

Application of Polar Code to Small Ships

Object of Amendment

Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Parts A and I
Rules for Safety Equipment
Guidance for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Part B

Reason for Amendment

The International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) applies to ships subject to SOLAS that operate in polar waters. In recent years, however, fishing vessels and small ships that are not subject to SOLAS are increasingly operating in polar waters, and there have been reports of incidents involving such ships. The IMO, therefore, discussed the need to enhance the safety of operations in the polar waters even for small ships not covered by SOLAS. As a result, at the 107th session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC107) held in May 2023, the IMO adopted resolution MSC.532(107) to amend Chapter XIV of SOLAS to apply a part of the Polar Code to small ships.

At the same time, the IMO adopted resolution MSC.538(107) to amend the Polar Code to provide new requirements for safe navigation that apply to such ships.

Accordingly, relevant requirements are amended in accordance with resolutions MSC.532(107) and MSC.538(107). Additionally, relevant requirements are amended to specify the additional notation to be affixed to the Classification Characters for small ships complying with requirements related to the Polar Code.

Outline of Amendment

The main contents of this amendment are as follows:

- (1) Specifies echo sounding devices, anti-icing devices, etc. are to be provided for the following ships navigating in polar waters.
 - (a) Fishing vessels of 24 *metres* in length overall and above
 - (b) Pleasure yachts of 300 *gross tonnage* and upwards not engaged in trade
 - (c) Cargo ships of 300 *gross tonnage* and upwards but below 500 *gross tonnage*
- (2) Specifies the notation “Polar Code for Ships Other than Those Certified in accordance with SOLAS Chapter I” (abbreviated to PC O) is to be affixed to the Classification Characters of ships applying (1) above.

Effective Date and Application

Effective date of this amendment is 1 January 2026. (However, this amendment applies from 1 January 2027 to ships the keels of which were laid or which were at a similar stage of construction before the effective date.)

An asterisk (*) after the title of a requirement indicates that there is also relevant information in the corresponding Guidance.

ID: DD24-14

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
RULES FOR THE SURVEY AND CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL SHIPS Part A GENERAL RULES Chapter 1 GENERAL 1.2 Class Notations 1.2.5 Polar Class Ships and Ice Class Ships* 1 (Same as on the right)	RULES FOR THE SURVEY AND CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL SHIPS Part A GENERAL RULES Chapter 1 GENERAL 1.2 Class Notations 1.2.5 Polar Class Ships and Ice Class Ships* 1 For polar class ships in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1, Part I , the following notation corresponding to the polar classes specified in 1.2.2 of Annex 1, Part I , is affixed to the Classification Characters. For ships which are subject to relevant requirements in Annex 1, Part I in accordance with 1.2.2-3 of Annex 1, Part I , the notation of “ <i>Icebreaker</i> ” (abbreviated to <i>ICB</i>) is added to the following notation specified in (1) to (7): (1) <i>PC1: Polar Class 1</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC1</i>) (2) <i>PC2: Polar Class 2</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC2</i>) (3) <i>PC3: Polar Class 3</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC3</i>) (4) <i>PC4: Polar Class 4</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC4</i>) (5) <i>PC5: Polar Class 5</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC5</i>) (6) <i>PC6: Polar Class 6</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC6</i>) (7) <i>PC7: Polar Class 7</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC7</i>) 2 For ice class ships in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1, Part I , the following notation corresponding to the ice classes specified in 1.2.2, Part I , is affixed to the Classification Characters.	

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p>3 For ships operating in polar waters in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1, Part I, the following notation corresponding to the categories specified in 1.2.1(1) to (3), Part I or applicable to the ships specified in 1.1.1-4, Part I, is affixed to the Classification Characters.</p> <p>(1) <i>Category A: Polar Code Category A</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC A</i>)</p> <p>(2) <i>Category B: Polar Code Category B</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC B</i>)</p> <p>(3) <i>Category C: Polar Code Category C</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC C</i>)</p> <p>(4) <u>Ships subject to 1.1.1-4, Part I: Polar Code for Ships Other than Those Certified in accordance with SOLAS Chapter I (abbreviated to <i>PC O</i>)</u></p>	<p>(1) <i>IA Super: Class IA Super Ice Strengthening</i> (abbreviated to <i>IA SUPER IS</i>)</p> <p>(2) <i>IA: Class IA Ice Strengthening</i> (abbreviated to <i>IA IS</i>)</p> <p>(3) <i>IB: Class IB Ice Strengthening</i> (abbreviated to <i>IB IS</i>)</p> <p>(4) <i>IC: Class IC Ice Strengthening</i> (abbreviated to <i>IC IS</i>)</p> <p>(5) <i>ID: Class ID Ice Strengthening</i> (abbreviated to <i>ID IS</i>)</p> <p>3 For ships operating in polar waters in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 1, Part I, the following notation corresponding to the categories specified in 1.2.1(1) to (3), Part I, is affixed to the Classification Characters.</p> <p>(1) <i>Category A: Polar Code Category A</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC A</i>)</p> <p>(2) <i>Category B: Polar Code Category B</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC B</i>)</p> <p>(3) <i>Category C: Polar Code Category C</i> (abbreviated to <i>PC C</i>)</p> <p>(Newly added)</p>	<p>A new notation for small ships operated in polar waters was established.</p>

