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MSC/Circ.947  
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1 June 2000

## SAFE LOADING AND UNLOADING OF BULK CARRIERS

### Ship/Terminal Interface (Requirements for terminal operators)

1 The Facilitation Committee, at its twenty-seventh session, and the Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-second session, expressed concern at the number of incidents associated with the loading and unloading of bulk carriers, and recognized that there was a need for solid bulk cargo terminals to be fully aware of the requirements detailed in the Organization's instruments.

2 It is considered that the requirements of the amendments to Chapter VI of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS), which were adopted by resolution MSC.47(66) on 4 June 1996 and entered into force on 1 July 1998, should be highlighted, particularly in so far as they place specific responsibilities on terminal operators.

3 In this regard, attention is drawn to the following mandatory requirements in SOLAS regulation I/7, as amended:

- .1 before a solid bulk cargo is loaded or unloaded, the master and the terminal representative shall agree on a loading, unloading and ballasting/deballasting plan;
- .2 the master and terminal operator shall ensure that loading and unloading operations are conducted in accordance with the agreed plan; and
- .3 if during loading or unloading any of the specified limits of the ship are exceeded or are likely to become so if the loading or unloading continues, the master has the right to suspend operation and the obligation to notify accordingly the appropriate authority of the port State with which the plan has been lodged. The master and the terminal operator shall ensure that corrective action is taken. When unloading cargo, the master and terminal operators shall ensure that the unloading method does not damage the ship's structure.

4 The foregoing requirements are also contained in the Code of Practice for the Safe Loading and Unloading of Bulk Carriers (BLU Code) adopted by the Organization by resolution A.862(20). The purpose of the BLU Code is to assist persons responsible for the safe loading or unloading of bulk carriers to carry out their functions and to promote the safety of bulk carriers. The Code sets out detailed recommendations on the procedures to be followed between ships and terminals prior to and during cargo loading and unloading, and recommended contents of port and terminal information books. It is

recommended that a copy of the Code be made available to every bulk loading or unloading terminal so that advice on operational procedures is readily available and respective responsibilities are identified.

5 The attention of terminal operators is also drawn to additional information on the loading and unloading of solid bulk cargoes provided in the following documents:

- .1 The loading and unloading of solid bulk cargoes (Safety Panel Briefing Pamphlet No. 13), published by the International Cargo Handling Co-ordination Association (ICHCA), available from:

ICHCA International Secretariat  
Suite 2, 85 Western Road, Romford  
Essex, RM1 3LS  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)1708 734787

Fax: +44 (0)1708 734877

Email: [postmaster@ichca.org.uk](mailto:postmaster@ichca.org.uk)

- .2 Bulk Carriers – Handle with Care, published by the International Association of Classification Societies Ltd. (IACS), available from IACS member societies or directly from:

IACS Permanent Secretariat  
5 Old Queen Street  
London SW1H 9JA  
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7976 0660

Fax: +44 (0)20 7976 0440

Email: [permsec@iacs.org.uk](mailto:permsec@iacs.org.uk)

6 Member Governments and international organizations concerned are requested to bring this circular, by the most appropriate means, to the attention of solid bulk cargo terminal operators.