

## ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Industry guidance on large scale rescue operations at sea: Ensuring the safety and security of seafarers and rescued persons

Submitted by International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

#### SUMMARY

<i>Executive summary:</i>	This document provides information on new industry guidance on large scale rescue operations at sea. The purpose of the guidance is to ensure the safety and security of seafarers and rescued persons during such operations. The guidance was developed in response to the growing number of merchant ships involved in the rescue of persons, often migrants, in the Mediterranean.
<i>Strategic direction:</i>	5.1
<i>High-level action:</i>	5.1.2
<i>Planned output:</i>	5.1.2.2
<i>Action to be taken:</i>	Paragraph 12
<i>Related documents:</i>	MSC 94/21, FAL 39/16, III 1/18

#### Background

1 This document provides information on new industry guidance, *Large scale rescue operations at sea: Guidance on ensuring the safety and security of seafarers and rescued persons*. The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) issued the guidance in response to the increase in the number of migrants being rescued, particularly in the Mediterranean.

2 Last year, over 800 merchant ships were involved in the rescue of some 40,000 migrants in distress in the Mediterranean. This represents an unprecedented level of involvement in search and rescue by commercial ships. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that 216,000 migrants made the dangerous crossing by sea from North Africa to Europe in 2014, and estimates a potential 400,000 migrants attempting the same crossing in 2015.

#### Comment

3 The obligations concerning the rescue of persons in distress at sea and their disembarkation at a place of safety are found in:

- .1 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982;*

- .2 *IMO International Convention for Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) 1974, as amended; and*
- .3 *IMO International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), 1979, as amended.*

4 This new industry guidance is intended to help shipping companies prepare for the requirements of large scale rescue operations at sea, by considering plans and procedures to ensure the safety and security of ships, seafarers and rescued persons. Industry experience has shown that timely preparation, supported by clear and effective procedures, will prepare Masters and crews to manage large scale rescue operations safely, securely and humanely within the capabilities of the ship.

5 It is recognized that, for many companies and ships, the guidance will complement existing practices and procedures. For others, it may assist with the development of new or revised company practices and procedures to support Masters and crews.

6 The following is a summary of the structure and areas covered in the guidance:

- .1 Preparations (including the establishment of plans and procedures, relevant training and familiarization, and assessment of additional stores);
- .2 Conducting a large scale rescue operation (including rescue planning and general considerations for conducting the rescue, and embarkation of rescued persons);
- .3 Management of rescued persons (including accommodation of rescued persons, provision of medical care, sanitation and hygiene considerations, and safeguarding the security of the ship and crew); and
- .4 Disembarkation of rescued persons (including disembarkation in port and at sea, post-disembarkation actions, and crew welfare considerations).

7 There are two checklists appended to the guidance:

- .1 Company preparations to support Masters and crew; and
- .2 Masters and crew preparations for rescue operations.

8 The guidance can be freely downloaded via the ICS website.

<http://www.ics-shipping.org/docs/largescalerescue>

9 The guidance complements that available from IMO:

- .1 *Guidelines for the Development of Plans and Procedures for the Recovery of Persons from the Water (MSC.1/Circ.1447);*
- .2 *Guide to Recovery Techniques (MSC.1/Circ.1182/Rev.1); and*
- .3 *Guide for Cold Water Survival (MSC.1/Circ.1185/Rev.1).*

10 Although developed in response to the current situation in the Mediterranean, the guidance has wider application where merchant ships may be involved in large scale rescue operations.

11 The guidance will be reviewed by ICS as necessary.

**Action requested of the Committee**

12 The Committee is invited to note the new industry guidance, to encourage Member States and observer organizations to promote its availability as widely as possible, and to take action as appropriate.

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