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MSC.1/Circ.1397
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UNIFIED INTERPRETATION OF SOLAS REGULATION III/15.1

STOWAGE OF MARINE EVACUATION SYSTEMS

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-ninth session (11 to 20 May 2011), with a view to ensuring a uniform approach towards the application of the provisions of SOLAS regulation III/15.1 concerning the stowage of marine evacuation systems, and following a recommendation made by the Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Equipment at its fifty-fourth session, approved the following unified interpretation:

SOLAS regulation III/15.1 requires that the ship's side shall not have any openings between the embarkation station of the marine evacuation station and the sea level in the lightest seagoing condition. This means no openings, be they permanent openings, recessed promenades or temporary openings such as shell doors, windows or ports, should be allowed in this particular area.

On passenger ships, windows and side scuttles of the non-opening type should be allowed in this area if complying with SOLAS regulation II-2/9.4.1.3.3. On cargo ships, the windows and side scuttles in the area in way of a marine evacuation system, if installed, should only be of the non-opening type.

2 Member Governments are invited to use the above interpretation from 20 May 2011 when applying the relevant provisions of SOLAS regulation III/15.1 and to bring it to the attention of all parties concerned.
