

Halon

IMCA has previously provided members with guidance in respect of halon, notably in IMCA S&L 006 – “Halon and the Alternative Fire Suppression Gases” – and more recently in the July 2003 revision of IMCA M 119 – “Fires in Machinery Spaces on DP Vessels”. In the latter, the regulatory situation regarding the use of halon was described at paragraph 8.2.

The European Union in particular instigated EC Regulation 2037/2000, as described therein; and other flag states have similar decommissioning requirements, albeit not necessarily with the same dates. The situation is always subject to change as and when different states implement their requirements.

If members’ fire protection systems still contain halons 1211, 1301, and/or 2402 then this summary of information, provided by a fire systems supplier, would apply in respect of EU and EFTA flag state vessels. Something similar might well apply in respect of other flag state vessels, though perhaps with different cut-off dates.

Summary of Information Provided

- ◆ “Halon systems should have been removed/de-commissioned by the end of December 2003;
- ◆ “Removal of halon must only be carried out by approved companies;
- ◆ “Halon must be disposed of in a responsible and environmentally friendly way;
- ◆ “Servicing and maintenance of halon systems is no longer permitted.

“It should be borne in mind that insurers require policy holders to comply fully with their legal obligations. Thus, reliance on a halon system after 31 December 2003 could void an insurance policy, meaning that claims resulting from an insured event would not be met. The Association of British Insurers, for example, has stated that it is vital that all halon systems be decommissioned and replaced ahead of the statutory deadline; and a large amount of marine insurance is placed on or underwritten by the British insurance market.”

This note is thus a reminder for members to check the situation with the relevant flag states of their vessels. Further information can also be found on some fire system providers’ websites.