

Lifeboat Release Mechanisms

Amended Rules and Guidance

Rules for Safety Equipment

Guidance for Safety Equipment

Guidance for the Approval and Type Approval of Materials and Equipment for Marine Use

Reason for Amendment

There has always been the risk of serious lifeboat accidents occurring during lifeboat drills. Accidents involving crew members being injured, sometimes even fatally, while participating in such drills frequently occur. Most of these accidents are the result of the failure of lifeboat release mechanisms. Over the years, the IMO has tried various ways to reduce the frequency of such accidents but has had little success. Recently, as part of its continued efforts, the IMO has been discussing means of preventing lifeboat accidents caused by unintentional release as well as ways to improve the design criteria of release mechanisms and the guidelines for evaluating existing lifeboat release mechanisms, etc.

Consequently, in order to improve the reliability of lifeboat release mechanisms, amendments to the LSA Code regarding the performance criteria of lifeboat release mechanisms (Resolution MSC.320(89)), amendments regarding the testing methods and criteria of prototype tests for lifeboat release mechanisms (Resolution MSC.321(89)) and amendments regarding the testing methods of prototype tests, etc. for life-saving appliances (Resolution MSC.323(89)) were adopted respectively by the IMO at the 89th Session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC89) held in May 2011.

Furthermore, amendments to SOLAS Regulation III (Resolution MSC.317(89)) stipulating existing lifeboat release mechanisms in accordance with the above mentioned amendments to the LSA Code (Resolution MSC.320(89)) as well as corresponding guidelines for the evaluation and replacement of lifeboat release mechanisms (MSC.1/Circ.1392) were also adopted.

In addition, related to the above, IACS established Unified Interpretation (UI) SC254 in April 2012 to further clarify the guidelines for fall preventer devices (FPDs), auxiliary devices used during lifeboat release operations, specified in MSC.1/Circ.1327 because some of the testing items and related requirement were unclear.

Therefore, relevant requirements have been amended in accordance with the above IMO Resolutions, IMO MSC.1/Circ.1392 and IACS UI SC254.

Outline of Amendment

- (1) Testing methods related to the prototype tests for type approval of lifeboat release mechanisms have been amended
- (2) It has been specified that evaluations of existing lifeboat release mechanisms installed on vessels are to be done and the strength, release functions etc. of said mechanisms are to be in accordance with amendments to the LSA Code.
- (3) Testing methods related to the prototype tests for type approval of fall preventer devices have been added.