

Means of Recharging Breathing Apparatus Cylinders and Spare Cylinders

Amended Rules and Guidance

Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Part R

Guidance for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Part B

Reason for Amendment

In 2007, the effectiveness of fire-fighting on board the Faroese vessel “Hercules” was hampered due to the insufficient air supply of their breathing apparatus. In response to this incident, the IMO conducted a review of the SOLAS requirements related to the onboard means of recharging breathing apparatus cylinders and spare cylinders.

Under the current SOLAS requirements, only passenger ships carrying more than 36 passengers are required to be fitted with a means for recharging breathing air cylinders. However, no such requirements exist for other ships such as cargo ships. Having noted there is possibility that air cylinders used during fire drills will not have an adequate supply of air remaining in the cylinders to fight an actual fire, the IMO discussed making a means of recharging breathing apparatus cylinders used during drills or additional spare cylinders used during drills mandatory for such ships.

As a result, at the 91st Session of the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC91) held in November 2012, it was agreed to amendments to SOLAS which make it mandatory for all ships to be fitted with a means of recharging breathing apparatus cylinders used during drills or be provided additional spare cylinders to replace those used during drills. This amendment was adopted as IMO Res. MSC.338(91).

Therefore, relevant requirements were amended in accordance with IMO Res. MSC.338(91).

Outline of Amendment

- (1) Specified that ships are to be fitted with a means of recharging breathing apparatus cylinders used during drills or provided with additional spare cylinders to replace those used during drills.
- (2) Specified that a survey is to be carried out by the first survey on or after 1 July 2014 in order to verify compliance with (1) above for ships at the beginning stage of construction prior to 1 July 2014.