



EMERGENCY TOWING PROCEDURES

**DBS
TECHNICAL
PUBLICATION**



INTRODUCTION

This publication aims to assist ship owners and operators regarding the new SOLAS requirement that comes in force on January 1st, 2012 for emergency towing procedures of existing ships.

More specifically, an emergency towing procedure shall be implemented on all cargo ships above 500 GT constructed before 1 January 2010 by the end of current year.

According to MSC.256(840), adopted on May 16, 2008: *“Ships shall be provided with a ship-specific emergency towing procedure. Such a procedure shall be carried aboard the ships for use in emergency situations and shall be based on existing arrangements and equipment available onboard the ship”.*

It is important to note that this requirement was already in force for all passenger ships and has been implemented on January 1st, 2010 and cargo ships constructed on or after 1 January 2010.

Nevertheless, tankers of deadweight 20,000 tonnes and more shall also comply with this new requirement.

EMERGENCY TOWING BOOKLET

All cargo ships shall be provided with a ship-specific Emergency Towing Booklet (ETB) with a minimum of three copies to be kept on board as follow:

- On the bridge;
- In the forecastle space; and
- In the ship's office or cargo control room.

Moreover, a copy of the ETB shall be provided to owner/operator in case of emergency to be easily accessible to the towage company. An electronic copy of the ETB shall also be provided to owner/operator.

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) has issued guidelines for owners/operators on preparing emergency towing procedures. These were published through MSC.1/Circ.1255 issued on May 27, 2008. According to this publication the emergency towing procedures shall be developed based on the information outlined below.

DECISION MATRIX

A decision matrix shall be included that will assist Master to take easier decisions on the towing procedure that shall be used under various emergency scenarios. Such emergency

scenarios include but not limited to the following:

- towing in case there is imminent danger such as grounding in short time (less than 1 hour)
- towing in case the weather is bad when connecting the towing lines between the ship and the towing ship
- towing in case there is no power supply for deck machinery to hand the towing lines
- the duration being towed is long (more than 1 day for instance) etc.

DECK CREW RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific information on how the deck crew will be distributed and what tasks each crew member will have shall be clearly defined. For example this procedure shall include what need to be done during the connecting operation and during towing operation, how it should be done and what is needed for each task. The equipment necessary to be used during these operations shall also be listed (including radios, safety equipment etc.).

TOWING PATTERNS & SAMPLE PROCEDURES

The booklet shall include specific towing patterns with diagrams for assembling and rigging bridles, tow lines, etc., for both fore and aft side of the ship. Rigged lines should be directed in such a way in order to avoid sharp corners, edges and other points of stress concentration.

The sample procedures shall include which deck fittings will be used for each towing pattern together with Safe Working Load (SWL). It is recommended that the SWL to be in accordance with IMO MSC/Circ.1175 as published on May 24th, 2005. When calculating the SWL of the towing bollards, chock or other strong points is to be ensured that the under-deck structures of that strong point can withstand the SWL.

The worst case scenario that power shortages and dead ship situations shall also be included.

COMMUNICATION PLAN

A communications plan for contacting the salvage/towing ship shall be included. This plan should list all information that the ship's master needs to communicate to the salvage/towing ship and shall consist but not be limited to:

- damage or seaworthiness;
- status of ship steering;
- propulsion;
- on deck power systems;
- on-board towing equipment;
- existing emergency rapid disconnection system;
- forward and aft towing point locations;
- equipment, connection points, strong points and safe working loads (SWL);
- towing equipment dimensions and capacities; and
- ship particulars;

EXISTING EQUIPMENT ONBOARD

The existing equipment available onboard shall be listed. An inventory of the equipment that can be used during emergency towing procedures together with their location on board, connecting points and related SWL shall be presented. Nevertheless, the existing equipment shall be evaluated together with possible tools and arrangements used onboard for possible use in rigging a towing bridge and securing a towline. Added to this, the plan shall identify any minor tools or equipment providing significant improvement to the "towability" of the ship.

OTHER INFORMATION

Further information shall be included such as important preparation information prior to emergency towing (locking rudder and propeller shaft, ballast and trim, etc.) and other relevant information such as limiting sea states, towing speeds, etc.



DBS SUPPORT

The Emergency Towing Procedure will not be approved by DBS. This procedure will be part of the safety management system of emergency preparedness as required by the ISM Code and will be verified during audits.

However, the emergency towing procedure shall be submitted to DBS Head Office for review and will be stamped "Examined" by the approval engineer.

The strength calculations carried out of strongpoint and fairlead shall be based on IMO MSC/Circ.1175 and will be approved by the engineering department.

For further information owners/operators shall conduct DBS Head Office through:
info@dromonbs.com

For further information please contact:

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