

## **Danish noise regulations and Arctic navigation on the agenda at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment (DE)**

Among the main items on the agenda at the session were the following:

### **Arctic navigation (polar code)**

At its 86<sup>th</sup> session in June 2009, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) decided that the DE Sub-Committee should draw up draft international mandatory regulations on navigation in polar areas in the lights of the increasing cargo and passenger traffic in these waters.

At the Sub-Committee's session, it was emphasized that this agenda item should be given high priority despite a great workload in the Sub-Committee. In general, the prioritisation of the drafting of a code on navigation in polar areas enjoyed great support, and it was decided to initiate the work by establishing a correspondence group that should, until the next session (DE 54), draw up a proposal for a polar code.

For this work, Denmark had made a risk analysis on navigation in Arctic waters and, in cooperation with Canada and other countries, submitted a proposal on the framework of the contents of a polar code. Now, these documents will be included in the future work.

### **Noise on board ships**

On the basis of a proposal from the EU member States, the Sub-Committee started debating the maximum limits of noise on board ships. The submission by the EU member States proposed a revision of the voluntary IMO code on noise in ships in force today (IMO resolution A.468(XII) from 1981) and to make the code mandatory. The EU member States' submission contained requirements for maximum noise limits in the relevant rooms on board ships as well as for the noise load on each individual crew member. The proposed limit values correspond to the requirements that have for many years applied on Danish ships.

Following intense debate where a number of countries concurred in the introduction of noise regulations, the Sub-Committee agreed that, as a first step, the work revising the existing code on noise in ships should be started, and subsequently it could be considered whether to make the code mandatory. Specific discussions will be initiated at the next session of the Sub-Committee, when it is expected that a working group will be established to deal with this specific issue.

### **Watertight doors**

Prior to this session, a correspondence group under DE had drawn up draft guidelines for the maritime administrations with a view to laying down equipment-related and operational conditions for permitting watertight doors to remain open or be passed through during voyages. The Sub-Committee discussed this draft and found a need for only minor adjustments.

Concurrently, the SLF Sub-Committee had drawn up guidelines on the basis of stability-related considerations. Consequently, the DE Sub-Committee found a need to compile the guidelines. It was agreed to finalise this work at the next session of the Sub-Committee when a working group will be established for this purpose with the participation of experts from both Sub-Committees.

### **Life-saving appliances**

It had previously been decided that on-load release hooks of inappropriate design should be phased out. The timeframe for this had, however, not yet been set, but was expected to be at the ship's first renewal survey after 2012. In order to ensure a consistent assessment of the need to replace a given hook, the working group made draft guidelines on this. The guidelines will be submitted to MSC 87 for approval.

Furthermore, a correspondence group was established to continue working on a proposal on how to standardise the operation of hooks in lifeboats. The idea behind the proposal was that the seafarers should be able to recognise the basic operating functions in lifeboats – regardless of their type and manufacture.

### **Corrosion protection of cargo tanks in crude oil tankers**

The Sub-Committee finalised a draft standard for corrosion protection of cargo tanks in crude oil tankers. The standard contains a paint standard and a standard for the use of corrosion-resistant steel as an alternative to paint. The standard will now be submitted for approval by the MSC.

### **Safety-related guidelines for voyages with passenger ships' "tenders"**

At its 84<sup>th</sup> session, the MSC had requested a number of Sub-Committees to draw up safety-related guidelines for the "tenders" of passenger ships.

(Tenders are small boats on board cruise liners used to carry passengers between a cruise liner and a port when the ship is at anchor outside a port. Often the boats also form part of the ship's emergency preparedness.)

Against this background the Sub-Committee discussed a number of guidelines on the design and equipment of such boats. There was general agreement that the guidelines could not have precedence over the safety requirements of coastal States, but that they should solely be considered an international standard for "best practices" that flag and coastal States could choose to use. Furthermore, it was the intention that the guidelines should only be used for boats carrying out "tender operations", i.e. direct transfers of passengers between ship and port. The guidelines were not intended for boats used for other types of voyages, such as sightseeing and the like.

The work with these guidelines will continue at the next Sub-Committee session.

### **Bilge water separators**

In 2007, the IMO Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) discussed a proposal by the USA to replace all old bilge water separators over a number of years since old bilge water separators could not react on oil absorbed by detergents, etc. (emulsifying detergents). The MEPC decided to let the DE Sub-Committee consider the possibility of and the consequences of a replacement and – on the proposition of Denmark – any modification of existing equipment. Therefore, Denmark had submitted a proposal for DE 52 on a simplified test method for supplementary equipment. This proposal – as well as a proposal submitted by the USA and Japan – was referred to a correspondence group which should report its results to the next session of the Sub-Committee.

### **Surveillance and control of oil discharges**

For the MEPC session held in October 2008, Denmark had furthermore submitted a proposal for amending the regulations on systems for surveillance and control of oil discharges from tankers. The purpose was to prevent pollution of the marine environment in cases where the equipment did not work. The industry had considerations about the Danish proposal. Consequently, the problem was referred to the same correspondence group as the proposal to modify existing bilge water separators.

It is expected that the next session of the Sub-Committee, DE 54, will take place in October 2010.