

New SOLAS requirements for lifting appliances and anchor handling winches on board ships

At its 107th session, IMO's Maritime Safety Committee adopted amendments to SOLAS, introducing a new regulation II-1/3-13 on lifting appliances and anchor handling winches on board ships which will enter into force on 1 January 2026. For ease of reference, a link to the text of the new regulation is set out below.

For more information, please [contact @imca-int.com](mailto:contact@imca-int.com)

SOLAS Chapter II-1, regulation 3-13

The SOLAS amendments cover requirements for the application, design and construction, operation, inspection, testing and maintenance of onboard lifting appliances and anchor handling winches. In addition to the new SOLAS regulation, two sets of associated draft guidelines have been developed:

- 1) MSC.1/Circ.1662 – Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches, and
- 2) MSC.1/Circ.1663 – Guidelines for Lifting Appliances.

The aim of the new SOLAS regulation and the two sets of associated guidelines is to prevent accidents related to lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, which have resulted in harm to operators and damage to ships, cargo, shore-based structures, and subsea structures, as well as to the marine environment.

The new requirements will apply to lifting appliances and anchor handling winches, and loose gear utilised with the lifting appliances and the anchor handling winches. Design, construction and installation requirements will apply only to new ships built after 1 January 2026, while requirements applicable to maintenance, operation, inspection and testing will apply to all ships.

Notwithstanding the above, following a submission by IMCA's Marine Policy & Regulatory Affairs (MPRA) Committee to the 100th session of IMO's Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 100/9/5), the new requirements will not apply to lifting appliances used on offshore construction ships, such as pipe/cable laying/repair or offshore installation vessels, including ships for decommissioning work, which comply with standards acceptable to the Flag State.

In addition, the new requirements will also not apply to:

- ◆ lifting appliances on MODUs
- ◆ integrated mechanical equipment for opening and closing hold hatch covers, and
- ◆ life-saving launching appliances complying with the LSA Code.

Furthermore, the Flag State shall determine to what extent the design, construction and installation provisions do not apply to lifting appliances which have a safe working load below 1,000 kg.

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Members' attention is drawn to the following points:

- ◆ Even though offshore cranes are excluded, careful understanding of the position of the Flag State will be required to ensure members are clear as to what is considered 'acceptable standards'.
- ◆ Anchor-handling winches are not limited to dedicated anchor-handling ships, but include any winch for the purpose of deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and mooring lines in subsea operations. Therefore, this also includes, for example, winches for deploying start-up anchors for pipelay operations.
- ◆ The guidance does not impose specific requirements for the training of crane operators, other than that they should be competent. Existing (offshore) crane driver certification schemes will therefore remain acceptable.
- ◆ In addition to the new SOLAS regulations, Flag state, Coastal/Port State, ILO Convention 152 and SOLAS II-1 requirements may also apply concurrently. While these are largely aligned, there may be subtle differences in content and/or application which members need to look out for.