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MSC.1/Circ.1246  
29 October 2007

## INTERPRETATION OF ALTERATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF A MAJOR CHARACTER

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its sixty-third session (16-25 May 1994), noted that the Sub-Committee on Stability and Load Lines and on Fishing Vessels Safety (SLF), in considering a definition of the term “modification of a major character” in the context of chapter II-1 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention, had decided that it should be sufficient to relate the modification, whatever its nature and extent, to its effect on the level of subdivision of the ship. The Committee, therefore, agreed to the following interpretation of alterations and modifications of a major character proposed by the SLF Sub-Committee:

“Where an existing cargo ship is subject to any modification which affects the level of subdivision of that ship, it should be demonstrated that the A/R ratio calculated for the ship after such modifications is not less than the A/R ratio calculated for the ship before the modification. However, in those cases where the ship’s A/R ratio before modification is equal to or greater than unity, it is only necessary to demonstrate that the ship after such modification has an ‘A’ value which is not less than ‘R’, calculated for the modified ship.”

2 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-third session (3-12 October 2007), considered a definition of the term “existing cargo ship” in the context of the above interpretation and, following a proposal by the SLF Sub-Committee at its fiftieth session, agreed that, in the context of this circular, an existing cargo ship means:

- .1 a cargo ship constructed before 1 February 1992, regardless of length; and
- .2 a cargo ship constructed before 1 July 1998, below or equal to 100 m in length.

3 Notwithstanding the above, a cargo ship should not be considered an existing cargo ship if it was:

- .1 constructed between 1 February 1992 and 30 June 1998, and lengthened from below to above 100 m; and
- .2 constructed on or after 1 July 1998.

4 Member Governments are invited to take account of the above interpretation when applying the relevant provisions of chapter II-1 of the 1974 SOLAS Convention.

5 This circular supersedes MSC/Circ.650.