Regulations of 7 June 2019 No. 710 on the construction, equipment and operation of ships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard

Legal basis: Laid down by the Norwegian Maritime Authority on 7 June 2019 under the Act of 16 February 2007 No. 9 relating to ship safety and security (Ship Safety and Security Act) sections 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22, 27 and 43, cf. Formal Delegation of 16 February 2007 No. 171 and Formal Delegation of 31 May 2007 No. 590.
Amendments: Amended by Regulations of 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024), 26 June 2025 No. 1372, 19 March 2025 No. 563 (in force on 1 January 2026, i.a. title).

Chapter 1
General provisions

Section 1. *Scope of application*

Subject to the limitations imposed by international law, these Regulations apply to Norwegian and foreign passenger ships operating in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard.

Section 4a of these Regulations applies to Norwegian and foreign ships of 24 metres in overall length and upwards, of less than 500 gross tonnage and carrying not more than 12 passengers, when operating in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard.

Amended by Regulation of 19 March 2025 No. 563 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 2. *Survey and documentation*

The ship shall have on board a confirmation from the flag State that surveys have been carried out in accordance with IMO Resolution A.1104(29), and that the requirements of these Regulations are met. The confirmation shall:

a. be in Norwegian or English;
b. be renewed every five years.

Section 3. *Definitions*

For the purpose of these Regulations, the following definitions shall apply:

a. ”Passenger” means every person other than:
    1. the master and members of the crew, or other persons employed or engaged in any capacity on board a ship on the business of that ship;
    2. a child under one year of age.
b. “Passenger ship” means ships carrying more than 12 passengers, with the exception of ships belonging to the armed forces or employed in their service;
c. “SOLAS” means the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, consolidated edition 2020, with amendments up to and including MSC.456(101), MSC.474(102), MSC.482(103) and MSC.496(105).

Amended by Regulation of 18 December 2023 No. 2173 (in force on 1 January 2024).

Chapter 2
Common provisions

Section 4. *Planning and execution of the voyage*

The Polar Code Part I-B paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3 shall apply as regulation.

Ships shall be operated at a safe distance from glacier fronts. The distance shall be at least five times the height of the glacier front, but not less than 200 metres.

Section 4a. *Qualifications of deck officers*

The Polar Code Part I-A Chapter 12 and the STCW Convention regulation V/4, cf. the STCW Code Section A-V/4, shall apply as regulations.

Added by Regulation of 19 March 2025 No. 563 (in force on 1 January 2026).

Section 5. ***Hospital accommodation and procedures for evacuation by helicopter***

The ship shall be provided with hospital accommodation, medical supplies and equipment in accordance with the recommendations of MSC.1/Circ. 1129.

The ship shall have procedures for evacuation by helicopter in compliance with the recommendations of the "International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual" (IAMSAR Manual).

Section 6. ***Requirements for vessels used as tenders***

A vessel which is regarded as part of the passenger ship's equipment and which is used to transport passengers between shore and ship (tender) shall meet the requirements of this provision.

Tenders shall be operated at a safe distance from glacier fronts. The distance shall be at least five times the height of the glacier front, but not less than 200 metres.

Section 7. ***Protection against polar bears***

In order to protect persons after evacuation to ice or land, the ship must be provided with equipment and procedures to prevent polar bear attacks without harming or killing the animal.

Chapter 3
Passenger high-speed craft

Section 8. ***Passenger high-speed craft***

Passenger ships defined as high-speed pursuant to SOLAS Chapter X Regulation 1 shall be certified in accordance with the International Code of Safety for High-Speed Craft adopted by IMO Resolution MSC.97(73), as amended by MSC.175(79), MSC.222(82), MSC.260(84), MSC.271(85), MSC.326(90), MSC.352(92), MSC 424(98) and MSC.439(99) (the 2000 HSC Code).

Category A craft may only operate in the Isfjord and shall be provided with liferafts satisfying the LSA Code.

Chapter 13 of the 2000 HSC Code also applies to ships of less than 150 gross tonnage.

Sections 17 and 18 of these Regulations shall apply accordingly to passenger high-speed craft.

Chapter 4
Passenger ships not holding a Passenger Ship Safety Certificate or a High-Speed Craft Safety Certificate

Section 9. ***Scope of application for chapter 4***

Sections 10 to 19 shall apply to ships not holding a Passenger Ship Safety Certificate according to SOLAS Chapter I or a High-Speed Craft Safety Certificate according to chapter 1 of the 2000 HSC Code.

