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### **Amendments to the Regulations on the construction of ships – anchor-handling winches and associated loose gear**

#### **Introduction**

The Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA) has adopted amendments to section 3, first paragraph, sections 11 and 13, as well as new section 13a, of the Regulations of 1 July 2014 No. 1072 on the construction of ships.

The amendment to section 3 first paragraph of the Regulations on the construction of ships results from amendments to SOLAS regulation II-1.

On 8 June 2023, the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) adopted amendments to SOLAS chapter II-1 through resolution MSC.532(107). The resolution introduces new definitions in SOLAS regulations II-1/2.30, 2.31, 2.32 and 2.33, and a new regulation II.1/3-13 concerning lifting appliances and anchor handling winches.

Norway developed its positions in collaboration with the industry and participated in the negotiations on this regulatory framework in the IMO. The industry is expected to be well acquainted with these amendments through special interest organisations and information provided by the NMA.

The amendments enter into force on 1 January 2026.

#### **Repeal of RSV 17-2022**

RSV 17-2022 is repealed concurrently with the adoption of the amending regulations. In the view of the NMA, it is no longer necessary to maintain this circular. The content of the circular has been accommodated through the introduction of rules in SOLAS II-1/3-13, cf. section 3 of the Regulations on the construction of ships. With regard to the stability criteria, the NMA refers to the International Code on Intact Stability, 2008 (IS Code), Part B, chapter 2.7, which addresses these matters. The operational requirements contained in the circular are also well known within the industry.

#### **Public consultation**

The proposed amendments were circulated for public consultation from 12 September to 12 December 2025, and the NMA received four comments.

#### *Consultation comments and the NMA's remarks*

The Norwegian Union of Marine Engineers and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security had no comments on the proposed amendments.

The NMA received almost identical responses from IP Huse and Kongsberg Maritime AS. In their comments, they point out that ISO 7365 is an old standard for towing winches and is, in certain respects, outdated and no longer aligned with current solutions. Both propose that the reference to this standard be removed from the Regulations on the construction of ships. The NMA agrees that the standard is outdated in certain respects. However, the amendment as proposed cannot be implemented at this time. Among other considerations, several ships have not been designed, constructed or equipped in accordance with a classification society's own rules, and currently rely on this standard. The NMA will, however, consider whether the reference to ISO 7365 should be removed in future amendments to the Regulations on the construction of ships. IP Huse and

Kongsberg Maritime AS refer to section 13 second paragraph (d) and argue that separate requirements for the breaking load of towing wires are unnecessary, as these matters are already covered by classification society rules. Alternatively, they suggest that the requirement should be aligned with what is set out in the classification rules. The requirement in section 13 second paragraph (d) is a continuation of the requirement previously found in section 13 second paragraph (e), which corresponds to MSC/Circ. 884 "Guidelines for safe ocean towing". The Norwegian Maritime Authority wishes at this stage to maintain this requirement and has therefore adopted the amendment as proposed in the consultation.

Furthermore, IP Huse and Kongsberg Maritime AS point out that several classification societies have developed notations for anchor-handling and have specific requirements for winches. As an alternative to the reference to ISO 7365, they propose adding the wording "or equivalent rules of a recognised classification society" to section 13 third paragraph. The NMA notes that section 13a ninth paragraph already provides an option for the use of rules from a recognised classification society as an alternative to, inter alia, section 13a second paragraph (a).

## **Amendments to SOLAS chapter II -1**

### *General*

The provisions in SOLAS chapter II-1 on construction – subdivision and stability, machinery and electrical installations are implemented in Norwegian law by incorporation into section 3 of the Regulations on the construction of ships.

Section 3. The implementing provision in section 3 has therefore been amended, with the first paragraph now referring to MSC.532(107). SOLAS chapter II-1 was consolidated in 2024, and this consolidation is now also reflected in section 3 first paragraph.

