

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE  
95th session  
Agenda item 21

MSC 95/21/3  
24 March 2015  
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## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Request for data on incidents within polar waters**

**Submitted by Iceland, New Zealand and South Africa**

#### **SUMMARY**

*Executive summary:* After the development of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code), there is a consideration for an instrument to address non-Convention vessels operating in polar waters. This document calls for information on incidents in polar waters to assist in assessing the potential scope of such an instrument.

*Strategic direction:* 5.2

*High-level action:* 5.2.1

*Planned output:* 5.2.1.15

*Action to be taken:* Paragraph 8

*Related documents:* MSC 86/26; DE 54/13/3, DE 54/WP.3 and SDC 1/WP.2

#### **Introduction**

1 It is intended that the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code) will become mandatory in January 2017.

2 The safety-related provisions of the Polar Code currently only apply to cargo ships above 500 gross tonnage and passenger ships. It is recognized that there are vessels operating in these regions that do not fall under the application criteria of the Polar Code.

3 MSC 86 agreed to include in the work programme of the DE Sub-Committee and provisional agenda of DE 53, a high-priority item on "Development of a mandatory Code for ships operating in polar waters". A number of documents considered in reaching this agreement proposed that the mandatory Code should address vessel types not included in SOLAS, i.e. fishing vessels.

**Discussion**

4 As part of the development of the Code, a two-step approach to the work was proposed by the Polar Code Working Group at DE 54, which was subsequently approved by DE 54 and MSC 88:

Step 1: Passenger and cargo ships covered by SOLAS; and

Step 2: Non-SOLAS ships, including fishing vessels and pleasure craft.

5 Such an instrument to address non-SOLAS ships could involve a significant amount of work by the Organization and this document seeks assistance from all Member Governments and accredited organizations in compiling relevant data in order to more accurately assess the possible scope and application of any such instrument or instruments.

6 In order to aid the assessment of the scope and possible mechanism of any instrument for non-SOLAS ships operating in polar waters, the co-sponsors request Member Governments and, where they have relevant information, accredited organizations, to submit to the Organization the following:

- .1 number of "non-SOLAS" ships operating in polar waters (type, sizes, etc.);
- .2 report of accidents and incidents, including those requiring search and rescue interventions, with these ships in polar waters; and
- .3 any other relevant information.

Data should be limited to the period from 1 January 2005 to date and polar waters, as defined in the *Guidelines for ships operating in polar waters* (resolution A.1024 (26)) should be applied.

7 The Secretariat for the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources has been contacted and agreed that, should the Organization approve the request for information from Member Governments, it will also provide relevant data.

**Action requested of the Committee**

8 The Committee is requested to endorse and bring to the attention of Member Governments and accredited organizations the request for submission of the information outlined above.

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