

Means of Escape from Machinery Control Rooms and Main Workshops

Amended Rules and Guidance

Rules for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Parts N, S, and R
Guidance for the Survey and Construction of Steel Ships Part R

Reason for Amendment

In 2008, a fatal fire broke out in the machinery space of the Chilean-flagged ship “Rio Blanco”. Some crew members became trapped in the machinery control room and were unable to escape. As a result of this fatal accident, the IMO conducted a review of the SOLAS regulations related to means of escape from machinery spaces and determined that said regulations needed to be strengthened.

More specifically, the SOLAS regulations at the time specified that two means of escape from machinery spaces were to be provided. The above-mentioned review, however, determined that an additional two means of escape from enclosed spaces within machinery spaces, i.e. respectively from machinery control rooms and from main workshops, was to be provided to ensure the safe escape of crew members working in such places in the event of a fire.

Amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13 related to these requirements were adopted as resolution MSC.365(93) at the 93rd Session of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC93) held in May 2014.

In addition to the above, the adopted resolution added further requirements for all inclined ladders and stairways with open treads which are parts of escape routes from machinery spaces. These new requirements specify that such inclined ladders and stairways are required to be made of steel and fitted with steel shields attached to their undersides to provide protection for escaping crew members against heat and flame from below.

Accordingly, all relevant requirements were amended based upon MSC.365(93).

Outline of Amendment

- (1) Specified that machinery control rooms and main workshops located within machinery spaces of category “A” are to be provided with two means of escape, at least one of which provides continuous fire shelter, to a safe position outside of the machinery space.
- (2) Specified that inclined ladders and stairways with open treads which are parts of escape routes from machinery spaces are to be made of steel and are to be fitted with steel shields attached to their undersides.
- (3) Changed the term “fire shelter” used in the ClassNK Rules and the Guidance to the term “protected enclosure” used in SOLAS II-2/13.4.2.1 for the sake of consistency and to clearly distinguish it from the term “continuous fire shelter” required by (1) above.