



CENTRE FOR IMO AFFAIRS

INFORMATION BULLETIN

No 15/2025

Upcoming IMO requirements entering into force in 2026

REQUIREMENTS ON SAFETY (SOLAS AND APPLICABLE CODES)			
IMO New/revised instruments	Resolution	Date of entry into force	Application/Content
Amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and HSC Codes on the prohibition of perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)	MSC.532(107) MSC.536(107) MSC.537(107)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships New vessels must comply from delivery, while existing ships must meet the requirements at their first survey on or after that date.
			Amendments prohibit the use and storage of fire-extinguishing media containing PFOS on ships and high-speed craft. The requirements apply to both fixed and portable firefighting systems.
Amendments to SOLAS chapter II-1 on safety requirements for lifting appliances and anchor handling winches	MSC.532(107)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
			Amendments state that new lifting appliances must be designed, installed, load-tested and marked with their safe working load, while existing ones must meet examination and documentation requirements by their first renewal survey. All appliances must be regularly maintained and tested, with certain offshore and lifesaving equipment excluded. Related Instruments: • MSC.1/Circ.1663 - Guidelines for Lifting Appliances • MSC.1/Circ.1662 - Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches

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Amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 and FSS Code on fire safety of closed vehicle spaces, ro-ro spaces and special category spaces	MSC.550(108) MSC.555(108)	1 January 2026	All New Ships Ships the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2026
			Amendments require improved fire detection (smoke plus heat or linear heat detectors) and permanent video monitoring in vehicle, ro-ro, and special-category spaces, and regulate how openings (doors, ramps, vents) must be protected so a fire can't spread to accommodation or control areas. They also introduce fixed water-based fire-extinguishing systems (monitors) on weather decks used for vehicle carriage. For ro-ro passenger ships constructed on or after 1 January 2026, the fire-extinguishing monitors must cover the entire weather-deck vehicle area, deliver a minimum water flow rate, be placed where they can operate even with vehicles loaded. Areas that cannot be covered by water monitors shall be protected by water nozzles.
Amendments to SOLAS chapter II-2 for safety measures on use of fuel oil	MSC.520(106)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
			Amendments tighten safety around fuel oil flashpoints: they require that before bunkering, the fuel oil supplier shall provide a certified declaration confirming that the fuel meets SOLAS flashpoint requirements, and the bunker delivery note must include the measured flashpoint (or a statement that it's ≥ 70 °C).

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Amendments to SOLAS chapter V and format of SE Certificate on carriage of electronic inclinometers	MSC.532(107) MSC.533(107) MSC.534(107)	1 January 2026	New container ships and bulk carriers, 3000 GT and upwards, constructed on or after 1 January 2026. "Constructed" in respect of a ship means a stage of construction where: • Ships the keel of which are laid; or • construction identifiable with a specific ship begins; or • assembly of the ship has commenced comprising at least 50 tonnes or 1% of the estimated mass of all structural material, whichever is less.
			Amendments state that newly built bulk carriers and container ships of 3,000 GT and above must carry electronic inclinometers. These inclinometers allow the Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) to record and display the ship's roll motion, improving both incident investigation and operational-stability monitoring. Amendments add "container ship" as a ship type in SOLAS Chapter V and require "electronic inclinometer" to be listed in the Record of Equipment on the Safety Equipment Certificate. Also, backup systems (electronic or mechanical) are not required – the inclinometer is considered operational equipment rather than critical for navigation.

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Amendments to SOLAS chapter XIV and related amendments to the Polar Code	MSC.538(107) MSC.532(107)	1 January 2026	Fishing vessels, pleasure yachts and cargo ships, as defined below, constructed on or after 1 January 2026
		1 January 2027	Fishing vessels, pleasure yachts and cargo ships, as defined below, are constructed before 1 January 2026
		Resolution MSC.538(107) adds new chapters 9-1 (Safety of Navigation for Non-SOLAS ships) and 11-1 (Voyage Planning for Non-SOLAS ships) to the Polar Code. It introduces requirements for reliable navigation and voyage planning that account for ice conditions, environmental hazards, protected areas, marine life and the remoteness of rescue services. The amendments apply to all ships as well as: • Fishing vessels ≥ 24 m, • Pleasure yachts ≥ 300 GT not engaged in trade, • Cargo ships ≥ 300 GT but < 500 GT. Related Instruments: • A.1137(31) - Interim safety measures for ships not certified under the SOLAS Convention operating in polar waters • MSC.385(94) - International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code)	