As noted in the introduction, the amendments to SOLAS chapter II-1 introduce new definitions in SOLAS regulations II-1/2.30, 2.31, 2.32 and 2.33, as well as a new regulation II-1/3-13. The new regulation II-1/3-13 applies not only to anchor-handling winches, but also to lifting appliances and loose gear used in conjunction with lifting appliances and anchor-handling winches. Lifting appliances are currently regulated by the Regulations of 17 January 1978 No. 4 on cargo-handling appliances in ships and the Regulations of 13 January 1986 No. 31 on cranes used on ships in open waters for loading and unloading. These rules safeguard the content of MSC.532(107) insofar as lifting appliances are concerned.

The regulatory amendment therefore has implications only for anchor-handling winches and loose gear used in conjunction with such winches.

The new SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13 renders *Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches* (MSC.1/Circ.1662) mandatory through the reference found in SOLAS regulations II-1/3-13.2.2 and II-1/3-13.2.5.. The guidelines shall apply to anchor-handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026. The meaning of “installed on or after 1 January 2026” is defined in SOLAS regulation II-1/2.33. For ships the keels of which are laid on or after 1 January 2026, all installation dates of equipment on board are applicable. For ships the keels of which are laid before 1 January 2026, the applicable date is the agreed delivery date of the anchor-handling winch. If no such agreement exists, the actual delivery date shall apply, provided that this date is 1 January 2026 or later.

#### *Details of the amendments arising from MSC.532(107)*

SOLAS regulations II-1/2.31 and 2.32 introduce new definitions of “anchor-handling winch” and “loose gear”. An anchor-handling winch means “any winch used for deploying, recovering and repositioning anchors and moorings lines in subsea operations”. Loose gear is defined as “an article of ship's equipment by means of which a load can be attached to a lifting appliance or an anchor-handling winch, but which does not form an integral part of the appliance or load”. SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13 applies to anchor-handling winches and loose gear used in conjunction with anchor-handling winches. Pursuant to SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.2, anchor-handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall be designed, constructed, installed and tested on the basis of the *Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches* (MSC.1/Circ.1662). It follows further from SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.5 that anchor-handling winches installed before 1 January 2026 shall be tested and thoroughly examined in accordance with the *Guidelines for Anchor Handling Winches* (MSC.1/Circ.1662) no later than at the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026. This entails that anchor-handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026 shall, as a minimum, comply with these approved guidelines.

Existing anchor-handling winches already installed on board shall meet the new testing and inspection requirements no later than at the first renewal survey on or after 1 January 2026.

#### *Guidelines for anchor handling winches (MSC.1/Circ.1662)*

The guidelines provide supplementary requirements to SOLAS regulation II.1/3-13 for anchor-handling winches, associated equipment and loose gear intended for use in connection with anchor-handling winches, cf. the scope set out in paragraph 1 of the guidelines. In accordance with paragraph 3.1.1, anchor-handling winches and associated equipment shall be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the requirements of a classification society recognised by the Administration in accordance with SOLAS regulation XI-1/1, or standards accepted by the Administration providing an equivalent level of safety. In addition, anchor-handling equipment falling within the scope of SOLAS regulation II-1/3-13.2.2 – that is, anchor-handling winches installed on or after 1 January 2026 – shall also comply with the additional guidelines set out in paragraphs 3.1.2 to 3.1.8.

The Regulations of 22 December 2014 No. 1893 on supervision and certificates for Norwegian ships and mobile offshore (the Certificate Regulations) requires, in section 34, inspection and survey of towing and anchor-handling arrangements. This provision must be read in conjunction with the guidelines, which likewise address the inspection of anchor-handling winches. At this time, the NMA sees no need to amend the wording of section 34 of the Certificate Regulations, as the provision is consistent with the requirements set out in MSC.1/Circ.1662.

### **Remarks on the individual adopted amendments**

*To section 3 Requirements for construction, stability and outfitting of cargo ships and passenger ships engaged on foreign voyages*

As a consequence of the amendments to SOLAS regulations II-1/2 and II-1/3-13, a reference to resolution MSC.532(107) has been added to section 3, first paragraph. In addition, the reference to the consolidated edition of SOLAS has been updated to the 2024 edition.

