

GUIDANCE NOTE 02/2026

IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC)109

Convention and Code Amendments

To: BUILDERS, DESIGNERS, MANAGERS, OWNERS, MASTERS AND RECOGNIZED ORGANIZATIONS

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 IMO MSC 109 adopted the following: -

Amendments to the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquified Gases in Bulk (IGC Code)

Amendments to the International Code of Safety for Ships using Gases or Other Low-Flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code)

1.2 Under the provisions of the Cayman Islands Merchant Shipping Act (MSA) 2024, any amendments to IMO Conventions pertaining to COLREGS, Load Lines, SOLAS, STCW and Tonnage, including any associated codes and any other instruments made mandatory, automatically have the force of law, unless the discretionary powers under section 459(4) of the MSA are invoked via a Shipping Notice.

1.3 The purpose of this guidance note is to raise awareness of the various significant amendments which will have the force of law.

2. **AMENDMENTS TO THE IGC CODE**

These amendments address the current prohibition on the use of ammonia cargo as fuel and the application of the '*Interim Guidelines for the Safety of Ships Using Ammonia as Fuel*' (MSC.1/Circ.1687). These guidelines are intended to be used as a basis for Alternative Design and Arrangements as per SOLAS Chll-1, regulation 55.

Application: 1 July 2026

3. **AMENDMENTS TO THE IGF CODE**

The IGF Code is regularly reviewed. The amendments incorporate several consolidations and additional new provisions based upon industry experience.

The new provisions include: -

- limitations on the protrusion of fuel tank suction wells into the double bottom compartment
- the discharge of piping system pressure relief valves back into fuel tanks or to the vent mast
- ventilation ducts passing through or serving hazardous areas to be gas tight. Ducts to be maintained at negative or positive pressure relative to space they are passing, if serving a hazardous area or passing through a hazardous area, respectively.
- changes to fuel tank vet hazardous area zones, with a provision for dispersion analysis to limit the extent.
- changes to structural fire protection in way of fuel tanks, with a provision for heat analysis to limit the extent.

Application: Ships constructed on or after 1 January 2028

4. **SOLAS UNIFIED INTERPRETATIONS (UIs)**

The following UIs were approved by the committee: -

4.1 **Unified interpretations of SOLAS regulations III/20.8.4 and 20.11, and resolution MSC.402(96)**

MSC.1/Circ.1682 covers *Unified Interpretations of SOLAS Regulations III/20.8.4 and 20.11, and Resolution MSC.402(96)*, confirming the applicability of SOLAS regulation III/20.11 and resolution MSC.402(96) to inflated rescue boats.

4.2 **Unified interpretations of SOLAS regulation II-2/4.5.6.1, and paragraphs 3.1.2, 3.1.4 and 3.5.3 of the IBC Code**

MSC.1/Circ.1683 covers *Unified Interpretations of SOLAS Regulation II-2/4.5.6.1, and Paragraphs 3.1.2, 3.1.4 and 3.5.3 of the IBC Code*, regarding cargo/vapour piping and related gas-freeing piping/ducts on tankers, with the effective date of 1 January 2026.

4.3 **Unified interpretations of SOLAS chapter II-2**

MSC.1/Circ.1684 covers *Unified Interpretations of SOLAS Chapter II-2*, on the consistent application of SOLAS regulation II-2/11.4.1 regarding the crown of a machinery space of category A, as well as SOLAS regulations II-2/4.5.3.2.2 and 11.6.3.2 on the secondary means of venting cargo tanks or pressure sensors as alternative.

4.4 **Unified interpretation of SOLAS chapter II-1**

MSC.1/Circ.1685 provides *Unified Interpretation of SOLAS Chapter II-1*, on SOLAS regulation II-1/26 concerning single essential propulsion components installed on passenger ships, with the effective date of 1 January 2026.