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Amendments to IGC Code	MSC.523(106)	1 January 2026	New gas carriers - ships the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2026
		1 January 2028	Existing gas carriers - Not later than the first survey on or after 1 January 2028
		Amendments add high manganese austenitic steel in Table 6.3 of IGC Code on plates, sections and forgings for cargo tanks, secondary barriers and process pressure vessels for design temperatures below -55°C and down to -165°C. Related Instruments: MSC.1/Circ.1599/Rev.3 - Revised guidelines on the application of high manganese austenitic steel for cryogenic service	
Amendments to IGC Code	MSC.566(109)	1 July 2026	New and existing gas carriers
		Amendments update the IGC Code to allow certain toxic cargoes (like ammonia) to be used as fuel. Related Instruments: MSC.1/Circ.1681 - Voluntary early implementation of the amendments to chapter 16 of the IGC Code	
Amendments to IGF Code	MSC.524(106)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships using gases or other low-flashpoint fuels
		Amendments add high-manganese austenitic steel in IGF Code Table 7.3 as a permitted material for plates, structural sections, and forgings used in fuel tanks, secondary barriers, and process pressure vessels operating at design temperatures from below -55°C to -165°C.	

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Amendments to IGF Code	MSC.551(108)	1 January 2026	New ships Ships for which: - the building contract is placed on or after 1 January 2026; and - in the absence of a building contract: - the keel of which is laid, or which is at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 July 2026; or - ships the delivery of which is on or after 1 January 2030.
		1 January 2026	Existing ships
		Amendments upgrade the IGF Code to tighten safety requirements for ships using low-flashpoint fuels. They introduce clearer definitions, strengthen rules for tank design, pressure relief, gas-supply systems and hazardous-area classification, and add stricter requirements for bunkering procedures, fire safety and equipment redundancy.	

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Amendments to LSA Code	MSC.554(108)	1 January 2026	New ships For ships for which the building contract is placed on or after 1 January 2026, or in the absence of the contract, the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2026, applies to all life-saving appliances of the specified type on board those ships.
		1 January 2026	Existing ships For ships other than those ships specified above, applies to all life-saving appliances of the specified type, having a contractual delivery date for the equipment or, in the absence of a contractual delivery date to the ship, actually delivered to the ship on or after 1 January 2026.
		Amendments update the LSA Code to improve the safety of life-saving appliances, including lifejackets and survival craft, by ensuring quicker self-righting, safer lowering speeds and more secure lifeboat release systems.	
Amendments to LSA Code	MSC.535(107) MSC.544(107)	1 January 2029	New ships Applies to totally enclosed lifeboats installed on or after 1 January 2029
		1 January 2029	Existing ships Applies to totally enclosed lifeboats installed on or after 1 January 2029
		Amendments update the LSA Code to require better ventilation for totally enclosed lifeboats – specifically, mandate a minimum ventilation rate per person. Related Instruments: • MSC.544(107) - Amendments to the Revised recommendation on testing of life-saving appliances (Resolution MSC.81(70))	

Amendments to IMDG Code	MSC.556(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships carrying cargo under IMDG Code
		Amendments clarify stowage arrangements, add or update entries for battery-powered vehicles (e.g., lithium-ion, sodium-ion), revise special provisions for batteries and carbon substances, and improve documentation rules. Related Instruments: MSC.1/Circ.1588/Rev.3 - Revised emergency response procedures for ships carrying dangerous goods (EmS Guide)	
Amendments to 2011 ESP Code	MSC.553(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
		Amendments clarify how firms that perform hull-thickness measurements are approved and audited and confirm that flag Administrations (not just Recognized Organizations) can directly audit and certify these firms.	
Amendments to Grain Code	MSC.552(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
		Amendments introduce a new, previously undefined, loading condition for grain holds: “specially suitable compartment, partly filled in the way of the hatch opening, with ends untrimmed” and update how to calculate the heeling moment for that condition.	

