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MSC-MEPC.4/Circ.3
19 December 2008

PORT STATE CONTROL-RELATED MATTERS

Blanking of bilge discharge piping systems in port

1 The Maritime Safety Committee and the Marine Environment Protection Committee have become aware of several instances where deficiencies have been raised by port State control officers and other surveyors concerning requiring the ship's crew to blank off bilge pumping overboard discharges. This practice is in contravention of SOLAS regulation II-1/21, as the bilge pumping arrangement is rendered inoperative and leads to a potentially dangerous situation where the ship is left unable to efficiently and promptly tackle an emergency situation in case of flooding or fire.

2 The Committees, being concerned about the above situation, request full compliance with the requirements of SOLAS regulation II-1/21 in relation to those bilge discharge piping systems whose primary purpose is to secure the ship's safety in the event of emergency situations, such as fire or flooding and which, as such, must be available for use at all times.

3 Consequently, the Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its fifty-eighth session (6 to 10 October 2008) and the Maritime Safety Committee, at its eighty-fifth session (26 November to 5 December 2008), approved the issuance of this circular and invited Member Governments to bring its content to the attention of their maritime and port authorities, including port State control officers.
