CIRCULAR no. 5/2003

Category

[ ] Operational [ ] Nautical

[X] Technical [ ] Other

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Sign.

Issue:

Phase-out of Halon for Cargo vessels registered in a Norwegian Ship Register

This circular supersedes NIS Circular 4/2003. The reason for the issuance of circular 5/2003 is that a typing error occurred on the second page of circular 4/2003. The words “on or after” in the second bullet point on page 2 has been replaced by “before” in this circular.

According to SOLAS 74 reg. II-2/5.3 new installations of fixed gas fire-extinguishing systems that use halon as fire-extinguishing media has been prohibited on all ships since 1 October 1994. This requirement is also repeated in IMO resolution A.719 (17) and MSC/Circ. 668. The requirement is implemented in the following Norwegian legislations:

- Regulations of 22 June 1990 No. 536 concerning Fire Safety Measures in Ships to which the Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) applies.
- Regulations of 17 June 1986 No. 1296 concerning Fire Safety Measures in Ships to which the Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS -74) does not apply.

IMO has not yet decided on a date for the final phase-out of halon. The philosophy in IMO has been that the phase-out of halon will happen automatically due to tighter control and the increased complication of the replenishing of bottles which in turn will bring increased costs.

However, the European Union have through REGULATION (EC) No 2037/2000 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 June 2000 on substances that deplete the ozone layer, established a prohibition for the use of fixed fire-extinguishing systems and portable fire-extinguishers that use halon as fire-extinguishing media after 31 December 2003. The regulation (EC) No 2037/2000 was implemented in Norwegian legislations by regulations of 20 December 2002 No 1818 concerning ozone depleting substances laid down by the Ministry for the environment.

It has been given exemption from the requirement for critical use of halon. According to (EC) regulation No 2037/2000 and Norwegian regulations the exemption for critical uses will only apply for halon 1301 for the making inert of occupied spaces where flammable liquid and/or gas release may occur in existing cargo ships (i.e. ships constructed before 1 October 1994). Halon used for ordinary fire-extinguishing is not included by the exemption and shall be faced-out within 31 December 2003.

In this context making inert means the pre-empty release of halon into a space to prevent fire or explosion. Typical spaces where this system may be used are cargo-handling spaces on certain oil-, gas- and chemical tankers.

The following will apply to Norwegian registered cargo vessels:

- Fixed fire-extinguishing systems and portable fire-extinguishers that use halon as fire-extinguishing media will not be allowed used on cargo-vessels after 31 December 2003.
- Cargo-vessels constructed before 1 October 1994 may continue to use halon 1301 for making inert in manned areas where flammable liquids and/or gas discharges may occur.

Section (§) 6-2 of regulations of 20 December 2002 No 1818 concerning ozone depleting substances allows the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority (SFT) to give exemptions from the requirement in special circumstances. Dispensation from the requirement can be granted to a vessel if the phase-out of halon within 31 December 2003 will be difficult to accomplish.

Questions regarding import of halon and applications for extension to fulfil the requirements should be directed to the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority (SFT).

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