

Sept. 2013

IMSBC Code: Voluntary Early Application 1 Jan. 2014 – Mandatory 1 Jan 2015

On 4 Dec. 2008, by **Resolution MSC.268(85)**, IMO adopted a new regulation for the carriage of solid bulk cargoes – the IMSBC Code. This code will supersede the existing Code of Safe Practice for Solid Bulk Cargoes (BC Code). The resolution is enclosed for your easy reference.

You should note that 1 January 2014 has been set as the date for the voluntary application of the new Code. The Code will become mandatory on 1 January 2015.

Enclosed, therefore, please find **MSC.1/Circ.1454**, which provides you with guidelines for the developing and approving procedures for sampling, testing and controlling the moisture content for solid bulk cargoes which may liquefy.

Note: We recommend that you already now start preparing the relevant section of your SMS compliance with the new amendments of the Code.

In respect of the Code and its content, you are briefly advised as follows:

The format of the IMSBC Code is similar to that of the existing BC Code. Like the BC Code, the IMSBC Code categorises cargoes into three groups - A, B and C:

- Group A consists of the cargoes which may liquefy if shipped with moisture content in excess of their transportable moisture limit.
- Group B consists of cargoes which possess a chemical hazard which could give rise to a dangerous situation on a ship.
- Group C consists of cargoes which are not liable to liquefy (Group A) and do not possess chemical hazards (Group B).

Detailed requirements relating to each type of cargo are stated in the Code's individual schedules.

The IMSBC Code contains some new schedules:

- Chopped rubber and plastic insulation: Characterised as a Group C cargo and described as "Plastic and rubber insulation material, clean and free from other materials, in granular form."
- Coarse chopped tyres: Characterised as a Group C cargo and described as "Chopped or shredded fragments of used tyres in coarse size."
- Direct reduced iron (C) (by-products fines): Characterised as a Group B cargo and therefore dangerous. Described as "A porous, black/grey metallic material generated as a by-product in the manufacturing and handling processes of Direct Reduced Iron (A) Briquettes, hot moulded and/or Direct Reduced Iron (B) Lumps, pellets, cold-moulded briquettes. The density of DRI (C) is less than 5 000 kg/m³."
- Granulated tyre rubber: Characterised as a Group C cargo and described as "Fragmented rubber tyre material cleaned and free from other materials."
- Linted cotton seed: Characterised as a Group B cargo and therefore dangerous. Described as "Cottonseed with short cotton fibres adhering to the kernel after approximately 90-98% of the cotton have been removed by machine."
- Sulphur (formed, solid): Characterised as a Group C cargo and described as: "A co-product recovered from sour gas processing or oil refinery operations that have been subjected to a forming process that converts sulphur from a molten state into specific solid shapes (e.g. prills, granules, pellets, pastilles or flakes). It is bright yellow in colour and odourless." It is important to note that this schedule is NOT applicable to

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crushed, lump and coarse-grained sulphur. For sulphur in this condition, the schedule Sulphur UN 1350 (crushed lump and coarse grained), which is characterised as a Group B cargo, is to be used.

We would also like to draw your attention to some of the schedules and some special items:

- Aluminium melting by-products or Aluminium re-melting by-products, UN 3170: The ventilation requirements have been changed. Continuous mechanical ventilation is now required for this cargo. This means that the Load Line Convention must be fulfilled which again means that the height from the freeboard deck to the ventilation openings must be at least 4.5 metres.
- Brown coal briquettes and Coal: The Code states that "the master shall ensure that these cargoes are not to be stowed adjacent to hot areas". This statement is rather vague taking into account its importance and the fact that it is a statement in a code that will soon be mandatory.

Note that some new sections have been added to the Code:

The new section 1.5: Containing information concerning tripartite agreements on the acceptance of exemptions from the IMSBC Code and the application of deviating measures compared to those required by the Code

The new section 11: Containing information concerning "Security provisions".

And finally, the added Supplement. In this Supplement you will find some IMO documents that are related to the IMSBC Code:

The BLU Code: The intention of the Code of Practice for the Safe Loading and Unloading of Bulk Carriers is to provide guidance to masters of bulk carriers, terminal operators and other parties concerned with the safe handling, loading and unloading of solid bulk cargoes. This code is also linked to SOLAS Reg. VI/7 - Loading, unloading and stowage of bulk cargoes, as amended.

The BLU Manual: The intention of the Manual on Loading and Unloading of Solid Bulk Cargoes for Terminal Representatives is to provide more detailed guidance to terminal representatives (as defined in the BLU Code) and others involved in the handling of solid bulk cargoes, including those responsible for the training of personnel.

In addition to MSC Res.268(85) and MSC.1/Circ.1454 mentioned initially, enclosed please also find other documents from IMO relevant in respect of the Code:

- MSC/Circ. 908 – Uniform Method of Measurement of the Density of Bulk Cargoes
- MSC/Circ.1395 – Lists of Solid Bulk Cargoes for which a Fixed Gas Fire-extinguishing System may be exempted or for which a Fixed Gas Fire-extinguishing System is Ineffective
- Res. A.1050(27) – Revised Recommendations for Entering Enclosed Spaces Aboard Ships.

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