*To section 11 on safety measures on offshore support vessels*

In section 11, the second paragraph has been deleted, and the requirement concerning “an arrangement for controlled release of torsional forces in wires” has been moved to section 13a third paragraph (d). This provision applies to “offshore support vessels”, as defined in section 2 second paragraph (c) of the Regulations on the construction of ships.

The former third and fourth paragraphs of section 11 now constitute the second and third paragraphs.

*To section 13 on towing and associated equipment*

The former section 13 applied to both towing equipment and anchor-handling equipment. Following the amendment, the rules applicable to this equipment have been divided into separate provisions: section 13 now contains the requirements for towing equipment, while the new section 13a lays down the requirements for anchor-handling equipment.

*First paragraph*

The former first paragraph of section 13 is continued, but with a clarification stating that the provision applies only where the vessel has such equipment on board.

*Second paragraph*

The same winch may be used for both towing and for anchor-handling. The *Guidelines for anchor handling winches* (MSC.1/Circ.1662) allow the use of classification society rules for the design, construction and installation of anchor-handling winches, cf. paragraph 3.1.1. On this basis, section 13 third paragraph of the Regulations now also provides for the use of rules from a recognised classification society for towing winches, thereby ensuring that the provision is more closely aligned with the guidelines for anchor-handling winches. In section 13, second paragraph (b), (c) and (d), the previous section 13, second paragraph (b), (d) and (e) are continued.

The former section 13, second paragraph (c), which pertained to anchor-handling equipment, has been transferred to section 13a.

*Third paragraph*

The former third paragraph of section 13 is continued, but the requirement is now expressly limited to towing pins and guide pins, where such equipment is fitted on board.

*Fourth paragraph*

The equipment referred to in the fourth paragraph is derived from the former section 13, sixth paragraph, but now limited to equipment used in towing operations.

The former fourth, fifth and seventh paragraphs of section 13 pertained to anchor-handling equipment and are therefore not included here but have been incorporated into section 13a.

*To section 13a on anchor-handling winches and associated equipment*

*First paragraph*

The scope of action of section 13a follows from the first paragraph. Subparagraph (a) covers cargo ships engaged on foreign voyages of less than 500 gross tonnage and cargo ships engaged on domestic voyages, cf. section 4 (a) and (c) of the Regulations on the construction of ships.

Subparagraph (b) covers cargo ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards engaged on foreign voyages, fitted with anchor-handling winches installed before 1 January 2026. These are vessels falling within the scope of section 3 of the Regulations on the construction of ships. Such cargo ships already have anchor-handling winches installed on board pursuant to former section 13 and, upon the implementation of MSC.532(107) in section 3 of the Regulations on the construction of ships, will not be subject to the requirements set out in SOLAS regulation li-1/3-13.2.2, concerning the design, construction and installation of anchor-handling winches until a new anchor-handling winch is installed on board on or after 1 January 2026.

*Second paragraph*

The previous section 13 second paragraph (a) to (c) is retained. However, the text concerning the deadline applicable to support vessels constructed before 1 November 1992 is removed, as the compliance deadline has expired and all such vessels shall now meet the new requirements.

*Third paragraph*

Subparagraph (a) continues the requirement in former section 13 seventh paragraph to have a remotely operated wire or chain stopper fitted on board. The requirement now applies to all vessels engaged in anchor-handling operations, and not solely offshore support vessels. This reflects the NMA's established administrative practice, under which vessels other than offshore support vessels – including vessels conducting anchor-handling within aquaculture – are required to carry the equipment mentioned in (a).

