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**PRECAUTIONARY ADVICE TO MASTERS WHEN UNDERTAKING
BALLAST WATER EXCHANGE OPERATIONS**

- 1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its seventy-ninth session (1 to 10 December 2004), approved the attached precautionary advice to Masters when undertaking Ballast Water Exchange operations, which should, at an appropriate time, be included in the Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange, under development by the Organization.
- 2 In the interim, for ships flying their flag, Administrations are invited to consider the issue of compliance with the requirements of SOLAS regulation V/22, while such ships are conducting Ballast Water Exchange operations, taking into account the annexed precautionary advice.
- 3 Member Governments are invited to bring this precautionary advice to the attention of shipping companies, shipowners, ship operators, equipment manufacturers, classification societies, shipmasters and all parties concerned.

ANNEX**PRECAUTIONARY ADVICE TO MASTERS WHEN UNDERTAKING
BALLAST WATER EXCHANGE OPERATIONS**

The Guidelines for Ballast Water Exchange, under development by the Organization, are expected to include, at an appropriate time, the following precautionary advice to Masters when undertaking Ballast Water Exchange sequences that involve periods when the criteria for propeller immersion, minimum draft and or trim and bridge visibility cannot be met:

1 During ballast water exchange sequences there may be times when, for a transitory period, one or more of the following criteria cannot be fully met or are found to be difficult to maintain:

- .1 bridge visibility standards (SOLAS V/22);
- .2 propeller immersion; and
- .3 minimum draft forward.

2 As the choice of acceptable Ballast Water Exchange sequences is limited for most ships, it is not always practicable to dismiss from consideration those sequences where transitory non-compliance may occur. The practical alternative would be to accept such sequences provided an appropriate note is placed in the Ballast Water Management Plan to alert the ship's master. The note would advise the master of the nature of the transitory non-compliance, that additional planning may be required and that adequate precautions need to be taken when using such sequences.

3 In planning a Ballast Water Exchange operation that includes sequences which involve periods when the criteria for propeller immersion, minimum draft and or trim and bridge visibility cannot be met, the Master should assess:

- .1 the duration(s) and time(s) during the operation that any of the criteria will not be met;
- .2 the effect(s) on the navigational and manoeuvring capabilities of the ship; and
- .3 the time to complete the operation.

4 A decision to proceed with the operation should only be taken when it is anticipated that:

- .1 the ship will be in open water;
- .2 the traffic density will be low;
- .3 an enhanced navigational watch will be maintained including if necessary an additional look out forward with adequate communications with the navigation bridge;

- .4 the manoeuvrability of the vessel will not be unduly impaired by the draft and trim and or propeller immersion during the transitory period; and
 - .5 the general weather and sea state conditions will be suitable and unlikely to deteriorate.
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