



SUB-COMMITTEE ON SHIP DESIGN AND
EQUIPMENT
53rd session
Agenda item 3

DE 53/3/4
18 December 2009
Original: ENGLISH

MEASURES TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS WITH LIFEBOATS

Information regarding experience gained in the use of Fall Preventer Devices (FPD)

Submitted by the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

SUMMARY

Executive summary:	ICS provides information regarding experience gained to date with the use of fall preventer devices (FPD).
Strategic direction:	5.1
High-level action:	5.1.2
Planned output:	5.1.2.1
Action to be taken:	Paragraph 9
Related documents:	MSC 83/INF.15 and MSC.1/Circ.1327

Introduction

1 MSC.1/Circ.1327 provides guidance on the fitting and use of fall preventer devices (FPD). This guidance was approved following extensive consideration by IMO when it was determined that there was a need for interim arrangements to supplement current lifeboat release hooks until such time as an improved safe hook design is agreed and becomes available.

2 DE 52/21 reports that the Sub-Committee agreed, “*fall preventer devices (FPDs) are only an interim measure, to be used with existing on-load release hooks, pending the implementation of improved hook designs with enhanced safety features; that both locking pins and strops are allowed; and that FPDs may be used in all launching and recovery situations, i.e. drills, maintenance and emergency situations*”.

3 The Sub-Committee also agreed, “*hooks of poor and unstable design*” should be replaced and that amendments to the LSA Code should specify safer lifeboat on-load hooks with the following elements: durable corrosion resistant construction materials; safe operation not reliant on maintenance of critical manufacturing tolerances; and provision of means to enable release only at a safe height.

For reasons of economy, this document is printed in a limited number. Delegates are kindly asked to bring their copies to meetings and not to request additional copies.



4 The Industry Lifeboat Group (ILG), whose formation was advised to the Committee in document MSC 83/INF.15, continues to work to address LSA safety issues. In addition to user interests, a number of other interests are represented including, the LSA manufacturers' organization ILAMA.

Information

5 The ILG was recently notified of two separate lifeboat incidents that occurred when onload release hooks failed and opened during manned drills. In these incidents almost certain serious injuries and possibly fatalities were averted by the FPD that had been fitted and operated in accordance with the guidance of MSC.1/Circ.1327. On both occasions otherwise inevitable falls to the water were prevented and the lifeboats and their occupants were recovered safely without injury or damage.

6 IACS has notified the ILG of information regarding the use of FPD as advised by one NW European lifeboat manufacturer. It was noted that despite the existence of MSC.1/Circ.1327 on the fitting of FPD, this manufacturer states that, subject to certain criteria, an FPD is not required to be installed on lifeboats that are included under the brand names of that manufacturer. The company advises that the only possible location for the attachment of the FPD is to the maintenance lug that has not itself been designed to withstand the dynamic loading associated with the use of FPD. ILAMA advised the ILG that some of their other members share this position.

7 ICS expresses its deep concern that during DE 52 when the FPD guidance was finalized and approved and in subsequent consideration by the Committee, lifeboat hook manufacturers raised no reservations regarding the development or implementation of MSC.1/Circ.1327, but that some companies now oppose the circular. ICS considers the IMO guidance to be a responsible response to concern regarding hooks that fail and then open.

8 It is understood that replies by the NW European lifeboat manufacturing company to enquiries advise that FPD are not required in certain restricted circumstances related to inspection, servicing and training. Furthermore, the company's hooks would require to be redesigned to accommodate the loads associated with such devices. This response to enquiries regarding the fitting and use of FPD causes ICS deep concern as uncertainty and confusion will inevitably follow. MSC.1/Circ.1327 was written to address a need for clarity and consistency regarding safety during lifeboat launch and recovery where numerous fatal accidents have occurred. This stance taken by one leading LSA manufacturer (and ILAMA member) is already causing uncertainty and confusion and undermines the work undertaken by the Organization.

Action requested of the Sub-Committee

9 The Sub-Committee is invited to note the information provided and decide as appropriate. The Sub-Committee is also invited to consider if further actions are required to address the concerns raised.