In the repealed Regulations of 15 September 1992 No. 695 on the construction of passenger, cargo ships and barges section 48 fifth paragraph (a) required "towing pins/guide pins for guiding steel wires and chains", and section 48 eighth paragraph required "a stern roller or equivalent arrangement designed to fit the ship in question". These provisions appear to have been inadvertently omitted during the transition to the current Regulations on the construction of ships and section 13. They are now reinstated by inserting them into section 13a second paragraph (b) and (c), with minor adaptations and wording adjustments in (c). The amendment is consistent with the NMA's practice maintained since the repeal of the 1992 Regulations.

Subparagraph (d) continues the provision laid down in section 11 second paragraph of the Regulations on the construction of ships. However, the equipment requirement now applies to all vessels performing anchor-handling operations, not only offshore support vessels. A vessel need not be an offshore support vessel to undertake anchor-handling, and the same operational hazards arise irrespective of vessel type. The NMA therefore considers that uniform equipment requirements shall apply whenever anchor-handling operations are carried out.

#### *Fourth to sixth paragraphs*

The fourth to sixth paragraphs continue the provisions laid down in section 13 third to fifth paragraphs of the Regulations on the construction of ships concerning anchor-handling equipment.

#### *Seventh paragraph*

The seventh paragraph continues the remaining requirements of section 13 seventh paragraph of the Regulations on the construction of ships. However, the requirement is amended to apply to all vessels performing anchor-handling operations, and not only offshore support vessels. See also the comments to the third paragraph (a).

#### *Eighth paragraph*

The eighth paragraph continues section 13 first paragraph of the Regulations on the construction of ships insofar as it concerns anchor-handling equipment, but with a clarification that the requirement applies specifically to enclosed towing pins or guiding pins.

#### *Ninth paragraph*

In the *Guidelines for anchor handling winches* (MSC.1/Circ.1662), paragraph 3.1.1 states that anchor-handling winches and associated equipment shall be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the rules of a recognised classification society or a standard providing an equivalent level of safety. Section 13a second paragraph (a) of the Regulations on the construction of ships specifies that the anchor-handling winch shall comply with the requirements for design and testing set out in the international standards ISO 7365, unless otherwise provided in the section. In order to allow the use of rules issued by a recognised classification society as an alternative, such rules are expected as an equivalent option to section 13a second paragraph (a), as well as to the fifth, sixth and eighth paragraphs.

#### *Entry into force*

The amendments enter into force on 1 January 2026.

### **Administrative and economic implications**

#### *Implications for the industry and affected stakeholders*

The Norwegian Maritime Authority assumes that operators who routinely work with the SOLAS Convention are already familiar with the amendments to SOLAS chapter II -1. These amendments have been negotiated within the IMO, where the interests of the various parties have been duly considered. On this basis, the implementation of SOLAS regulations II-1/2 and II-1/3-13 is, in the NMA's assessment, expected to have only limited economic impact on the industry.

Inspection and supervision of anchor-handling winches are already carried out pursuant to section 34 of the Certificate Regulations. The adopted amendments will therefore, in the NMA's view, form part of an already established inspection and supervisory framework.

With respect to the amendments in section 13a third paragraph (a), and seventh paragraph – where the requirements are expanded from applying to offshore support vessels to applying to all vessels performing anchor-handling operations – the NMA assumes that this will not entail additional costs for the industry, as such equipment is already installed on board current vessels. Regarding the requirement in section 13a third paragraph (d), that vessels used for anchor

handling shall be fitted with an arrangement for controlled release of torsional forces in wires, the NMA is not aware of any vessels performing anchor-handling operations today that are not already equipped with such arrangements. It is therefore assumed that the majority of existing vessels engaged in anchor handling will comply with the requirement, and that the amendment will have limited or no consequences for the industry. The remaining amendments to sections 11, 13 and the new section 13a are editorial in nature, with only minor adjustments to the requirements. The NMA assumes that these amendments will entail limited or no additional costs for the industry.

*Consequences for the authorities*

Apart from the costs associated with making the necessary amendments to the Regulations, the changes will not give rise to any further economic or administrative consequences for the authorities.

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