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MSC.1/Circ.1486
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GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR LIFEBOAT DRILLS ON MODUs

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its ninety-fourth session (17 to 21 November 2014), approved the *Guidelines on alternative methods for lifeboat drills on MODUs*, set out in the annex, following the recommendations made by the Sub-Committee on Ship Systems and Equipment at its first session (11 to 12 March 2014).

2 Member Governments are invited to use the annexed guidelines when applying the *Code for the Construction and Equipment of Mobile Offshore Drilling Units, 2009 (2009 MODU Code)*, as adopted by resolution A.1023(26), as amended by resolution MSC.387(94), and to bring them to the attention of all parties concerned.

3 Administrations may consider applying these guidelines also to the 1979 MODU Code adopted by resolution A.414(XI) and to the 1989 MODU Code adopted by resolution A.649(16).

4 Member Governments, shipowners and manufacturers of lifeboats are strongly encouraged to use the annexed *Guidelines on alternative methods for lifeboat drills on MODUs* at the earliest available opportunity.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR LIFEBOAT DRILLS ON MODUs

BACKGROUND

1 Paragraph 3.3.6 of SOLAS chapter III, regulation 19, requires the "launching of lifeboats with their assigned crew on board and manoeuvring in the water" at least once every three months, as far as reasonable and practicable.

2 Similarly, paragraph 14.12.4.2 of the 2009 MODU Code specifies:

"... at least once every three months when conditions permit, launching and manoeuvring with the assigned operating crew on board."

3 Such lifeboat drills provide an opportunity to verify that the emergency life-saving system and associated equipment is in place, in good working order and ready for use. Such drills are also necessary to train and evaluate the crew in the use of the equipment and demonstrate that they have the capability and readiness to manage an emergency in which lifeboats are employed.

4 The launching, manoeuvring and retrieval of lifeboats in remote offshore locations and similar unfavourable environmental conditions creates hazardous situations and potentially the inability to carry out such drills safely and fully.

5 Accordingly, the 2009 MODU Code allows for the situation where the regular, and full, completion of lifeboat launch and manoeuvre may not be possible.

6 Paragraph 14.12.4.3 of the 2009 MODU Code specifies:

"alternatively, the provisions regarding launching and manoeuvring may be considered as having been met for those units that have, (a) implemented the Guidelines developed by the Organization and they are included in the unit's operating procedures or, (b) by other equivalent means acceptable to the Administration."

7 The person in charge (PIC) of the unit is encouraged to place the lifeboats in the water and exercise them when conditions allow.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS

8 Where alternative methods of achieving the objectives of three-monthly launch and manoeuvre of lifeboats are to be employed, they should ensure achievement of a level of assurance of capability and readiness at least equivalent to that achieved through three-monthly launching and manoeuvring.

9 Such assurance includes the lifeboat equipment, the lifeboat crew and procedures and systems.

ELEMENTS OF TYPICAL THREE-MONTHLY LIFEBOAT LAUNCH AND MANOEUVRE DRILL

10 The launch and manoeuvre element of the three-monthly drill specified in SOLAS and the MODU Code consists primarily of the following elements:

- .1 prepare and make ready the lifeboat;
- .2 deploy and lower the boat into the water;
- .3 release the boat;
- .4 propel and steer the boat; and
- .5 functioning of the lifeboat onboard systems such as deluge, air, etc.

GUIDELINES

11 The following guidelines are intended to assist the operator of a mobile offshore unit in a situation where the execution of the three-monthly launch and manoeuvre of lifeboats as specified in paragraph 14.12.4.2 of the 2009 MODU Code is not possible. This is on condition that there is no reduction in ability to demonstrate assurance and capability of readiness to safely evacuate the unit's personnel by way of lifeboats.

11.1 Equipment

11.1.1 A comprehensive maintenance and inspection plan meeting the criteria found in MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1 should be in place. This plan should be to the satisfaction of the Administration.

11.1.2 Weekly and monthly inspections should be conducted in accordance with sections 10.18.7 and 10.18.8 of the 2009 MODU Code.

11.1.3 In addition, on a monthly basis, each lifeboat should be lowered to just above but not entering the water, and returned to the original stowage position; the condition of the hull, hook release and retrieval systems (lubrication, integrity and storage) and the operational condition of davit systems should be checked.

11.1.4 Insofar as possible, those on board responsible for lifeboat-launching should be involved in the annual servicing and function test of release gear carried out in accordance with MSC.1/Circ.1206/Rev.1.

11.2 Personnel

11.2.1 A competence assurance programme should be in place and cover all aspects of instruction and exercising of the crew as pertains to lifeboats and should be in accordance with the *Recommendations for the training and certification of personnel on mobile offshore units (MOUs)* (resolution A.1079(28)).

11.2.2 In addition to the specified mandatory training (e.g. as shown in table A-VI/2-1 of the STCW Code), the lifeboat coxswain should receive intermediate training (at least once every 2.5 years) at a facility satisfactory to the Administration. This training should include practical demonstration of all the elements that are described in paragraph 10 above of these guidelines and are part of the three-monthly launch/manoeuvre exercise. This training should be carried out utilizing a lifeboat system the same as, or substantially similar to, that which is fitted on board the unit;

11.2.3 Regarding drills and exercises, reference is made to appendix 1 of resolution A.1079(28).

11.2.4 Simulators can form a useful and important part of an overall competence assurance programme. Where such simulators are to be used they should be wholly appropriate to the lifeboat system encountered on board the unit. Simulators should not be seen as a complete replacement for practical, hands-on, training and drills.

11.2.5 Records of training in proficiency in lifeboats, including that carried out at a facility satisfactory to the Administration (resolution A.1079(28)), should be readily accessible.
