

MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE
101st session
Agenda item 7

MSC 101/INF.18
2 April 2019
ENGLISH ONLY
Pre-session public release:

SAFETY MEASURES FOR NON-SOLAS SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS

Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum

**Submitted by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway,
Russian Federation, Sweden and United States**

SUMMARY

Executive summary: The Arctic Council's Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) established the Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum ("Forum") in 2017. In May 2018, the Forum launched a public web portal to assist in the effective implementation of the International Maritime Organization's *International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters* (Polar Code). The aim of this document is to introduce the Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum and its web portal to IMO.

Strategic direction, if applicable: Other work

Output: OW 40

Action to be taken: Paragraph 14

Related documents: None

Background and introduction

1 IMO's Polar Code entered into force on 1 January 2017. The Code is intended to cover the full range of shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in waters surrounding the two poles – ship design, construction and equipment; operational and training concerns; search and rescue; and, equally important, the protection of the unique environment and eco-systems of the polar regions. This marks a historic milestone in IMO's work to protect ships, seafarers and the environment in the Arctic and Antarctic.

2 The Polar Code was made mandatory through amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Additionally, mandatory minimum

requirements for the training and qualifications of masters and deck officers on ships operating in polar waters, adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee in November 2016, became mandatory under the STCW Convention and the STCW Code on 1 July 2018.

3 In 2009, the Arctic Council's Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) released the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA), which recommended that the eight Arctic States (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and United States) cooperatively support efforts at IMO to augment global ship safety and pollution prevention conventions with specific Arctic requirements. This recommendation was further complemented by Arctic Council Ministers issuing a declaration "encourag[ing] active cooperation within [IMO] on development of relevant measures to reduce the environmental impacts of shipping in Arctic waters."¹

4 More recent Arctic Council Declarations, including the Iqaluit Declaration (2015) and the Fairbanks Declaration (2017), contain similar calls for closer collaboration between the Arctic Council and IMO on issues of Arctic shipping. Since 2012, PAME has consistently encouraged the timely implementation of the Polar Code, and now that the Code is in force, encourages Arctic and Observer States to continue to work towards harmonized and effective implementation. Complementing these calls to action, PAME established the Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum in 2017. The aim of the Forum is to promote effective implementation of the Polar Code and raise awareness of its provisions amongst all those involved in or potentially affected by Arctic marine operations.

5 Furthermore, the Forum facilitates the exchange of information and best practices between Forum members on specific shipping topics, including but not limited to: hydrography, meteorology, ice data, crew training, search and rescue, communication, industry guidelines, traditional and local knowledge, marine environmental protection considerations, operational understanding and ship equipment, systems and structure.

6 Forum participation is open to the Arctic Council Member States, Permanent Participants and Arctic Council Observers as well as to any widely recognized professional organization dedicated to improving safe and environmentally sound marine operations in the Arctic as demonstrated by expertise and experience in Arctic shipping and/or related issues. These might be hydrography, meteorology, nautical charting, ice data, high-latitude communications, ecological information, search and rescue, marine insurance, naval architecture, training of seafarers, pilotage, and traditional and local marine knowledge.

7 Arctic States intend the Forum to meet annually under PAME's auspices, with the oversight and guidance of the Co-Chairs of PAME's Shipping Expert Group, Forum Steering Committee, and with a representative of the Arctic State that holds the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council at the time the Forum meets, serving as Chair of the Forum.

8 During the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Forum convened twice, immediately preceding MSC 98 (2017) and MSC 99 (2018). The Forum has also been introduced to IMO in the form of a lunchtime presentation during both MSC 98 and MEPC 72.

9 The Forum will continue to place particular emphasis on collecting information of use to maritime administrations and/or Recognized Organizations in issuing Polar Ship Certificates (PSC) and conducting Operational Assessments, as well as information to be used by the shipowners and operators in developing a Polar Water Operational Manual (PWOM).

¹ Tromsø Declaration (Sixth Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council). Arctic Council, April 2009 (4)

Information sharing

10 In May 2018, the Forum launched a web portal to assist in the effective implementation of the Polar Code. The publicly accessible web portal contains information specific to each chapter of the Polar Code and relevant to all those involved in safe and environmentally sound Arctic shipping, including vessel owners/operators, regulators, classification societies, marine insurers, and indigenous and local communities.

More information on PAME and the web portal can be found here:

The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME)
<https://pame.is/index.php/shortcode/about-us>

Arctic Shipping Best Practice Information Forum
<https://pame.is/arcticshippingforum>

11 The web portal provides links to authoritative information essential to implementation of, and compliance with, the Polar Code. For example, links are available on hydrographic, meteorological, and ice data information needed to plan for safe and environmentally sound navigation in the Arctic.

12 This compilation, exchange and public sharing of information will assist all those involved in the decision-making processes in relation to Arctic marine operations under the Polar Code.

13 Many stakeholders have contributed information to the web portal, including Arctic States, intergovernmental organizations, classification societies, the shipping industry, marine insurers and non-governmental organizations. The web portal will be regularly updated and expanded as new information becomes available.

Action requested of the Committee

14 The Committee is invited to note the information provided in this document.
