



TECHNICAL CIRCULAR No. 088 of 28th October 2012

To: All Surveyors/Auditor

Applicable to flag: All Flags

Subject: Polar Code

Reference: IMO – Polar Code

Polar Code (ALL SHIPS)

A new mandatory Code is being developed to establish standards for construction of new ships and operation of all ships in the Arctic and Antarctic so as to afford safe ship operation and protection of the Polar Environment by addressing risks specific for Polar waters that are not explicitly considered by other international Conventions. Design environmental conditions and operational capability (including ice thickness/age, minimum temperatures, wind, current (with ice), wave heights, rescue/evacuation time, and communication distances) are to be documented in the Polar Ship Certificate. Additional operational limitations and information to support the Master and crew decision-making process is to be contained in a Polar Water Operational Manual.

The provisions in the draft Code which go above and beyond other Conventions include:

- unique intact and damage stability criteria (including extents of damage) to address ice accretion and protection against impact due to ice grounding, respectively. Both criteria include residual stability to account for the ship riding up on ice.
- minimum design temperatures for hull, machinery and essential systems and their relevant operation.
- performance of fire extinguishing systems and lifesaving provisions in harsh environments.
- additional navigation equipment including ice detection.
- onboard equipment having the capability to contain and clean up minor deck spills, contain minor over side spills and effect minor hull repair and emergency transfer of liquid cargo/fuel (or be sufficiently compartmentalized) so as to allow the vessel to proceed to a place of safe location where more substantial repairs can be carried out.
- other environmental issues still under development seek to limit spills of harmful substances in the event of hull penetration, and ban the discharge of oil or oily mixtures, garbage, sewage and ballast water.

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IMO's Design and Equipment Sub-Committee (DE S/C) tentatively agreed on three categories of ships operating in Polar Waters:

- Category A ship has ice-strengthening in accordance with the IACS Unified Requirements for Polar Class ships, or an acceptable alternative, and will operate with due caution in severe ice conditions.
- Category B ship has some level of ice-strengthening and will operate with due caution in first year ice conditions and maneuver to avoid structurally dangerous types and concentrations of ice.
- Category C ship has no ice-strengthening and will operate only in very thin (new) ice and will maneuver to avoid structurally dangerous ice.

The DE S/C is coordinating the efforts of several other Sub-Committees and has tentatively planned that the Code will be completed in 2014, after which it will be submitted to the MSC and MEPC for approval and adoption. Accordingly, it is envisaged that an entry into force date would be sometime in 2017.

REFERENCES:

IMO – Polar Code

ATTACHMENTS: No.

Kindest Regards,
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