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p align="center">Part I SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS, POLAR CLASS SHIPS AND ICE CLASS SHIPS</p> <p align="center">Chapter 1 GENERAL</p> <p>1.1 General</p> <p>1.1.1 Application</p> <p>1 (Omitted)</p> <p>2 (Omitted)</p> <p>3 Notwithstanding the provision in -2 above, ships corresponding to following (1) or (2) need not comply with the requirements in Chapter 1 and Chapter 7 of this Part.</p> <p>(1) Ships not subject to the <i>SOLAS</i> convention in accordance with <i>SOLAS Chapter I</i>; and</p> <p>(2) Ships owned or operated by the flag administration and used for non-commercial purposes.</p> <p>4 <u>Notwithstanding the provision in -2 and -3 above, ships corresponding to following (1) to (3) on all voyages in the Antarctic area and voyages in Arctic waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of the contracting government whose flag the ship is entitled to fly is to comply with the provisions of Chapter 9-1 of Part I-A of the Polar Code, taking into account the introduction and the safety-related provisions of 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5 of this Part. However, it is to be deemed appropriate by the Administration that to what extent the provisions of regulations 9-1.3.1 and 9-1.3.2 of chapter 9-1 of part I-A of the Polar Code do not apply to ships corresponding to following (1) and ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards</u></p>	<p align="center">Part I SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS, POLAR CLASS SHIPS AND ICE CLASS SHIPS</p> <p align="center">Chapter 1 GENERAL</p> <p>1.1 General</p> <p>1.1.1 Application</p> <p>1 (Omitted)</p> <p>2 (Omitted)</p> <p>3 Notwithstanding the provision in -2 above, ships corresponding to following (1) or (2) need not comply with the requirements in Chapter 1 and Chapter 7 of this Part.</p> <p>(1) Ships not subject to the <i>SOLAS</i> convention in accordance with <i>SOLAS Chapter I</i>; and</p> <p>(2) Ships owned or operated by the flag administration and used for non-commercial purposes.</p> <p>(Newly added)</p>	<p>MSC.532(107) Chapter XIV Regulation 3-1</p>

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p><u>but below 500 gross tonnage not engaged in international voyages.</u></p> <p><u>(1) Fishing vessels of 24 metres in length overall and above</u></p> <p><u>(2) Pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade</u></p> <p><u>(3) Cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage</u></p> <p><u>5</u> Ships intended for independent navigation in ice-infested polar waters (hereinafter referred to as “polar class ship” in this Part), are to comply with Annex 1 “Special Requirements for the Materials, Hull Structures, Equipment and Machinery of Polar Class Ships” in addition to requirements in other parts.</p> <p><u>6</u> Where a ship is intended to be registered as an ice class vessel (hereinafter referred to as “ice class ship” in this Part) for navigation of the Northern Baltic complying with the <i>Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules</i> or in the Canadian Arctic complying with the <i>Arctic Shipping Safety and Pollution Prevention Regulations</i>, the materials, hull structures, equipment and machinery of the ship are to be in accordance with the requirements in Chapter 1 except for 1.3 to 1.5 and Chapter 8 of this Part in addition to those in other Parts.</p>	<p><u>4</u> Ships intended for independent navigation in ice-infested polar waters (hereinafter referred to as “polar class ship” in this Part), are to comply with Annex 1 “Special Requirements for the Materials, Hull Structures, Equipment and Machinery of Polar Class Ships” in addition to requirements in other parts.</p> <p><u>5</u> Where a ship is intended to be registered as an ice class vessel (hereinafter referred to as “ice class ship” in this Part) for navigation of the Northern Baltic complying with the <i>Finnish-Swedish Ice Class Rules</i> or in the Canadian Arctic complying with the <i>Arctic Shipping Safety and Pollution Prevention Regulations</i>, the materials, hull structures, equipment and machinery of the ship are to be in accordance with the requirements in Chapter 1 except for 1.3 to 1.5 and Chapter 8 of this Part in addition to those in other Parts.</p>	

