ.1291; and
- .2 the liquid level monitoring systems, which are used as, or replace, the flooding detection systems, as specified in paragraph 7 of MSC.1/Circ.1291.

Therefore, for systems noted in sub-paragraph .2 above, the phrase "excluded from these requirements" in paragraph 7 of MSC.1/Circ.1291 is not an exclusion from the general provision in SOLAS regulation II-2/21.4.13 (remain operational in the event of fire). This exclusion pertains only to the detailed provisions in MSC.1/Circ.1291.