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MSC.1/Circ.1459
8 July 2013

UNIFIED INTERPRETATION OF THE SOLAS CONVENTION AND THE IBC AND IGC CODES

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-second session (12 to 21 June 2013), with a view to providing guidance on the uniform application of the requirements for the location of entrances, air inlets and openings in the superstructures and/or deckhouses of oil and chemical tankers and gas carriers, contained in SOLAS chapter II-2 and the IBC and IGC Codes, approved the following unified interpretation, prepared by the Sub-Committee on Fire Protection, at its fifty-sixth session (7 to 11 January 2013):

"If, under the requirements of the SOLAS Convention, the IBC Code or the IGC Code^{*}, owing to the design of a ship, it is impossible in practice, or unreasonable, to fulfil the requirements relating to the location of access doors, air inlets or other openings in superstructures and/or deckhouses, the Administration or recognized organization acting on its behalf may adopt alternative provisions provided that, as a consequence of doing so, no ignition source is located in the hazardous areas defined in publication IEC 60092-502, except for electrical installations that have the required protection and have been certified as safe under that standard."

2 Member Governments are invited to use the above interpretation as guidance when applying relevant provisions of the SOLAS Convention and the IBC and IGC Codes, and to bring it to the attention of all parties concerned.

^{*} E.g. SOLAS regulations II-2/4.5.2.1, 4.5.2.2, 4.5.3.4.1, 11.6.2 and 16.3.2.3; IBC Code, paragraphs 3.2.3, 3.7.4, 8.3.4 and 8.5.1; and IGC Code, paragraphs 3.2.4, 3.8.4, 8.2.9, 8.2.10 and 10.2.5.1.