

INTERNATIONAL CODE OF SAFETY FOR HIGH-SPEED CRAFT, 2000*

*The International Code of Safety for High Speed Craft, 2000 (2000 HSC Code) is the Annex to resolution MSC.97(73), the text of which is given at the end of this publication.

Resolution MSC.97(73) has subsequently been amended by MSC.175(79) and MSC.222(82), (see Appendix E and F for further detail) the text of which is in Chapters 1 to 19 and Annex 1 to 12 of this document. Appendix A to D of this document contains further supplementary UK and EC information.

Preamble

1 The international conventions ratified in respect of conventional ships and the regulations applied as a consequence of such conventions have largely been developed having in mind the manner in which conventional ships are constructed and operated. Traditionally, ships have been built of steel and with the minimum of operational controls. The requirements for ships engaged on long international voyages are therefore framed in such a way that, providing the ship is presented for survey and a Ship Safety Certificate is issued, the ship may go anywhere in the world without any operational restrictions being imposed. Providing the ship is not involved in a casualty, all that is needed is that it is made available to the Administration for the purpose of a satisfactory resurvey before the Ship Safety Certificate expires and the Certificate will be reissued.

2 The traditional method of regulating ships should not be accepted as being the only possible way of providing an appropriate level of safety. Nor should it be assumed that another approach, using different criteria, could not be applied. Over a long period of time, numerous new designs of marine vehicles have been developed and have been in service. While these do not fully comply with the provisions of the international conventions relating to conventional ships built of steel, they have demonstrated an ability to operate at an equivalent level of safety when engaged on restricted voyages under restricted operational weather conditions and with approved maintenance and supervision schedules.

3 The High-Speed Craft Code 1994 (1994 HSC Code) was derived from the previous Code of Safety for Dynamically Supported Craft (DSC Code) adopted by IMO in 1977, recognizing that safety levels can be significantly enhanced by the infrastructure associated with regular service on a particular route, whereas the conventional ship safety philosophy relies on the ship being self-sustaining with all necessary emergency equipment being carried on board.

4 The safety philosophy of this Code is based on the management and reduction of risk as well as the traditional philosophy of passive protection in the event of an accident. Management of risk through accommodation arrangement, active safety systems, restricted operation, quality management and human factors engineering should be considered in evaluating safety equivalent to current conventions. Application of mathematical analysis should be encouraged to assess risk and determine the validity of safety measures.

5 This Code takes into account that a high-speed craft is of a light displacement compared with a conventional ship. This displacement aspect is the essential parameter to obtain fast and competitive sea transportation and consequently this Code allows for use of non-conventional shipbuilding materials, provided that a safety standard at least equivalent to conventional ships is achieved.

6 To clearly distinguish such craft, criteria based on speed and volumetric Froude number have been used to delineate those craft to which this Code applies from other, more conventional, craft.

7 The Code requirements also reflect the additional hazards which may be caused by the high speed compared with conventional ship transportation. Thus, in addition to the normal requirements (including life-saving appliances, evacuation facilities, etc.) provided in case of an accident occurring, further emphasis is placed on reducing the risk of hazardous situations arising. Some advantages result from the high-speed craft concept, i.e. the light displacement provides a large reserve buoyancy in relation to displacement, reducing the hazards addressed by the International Convention on Load Lines, 1966. The consequences of other hazards, such as of collision at high speed, are balanced by more stringent navigational and operational requirements and specially developed accommodation provisions.

8 The above-mentioned safety concepts were originally reflected in the DSC Code and in the 1994 HSC Code. The development of novel types and sizes of craft has led to the development of pressures within the maritime industry for craft which are not dynamically supported cargo craft or passenger craft carrying larger numbers of passenger or operating further afield than permitted by that Code to be certified according to those concepts. Additionally, improvements of maritime safety standards since 1994 were required to be reflected in the revisions of the 1994 HSC Code to maintain safety equivalence with conventional ships.

9 Accordingly, two differing principles of protection and rescue were embodied in the 1994 HSC Code.

10 The first of these recognizes the craft which were originally foreseen at the time of development of the DSC Code. Where rescue assistance is readily available and the total number of passengers is limited, a reduction in passive and active protection may be permitted. Such craft are called "assisted craft" and form the basis for "category A passenger craft" of this Code.

11 The second concept recognizes the further development of high-speed craft into larger craft. Where rescue assistance is not readily available or the number of passengers is unlimited, additional passive and active safety precautions are required. These additional requirements provide for an area of safe refuge on board, redundancy of vital systems, increased watertight and structural integrity and full fire-extinguishing capability. Such craft are called "unassisted craft" and form the basis for "cargo craft" and "category B passenger craft" of this Code.

12 These two concepts have been developed as a unified document on the basis that an equivalent level of safety to that normally expected on ships complying with the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, is achieved. Where the application of new technology or design indicates an equivalent safety level to the strict application of this Code, the Administration is permitted to formally recognize such equivalence.

13 It is important that an Administration, in considering the suitability of a high-speed craft under this Code, should apply all sections of the Code because non-compliance with any part of the Code could result in an imbalance which would adversely affect the safety of the craft, passengers and crew. For a similar reason, modifications to existing craft, which may have an effect on safety, should be approved by the Administration.

14 In developing this Code, it has been considered desirable to ensure that high-speed craft do not impose unreasonable demands on existing users of the environment or conversely suffer unnecessarily through lack of reasonable accommodation by existing users. Whatever burden of compatibility there is, it should not necessarily be laid wholly on the high-speed craft.

15 Paragraph 1.15.1 of the 1994 HSC Code states that it should be reviewed by the Organization at intervals preferably not exceeding four years to consider revision of existing requirements to take account of new developments in design and technology. Experience gained with the application of the 1994 HSC Code since it entered into force in 1996 has led to the recognition that it needed to be revised and updated. Subsequent work in the Organization has resulted in the development of the present Code to ensure that safety is not compromised as a result of continuous introduction of state-of-the-art technology and innovative developments into the new and generally much larger and faster high-speed craft.

It should be noted that in the 2008 amendments to the 2000 HSC Code the review interval has been extended from four years to six years – see clause 1.15.1 of the amended Code.