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**GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICATION OF SAFETY STANDARDS TO
PUSHER TUG-BARGE COMBINATIONS**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its sixty-ninth session (11 to 20 May 1998), being concerned about the safety of pusher tug-barge combinations, approved the Guidelines for the application of safety standards to pusher tug-barge combinations, set out in the annex to the present circular.

2 Member Governments are invited to bring the Guidelines to the attention of shipowners, ship operators, shipmasters, skippers and all others involved in pusher tug-barge combination units and relevant operations and urge them to apply the Guidelines as appropriate.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES FOR THE APPLICATION OF SAFETY STANDARDS TO PUSHER TUG-BARGE COMBINATIONS

1 Categorization of pusher tug-barge combinations

For the purpose of applying various safety standards to pusher tug-barge combinations, these should, when nothing else is specified in the standard in question, be categorized as type A or type B, where:

- 1.1 Type A is a pusher tug-barge combination, which does not have the characteristics of a type B combination.
 - 1.1.1 A tug-barge combination, where the coupling is achieved by a completely rigid connection such as a bolt connection, should be regarded as type A, as well as a combination where the pusher can be manoeuvred by remote control from the barge.
- 1.2 Type B is a pusher tug-barge combination with the following characteristics:
 - 1.2.1 The connection system should permit the pusher to move in relation to the barge.
 - 1.2.2 The connection system should permit the pusher to be easily disconnected from the barge. This should be tested in harbour conditions and should be achieved by one person in less than 5 minutes.
- 1.3 This categorization is not intended to preclude any established interpretation of the words "rigidly connected" in regulation 12(s) of chapter V of the 1974 SOLAS Convention or Rule 24(b) of the 1972 Collision Regulations.

2 Application of safety standards to pusher tug-barge combinations

- 2.1 Type A combinations
 - 2.1.1 As a general principle, safety standards should be applied to a type A combination as if it were a single manned engine driven ship, the size parameters of which are those for the combination as a whole.
 - 2.1.2 The gross and net tonnages may be determined either by taking the tug-barge combination as one unit or by calculating the values for the pusher and the barge separately, in which case the tonnage of the combination, for the purpose of applying safety standards, should be the sum of the tonnages of these.
 - 2.1.3 If the pusher is intended to move alone, it should be fully seaworthy on its own.
- 2.2 Type B combinations
 - 2.2.1 As a general principle, safety standards could be applied to a type B combination as to two separate ships, where nothing else is specified in the standard in question.
 - 2.2.2 The pusher should be capable of towing the barge on a hawser, and pusher and barge should be equipped and rigged with the necessary gear for this purpose.

2.2.3 The following codes should be applied, when relevant to the cargo carried on the barge:

- Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes;
- Code of Safe Practice for Cargo Stowage and Securing;
- Code of Safe Practice for Ships Carrying Timber Deck Cargoes;
- International Code for the Safe Carriage of Grain in Bulk; and
- International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code.

2.2.4 For use in exercising their responsibility for the operation of the combination, the master and operator should be informed of the maximum sea states at which the pusher can routinely disconnect and safely reconnect.

3 These Guidelines are applicable to all pusher tug-barge combinations.
