
Shipboard Pollution Emergency Plans: Guidance on their development and approval

Notice to Shipowners, Masters and Officers

This Notice supersedes Marine Guidance Note No. MGN 110 (M+F)

Summary

The purpose of this Marine Guidance Note is to draw the attention of the shipping industry to new international requirements, effective 01 January 2003, concerning the provision of shipboard pollution emergency plans. Also to advise industry of MCA's policy and arrangements regarding the approval of these plans.

INTRODUCTION

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NEW REQUIREMENTS

2. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) Marine Environment Protection Committee resolution MEPC.78(43), adopted 01 July 1999, includes the addition of a new regulation 16 of Annex II of MARPOL 73/78, and amendments to regulation 26 of Annex I of MARPOL 73/78.
3. The new MARPOL Regulation II/16 requires every ship of 150 gross tonnage and above certified to carry noxious liquid substances (NLS) in bulk, to carry on board a Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan for Noxious Liquid Substances approved by the vessel's flag Administration. The regulation entered into force 01 January 2001 with an application to such ships not later than 01 January 2003. The requirement will be made effective, nationally, by the Merchant Shipping (Dangerous or Noxious Liquid Substances in Bulk) (Amendment) Regulations 2003.
4. In respect of oil tankers that may also carry NLS in bulk, and must therefore comply with the above new requirement, the plan may be combined with the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan already required by MARPOL Regulation I/26. This is because most of the contents are the same and, in case

of emergency, one combined plan on board is more practical than two separate plans. In this case the title of such a combined plan shall be “Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan”.

5. These alternative arrangements on plans for oil tankers are contained in a new paragraph of MARPOL Regulation I/26. They will be made effective, nationally, by the Merchant Shipping (Prevention of Oil Pollution) (Amendment) Regulations 2003.

GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS

6. To assist those in drawing up plans, and also assist in their approval, the International Maritime Organization has produced the following:
 - Guidelines for the Development of Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plans for Oil and/or Noxious Liquid Substances.¹
 - Amendments to the Guidelines for the Development of Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans.²

The Guidelines in resolution MEPC.85(44) and the amendments to the Guidelines in resolution MEPC.54(32) as adopted by

resolution MEPC. 86(44), are incorporated in publication – IMO 586E, the *second (expanded) edition 2001* being available from IMO. It should be noted there are some editorial corrections that should be made to the IMO publication.³

7. The above Guidelines provide very comprehensive information together with illustrative tables and flow charts to aid those preparing a plan. Shipowners and those drafting a plan are advised to ensure that the plan covers, in sufficient depth and detail, all of the requirements of the Guidelines that have been made mandatory.
8. The Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) takes the view that the plans should be simple documents which make use of summarizing flow charts or checklists to guide the Master through the various actions and decisions required in responding to an incident. It is intended that the plan should assist the ships’ crew when dealing with an accidental discharge of oil and/or noxious liquid substances into the sea. Its primary purpose is to set in motion the necessary actions to stop or minimize the discharge and to reduce its effects on the marine environment.
9. As emphasized in the Guidelines, the need for a properly structured plan is clear when the pressure and multiplicity of tasks that will

¹ Resolution MEPC.85(44)

² Resolution MEPC.86(44) amending resolution MEPC.54(32)

³ When using Publication IMO-586E, there are two editorial corrections to make. On page 40, the reference to “regulation 6” should be altered to “regulation 16” and on page 43, the reference in the footnote to “resolution A.648(16)” should be to “resolution A.851(20)”

- confront a ship's crew in an emergency are considered. To accomplish its purpose the plan must be realistic, practical and easy to use.
10. Background information concerning the ship, its cargo and other factors, which may be relevant, should be placed in annexes in order that ships' crews may locate the operative parts of the plan more easily. The annexes are not included in the MCA's assessment or in the approval arrangements.
 11. In specifying in plans the procedures for making reports, the general principles for reporting incidents involving marine pollutants contained in resolution A.851(20) should be used. These general principles are promulgated in Marine Guidance Note MGN 242 (M+F) available on the MCA website: www.mcga.gov.uk
 12. Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plans which have already been approved for oil tankers of 150 gross tonnage and above and ships other than oil tankers of 400 gross tonnage and above need not be modified in accordance with either the Guidelines including amendments or the Guidelines as published in IMO publication IMO-586E.
 13. The MCA limits its approval of the Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan or the Shipboard Marine Pollution Emergency Plan for Oil and/or Noxious Liquid Substances to those parts of the Guidelines corresponding to sub-paragraphs (a), (b), (c) and (d) of MARPOL Annex I, regulation 26(2) and MARPOL Annex II, regulation 16(2).
 14. The fees charged for plan approval are based on the time taken by surveyors to complete the work at the hourly fee rate current at the time. Fee calculations will take account of identical sections that reduce the work required in multiple submissions. In calculating fees, the MCA will make every endeavor to ensure consistency.
 15. Arrangements exist whereby plans are approved by Regional Marine Offices. Shipowners should submit any plans to the Marine Office they normally deal with. The Marine Office will require a deposit of fees against an estimate of the work involved in accordance with the MCA's standard financial procedures.
 16. Any general questions relating to the application for plan approval and any questions relating to the Guidelines should be addressed to the appropriate Marine Office. A full list of Marine Offices and their addresses is available on the MCA website.

APPROVAL OF PLANS

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