



REPORT OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE ON ITS SEVENTY-FIFTH SESSION

4. LARGE PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY

4.6. The Committee considered documents MSC 75/4/5 and MSC 75/INF.17 (United Kingdom) on the use of directional sound as an aid to passenger evacuation, proposing that consideration be given to developing appropriate SOLAS amendments addressing the use of directional sound and preparation of a relevant MSC circular to promulgate them in the meantime. After general discussion, the Committee instructed the working group to consider the aforementioned documents and advise it as appropriate. The Committee, having agreed to refer the documents to the FP Sub-Committee as well, further decided to include a relevant high priority item in the FP Sub-Committee's work programme and the provisional agenda for FP 47 (see also paragraphs 4.25 and 22.19).

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LARGE PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY

4.7 Following general discussions, the Committee established the working group and instructed it to proceed in accordance with the following terms of reference:

- .4 to deal with matters related to the use of directional sound as an aid to passenger evacuation, taking into account documents MSC 75/4/5 and MSC 75/INF.17 (United Kingdom), comments by FP46 and those made in plenary and advise the committee as appropriate;

REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP

4.8 Having received the report of the working group (MSC75/WP.12), the committee approved it in general and took action as outlined in the following paragraphs.

4.15 The committee agreed to add the following additional instructions to the correspondence group's terms of reference:

- .5 To consider the use of directional sound as an aid to evacuation, taking into account comments from FP46 and MSC75 and documents MSC75/4/5 and MSC 75/INF.17, and provide recommendations to FP47.

4.16 To further facilitate consideration of this high priority issue by the FP Correspondence Group on Large Passenger Ship Safety, the Committee agreed to relax the deadline for submission of the group's report, to FP47, to 6 December 2002. Consequently, Members were invited to submit comments on the correspondence group's report by 10th January 2003, i.e. 4 weeks in advance of the opening of the forty-seventh session of the FP Sub-Committee.

4.25 The Committee noted with appreciation that the delegation of the United Kingdom gave a detailed presentation on the use of directional sound as an equivalent to low-location lighting, as addressed in documents MSC 75/4/5 and MSC 75/INF.17, and agreed to convey the group's views, as contained in paragraphs 43 and 44 of document MSC 75/WP.12, to FP 47. In the context of the FP Sub-Committee considering document MSC 75/4/5 (see paragraphs 4.6 and 22.19), the Committee also agreed to instruct FP 47 to consider the actions requested in the document.

Extract of MSC75/WP.12:

USE OF DIRECTIONAL SOUND FOR EVACUATION PURPOSES

42. The delegation of the United Kingdom gave a detailed presentation on their research on the use of directional sound as an equivalent to low-location lighting, as addressed in document MSC 75/4/5 and MSC 75/INF.17. The group thanked the United Kingdom for their extensive research and the information submitted on this matter and noted the following conclusions, among others, from their presentation:
1. that directional sound has been tested in very noisy environments, such as a quarry with large earth moving vehicles, where tests showed it could be detected easily as much as 17 dBA below the ambient (broadband) background sounds;
 2. that the system can be manually triggered by the crew in response to a situation where evacuation is considered to be necessary;
 3. that it has been demonstrated in comparative trials that directional sound is at least as effective as low-location lighting and its use in an emergency not being diminished or obscured by smoke.
43. In considering document MSC 75/4/5, the group was of the view that directional sound technology was an interesting and innovative concept and that the FP Sub-Committee, and its Correspondence Group on Large Passenger Ship Safety, should further consider the proposal for application to passenger ships in general. In this context, the group noted the concerns expressed by the FP Sub-Committee, in conjunction with document MSC 75/4/5, and the concern expressed by several delegations, which included that, because the above system, as similarly to others, could not be shut down by section, it may lead escaping persons into harms way. (see also paragraph 22.19).
44. In concluding its discussion on the matter, the group recalled that the Committee had already decided to place a new item on the FP Sub-Committee's work programme and forwarded the relevant documents to FP 47 for consideration.

22.19 The Committee recalled that, under agenda item 4 (Large passenger ship safety), it had agreed to include, in the Sub-Committee's work programme and the provisional agenda for FP 47, a high priority item on in "Use of directional sound for passenger evacuation", with a target completion date of 2004 (see also paragraphs 4.6 and 4.25).