Section 10. ***Construction – subdivision and stability, machinery and electrical installations***

SOLAS Chapter II-1 shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulations 1.4 and 9.5.

Passenger spaces shall be designed in compliance with MSC.1/Circ.735 on ships the keel of which is laid or which are at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 January 2020.

Personnel lifts shall be designed, constructed, installed, equipped, tested and inspected in accordance with the rules of a recognised classification society and ISO 8383 "Lifts on Ships – Specific Requirements".

Section 11. ***Construction – fire protection, fire detection and fire extinction***

SOLAS Chapter II-2 shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulation 1.4.4.1.

Section 12. ***Life-saving appliances and arrangements***

SOLAS Chapter III shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulations 2.1 and 21.

The ship shall carry survival craft satisfying section 4.2 “inflatable liferafts”, 4.5 "partially enclosed lifeboats” or section 4.6 “totally enclosed lifeboats” of the LSA Code shall be sufficient to accommodate 125 % of the total number of persons the ship is certified to carry. The survival craft shall, as far as practicable, be equally distributed on each side of the ship. Liferafts shall be operated by a marine evacuation system (MES) in accordance with the requirements of section 6.2 of the LSA Code or launching appliances in compliance with paragraph 6.1.5 of the LSA Code.

The overall capacity of the survival craft shall be sufficient to accommodate the number of persons the ship is certified to carry, even if one survival craft is lost or rendered unserviceable. When calculating the capacity, consideration shall be given to whether one single fault in common components can result in several survival craft being lost or rendered unserviceable.

All survival craft required for abandonment of the ship by the total number of persons on board must be capable of being launched with their full complement of persons and equipment within 30 minutes from the time the abandon-ship signal is given.

The ship shall carry at least one rescue boat. A lifeboat may be accepted as a rescue boat provided that it and its launching and recovery arrangements comply with the requirements for a rescue boat.

The number of rescue boats and/or lifeboats shall be sufficient to ensure that no more than nine liferafts need to be marshalled by each rescue boat or lifeboat after evacuation.

Amended by Regulation of 26 June 2025 No. 1372.

Section 13. *Radio communication*

SOLAS Chapter IV shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulations 1.1 and 3.

Section 14. *Safe navigation*

SOLAS Chapter V shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulations 1.2, 1.4 and 3.

The ship is required to have minimum safe manning determined by the flag State.

Section 15. *Carriage of cargoes and fuel oil*

SOLAS Chapter VI shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulation 1.1.

Section 16. *Carriage of dangerous goods*

SOLAS Chapter VII shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulation 2.1.

Section 17. *Safety management*

The ship shall have a valid Safety Management Certificate in compliance with SOLAS Chapter IX, issued by its flag State.

Section 18. *Safety measures in polar waters*

SOLAS Chapter XIV shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Regulations 2.1 and 3.

The Polar Code Part I-A and the safety-related provisions in the introduction shall apply as regulation, with the exception of Part I-A chapter 1 paragraph 1.3 concerning certificate and survey.

Maximum expected time of rescue means the time adopted for the design of equipment and systems that provide survival support, and could be less than 5 days.

Section 19. *Load line*

For ships of 24 metres in length (L) and upwards, the requirements of the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966, as amended by the Protocol of 1988, consolidated edition 2005, Annex B, Annex I, as amended by IMO Resolutions MSC.223(82), MSC.270(85), MSC.329(90), MSC.345(91) and MSC.356(92) (the Load Line Convention) shall apply as regulation.

Ships of less than 24 metres in length (L) shall comply with all requirements related to means of closure, coaming and sill heights, air pipe and ventilator heights, freeing port area and overboard discharge valves specified in the Load Line Convention.

Chapter 5
Concluding provisions

Section 20. *Exemptions*

The flag State may upon written application from the company permit other solutions than those required by these Regulations when it is established that such solutions provide a level of safety equivalent to the requirements of the Regulations.

The ship shall have on board a list of equivalent solutions accepted by the flag State.

Section 21. *Transitional provision*

Ships having operated in the Norwegian territorial waters surrounding Svalbard each year for the last three years are not required to meet the requirements of these Regulations, with the exception of sections 4 and 7, until 1 January 2025.

Section 22. *Entry into force*

The Regulations enter into force on 1 January 2020.