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Amendments to the Performance standard for protective coatings for dedicated seawater ballast tanks in all types of ships and double-side skin spaces of bulk carriers res. MSC.215(82) , as amended	MSC.557(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships The requirement applies to the qualifications of protective coating assessment inspectors.
			Amendments replace “NACE Coating Inspector Level 2” with “AMPP Certified Coatings Inspector”.
Amendments to the Requirements for maintenance, thorough examination, operational testing, overhaul and repair of lifeboats and rescue boats, launching appliances and release gear res. MSC.402(96)	MSC.559(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
			Amendments add a requirement that the ventilation system of lifeboats, rescue boats, and fast rescue boats—where fitted—must be included in the annual thorough examination and testing. Related Instruments: • MSC.535(107) - Amendments to the International Life-Saving Appliance Code (LSA Code)

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Amendments to the Performance standard for protective coatings for cargo oil tanks of crude oil tankers res. MSC.288(87)	MSC.558(108)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
			Amendments set performance standards for protective coatings in crude oil tanker cargo tanks to reduce corrosion.
Amendments to the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual	MSC.1/Circ.1686	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
			Amendments affect Volumes I, II, and III of the manual and include updates to GMDSS regulations, new appendices on search and rescue coordination, and guidance on using night vision equipment and search planning for offshore installations. Under SOLAS regulation V/21, a hard copy of Volume III is mandatory to be carried onboard all ships.

REQUIREMENTS ON MARINE POLLUTION PREVENTION (MARPOL AND NOx CODE)

IMO New/revised instruments	Resolution	Date of entry into force	Application/Content
Designation of NOx ECA (Canadian Arctic)	MEPC.392(82)	1 March 2026	New ships Ships the keels of which are laid or that are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2025
Designation of NOx ECA (Norwegian Sea)		1 March 2026	New ships - Ships for which the building contract is placed on or after 1 March 2026; or - Ships the keel of which are laid on or after 1 September 2026, in the absence of a building contract; or - Ships the delivery of which is on or after 1 March 2030.
Designation of SOx ECA (Norwegian Sea and Canadian Arctic)		1 March 2027	New and existing ships
		Resolution MEPC.392(82) updates MARPOL Annex VI by designating the Canadian Arctic and Norwegian Sea as Emission Control Areas, where ships must meet tighter restrictions on nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides and particulate emissions.	
Amendments to NOx Technical Code 2008	MEPC.398(83)	1 September 2026	New and existing ships
		Resolution MEPC.398(83) amends the NOx Technical Code 2008, specifying requirements for the certification of engines that have undergone significant modifications or are being certified to a Tier standard different from the one originally assigned at installation.	

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Amendments to Protocol I of MARPOL	MEPC.384(81)	1 January 2026	New and existing ships
		Amendments introduce a requirement of reporting freight containers lost at sea in accordance with the danger message procedures under SOLAS regulations V/31 and V/32.	

REQUIREMENTS IN TERMS OF STCW/STCW-F CONVENTION AND RELEVANT CODES

IMO New/revised instruments	Resolution	Date of entry into force	Application/Content
Amendments to STCW-F Convention and STCW-F Code	MSC.561(108) MSC.562(108)	1 January 2026	Applicable to crews of new and existing fishing vessels
		Resolution MSC.561(108) revises the annex of the 1995 STCW-F Convention, updating the training, certification and watchkeeping requirements for fishing vessel personnel. Resolution MSC.562(108) adopts a new STCW-F Code, making Part A (mandatory competence standards) binding under the Convention and providing updated guidance (Part B) for fishing vessel personnel. Related Instruments: MSC.561(108) - Revised annex to the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F)	

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Amendments to STCW Code	MSC.560(108)	1 January 2026	Applicable to crews of new and existing vessels
		Resolution MSC.560(108) amends Part A of the STCW Code, specifically updating the minimum competences in personal safety and social responsibilities (table A-VI/1-4) to include prevention of and response to bullying, harassment (including sexual harassment) and sexual assault.	