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p align="center">RULES FOR SAFETY EQUIPMENT</p> <p align="center">Chapter 3 ARRANGEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE</p> <p>3.1 General</p> <p>3.1.2 Additional Requirements Concerning Ships Operating in Polar Waters*</p> <p><u>1</u> Ships certified in accordance with <i>SOLAS Chapter I</i></p> <p>(1) Ships operating in polar waters and to which the requirements of Chapter I of the Annex to the Convention are applied are to comply with Chapters 8 and 9, Part 1-A of <i>IMO Resolution MSC.385(94) “International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code)”</i>, as amended. However, some requirements in the aforementioned Chapters 8 and 9 may be modified in cases where deemed appropriate by the Society when the ship in question is either owned or operated by the flag administration and is used for non-commercial purpose.</p> <p>(2) Ships operating in the polar waters specified in (1) are to comply with 1.1.1-2, Part I of the Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships.</p> <p>(3) The equipment in ships operating in the polar waters specified in (1) which does not fall under Chapter 8, Part 1-A of <i>IMO Resolution MSC.385(94) “International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code)”</i>, as amended, but which is considered to be equivalent to that required by Chapter 8 in accordance with Regulation 4, Chapter</p>	<p align="center">RULES FOR SAFETY EQUIPMENT</p> <p align="center">Chapter 3 ARRANGEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE</p> <p>3.1 General</p> <p>3.1.2 Additional Requirements Concerning Ships Operating in Polar Waters*</p> <p>(Newly added)</p> <p><u>1</u> Ships operating in polar waters and to which the requirements of Chapter I of the Annex to the Convention are applied are to comply with Chapters 8 and 9, Part 1-A of <i>IMO Resolution MSC.385(94) “International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code)”</i>, as amended. However, some requirements in the aforementioned Chapters 8 and 9 may be modified in cases where deemed appropriate by the Society when the ship in question is either owned or operated by the flag administration, and is used for non-commercial purpose.</p> <p><u>2</u> Ships operating in the polar waters specified in <u>-1</u> are to comply with 1.1.1-2, Part I of the Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships.</p> <p><u>3</u> The equipment in ships operating in the polar waters specified in <u>-1</u> which does not fall under Chapter 8, Part 1-A of <i>IMO Resolution MSC.385(94) “International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code)”</i>, as amended, but which is considered to be equivalent to that required by Chapter 8 in accordance with Regulation 4, Chapter XIV of the Annex to the Convention will be accepted by the Society.</p>	

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p>XIV of the Annex to the Convention will be accepted by the Society.</p> <p>2 Small ships</p> <p><u>Ships corresponding to following (1) to (3) on all voyages in the Antarctic area and voyages in Arctic waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of the contracting government whose flag the ship is entitled to fly shall comply with 1.1.1-4, Part I of the Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships.</u></p> <p><u>(1) Fishing vessels of 24 metres in length overall and above</u></p> <p><u>(2) Pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade</u></p> <p><u>(3) Cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage</u></p>	(Newly added)	MSC.532(107) Chapter XIV Regulation 3-1
The effective date of the amendment is according to EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION (A)		

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
<p align="center">GUIDANCE FOR THE SURVEY AND CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL SHIPS</p> <p align="center">Part B CLASS SURVEYS</p> <p align="center">B1GENERAL</p> <p>B1.1 Surveys</p> <p>B1.1.3 Intervals of Class Maintenance Surveys (-1 and -2 are omitted.) 3 The Occasional Surveys specified in 1.1.3-3(5), Part B of the Rules are as specified below: ((1) to (20) are omitted.) (21) Ships operating in polar waters For ships operating in polar waters defined in 1.1.1-2, Part I of the Rules at the beginning stage of construction before 1 January 2017, a survey is to be carried out to verify compliance with the requirements of Chapter 1 (except for 1.1.1-5, 1.1.1-6, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4-2) to Chapter 7, Part I of the Rules by the first Intermediate Survey or Special Survey after 1 January 2018, whichever occurs first. <u>In addition, for ships operating in polar waters defined in 1.1.1-4, Part I of the Rules at the beginning stage of construction before 1 January 2026, a survey is to be carried out to verify compliance with the requirements of 1.1.1-4, Part I of the Rules by 1 January 2027.</u></p>	<p align="center">GUIDANCE FOR THE SURVEY AND CONSTRUCTION OF STEEL SHIPS</p> <p align="center">Part B CLASS SURVEYS</p> <p align="center">B1GENERAL</p> <p>B1.1 Surveys</p> <p>B1.1.3 Intervals of Class Maintenance Surveys (-1 and -2 are omitted.) 3 The Occasional Surveys specified in 1.1.3-3(5), Part B of the Rules are as specified below: ((1) to (20) are omitted.) (21) Ships operating in polar waters For ships operating in polar waters defined in 1.1.1-2, Part I of the Rules at the beginning stage of construction before 1 January 2017, a survey is to be carried out to verify compliance with the requirements of Chapter 1 (except for 1.1.1-4, 1.1.1-5, 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.4-2) to Chapter 7, Part I of the Rules by the first Intermediate Survey or Special Survey after 1 January 2018, whichever occurs first.</p>	<p>Requirement for small ships operating in polar waters at the beginning stage of construction before 1 January 2026.</p>

Amended-Original Requirements Comparison Table (Application of Polar Code to Small Ships)

Amended	Original	Remarks
((22) to (24) are omitted.)	((22) to (24) are omitted.)	
The effective date of the amendment is according to EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION (B)		
<p style="text-align: center;">EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION (A)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The effective date of the amendments is 1 January 2026. Notwithstanding the amendments, the current requirements apply to ships the keels of which were laid or which were at a similar stage of construction before the effective date except for in cases where the amendments are to be retroactively applied. (Note) The term “a similar stage of construction” means the stage at which the construction identifiable with a specific ship begins and the assembly of that ship has commenced comprising at least 50 <i>tonnes</i> or 1% of the estimated mass of all structural material, whichever is the less. <p style="text-align: center;">EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICATION (B)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The effective date of the amendments is 1 January 2026. 		