

CHAPTER 1

GENERAL

1.1 Object of Instructions

1.1.1 These Instructions are issued by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for the guidance of surveyors in surveying fire protection arrangements to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements covering merchant ships. They also indicate to shipowners, shipbuilders and other representative organisations the procedures adopted by MCA for the survey and approval of fire appliances and materials used in fire protection.

1.1.2 The legislation affecting ships is contained in the Merchant Shipping Regulations and statutory Merchant Shipping Notices listed in paragraph 1.2. Where the requirements do not need comment or explanation reference to them will not be found in the instructions. The IMO Sub-Committee on Fire Protection has prepared a set of unified interpretations of the vague expressions found in Chapter II-2 of SOLAS 1974, upon which the UK Regulations are based, and these have been used throughout the text as appropriate.

1.1.3 These Instructions should be read in conjunction with the instructions issued by MCA relating to life-saving appliances, large and small passenger ships, load-line, navigational and radio equipment and the prevention of oil pollution. Details of survey and certification procedures are contained in the instructions relating to survey and certification policy.

1.2 Statutory Provisions

1.2.1 The principal statutory provisions covering fire protection are:

- The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Large Ships) Regulations 1998;
- The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Ships) Regulations 1998;
- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1665(M) - Fire fighting equipment;
- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1666(M) - Fixed fire detection alarm and extinguishing systems;
- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1667(M) - Fire integrity of bulkheads, decks and ventilation ducts (Large Ships);

- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1668(M) - Fire integrity of bulkheads, decks and ventilation ducting (Small Ships);
- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1669(M) - Special fire safety measures for ships carrying dangerous goods; and
- Merchant Shipping Notice MSN 1670(M) - Exemptions.

1.3 Definitions

1.3.1 In these Instructions the following definitions apply:

1.3.1.1 'Convention', unless expressly stated otherwise, means the consolidated text of the 1974 SOLAS Convention and 1978 SOLAS Protocol as amended.

1.3.1.2 'FTP Code', means the International Code for Application of Fire Test Procedures, as adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee of IMO by Resolution MSC.61(67), as may be amended, provided that such amendments are adopted, brought into force and take effect in accordance with the provisions of article VIII of the present Convention concerning the amendment procedures applicable to the Annex other than Chapter 1.

1.3.1.3 IMO Sub-Committee on Fire Protection - where the unified interpretations of SOLAS Chapter II-2, developed by the Sub-Committee and presented in MSC/Circ.847 on 12 June '98, have been used in these Instructions the text will be identified as follows. **[unified text]**

1.3.1.4 References to the regulations used throughout these instructions have been abbreviated as shown in the following examples:

- (a) Regulation 3(1) of The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Large Ships) Regulations 1998 will be abbreviated to "L.S. Regulation 3(1)"; and
- (b) Regulation 3(1) of The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection: Small Ships) Regulations 1998 will be abbreviated to "S.S. Regulation 3(1)".

Where reference is made to "regulations" it shall mean, collectively or individually, those regulations regarding fire protection matters which are applicable to the particular ship under consideration.

1.3.1.5 'Surveyor' means a surveyor appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

1.3.1.6 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), an Executive Agency of the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions.

1.3.1.7 "MSPP2" means Maritime Safety and Pollution Prevention Directorate (Environmental Protection and Equipment Unit).

1.3.1.8 Two units of pressure are used throughout these Instructions as appropriate and in accordance with industry practice, these are the kPa and the bar. To convert a pressure in kPa to bar divide by 100.

1.4 Application of the Regulations and Requirements for Fire Protection Arrangements

1.4.1 It is important to establish which regulations are applicable to any particular ship. The Large Ship Regulations apply to passenger ships of Classes I and II, to passenger ships of Class II(A) of 21.34 m in length or over and to ships of Class VII to XII of 500 tons or over. The Small Ship Regulations apply to passenger ships of Class II(A) of less than 21.34 m in length, to passenger ships of Class III to VI(A) and to ships of Class VII to XII of under 500 tons.

1.4.2 In a number of cases there will be additional requirements for ships constructed on or after the dates specified in the regulations. All ships which undergo repairs, alterations, modifications and related outfitting shall continue to comply with at least the requirements previously applicable to those ships. Such ships if constructed before 1 July 1986 shall, as a rule, comply with the requirements for such ships constructed on or after that date to at least the same extent as they did before undergoing such repairs, alterations, modifications or outfitting. Repairs, alterations and modifications of a major character and related outfitting shall meet the requirements for ships constructed after 1 July 1986 in so far as is deemed reasonable and practicable. **[unified text]**

1.4.3 The following repairs, alterations and modifications should be recognised as being of a 'major character': **[unified text]**

1.4.3.1 any change that substantially alters the dimensions of a ship;

Example: Lengthening by adding new mid-body; new mid-body should comply with Chapter II-2 of SOLAS 1974, as amended;

1.4.3.2 any change that substantially alters the passenger accommodation; and

Example: Vehicle deck converted to passenger accommodation; new accommodation should comply with Chapter II-2 of SOLAS 1974, as amended;

1.4.3.3 any change that substantially increases a ship's service life.

Example: Renewal of passenger accommodation on one entire deck; renewed accommodation should comply with Chapter II-2 of SOLAS 1974, as amended.

1.5 Requirements of the Regulations

Owners and masters have a duty to ensure that ships to which the regulations and requirements apply are provided with the fire protection arrangements specified and that they are kept at all times fit and ready for use. Penalties are laid down for breaches of the regulations.

1.6 Fire Appliances Carried in Excess of Statutory Requirements

There is nothing against the carriage of fire appliances additional to the requirements of the regulations provided they do not detract from the safety of the ship and personnel. Surveyors should see that they are safe, suitable for their intended purpose and maintained in good condition.