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MARINE INFORMATION NOTICE

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The scope of the Marine Information Notice publication is to provide the Shipping Sector with information relevant to RINA, its organization, initiatives and services as well as to disseminate information of a general nature which in RINA view may be of interest. The information provided does not intend to be exhaustive and is given for reference only.

MARPOL ANNEX I NEW CHAPTER 8 STS OPERATIONS PLAN

Oil tankers of 150 GT and above engaged in the transfer of oil cargo at sea (STS operations) will need onboard, from first periodical survey after 01 January 2011, an STS operations Plan approved by the ship Flag Administration, describing how STS operations are to be conducted.

RINA is ready to approve this Plan on behalf of the Flag Administration.

Resolution MEPC.186(59) was adopted at MEPC 59 and contains a new Chapter 8 of MARPOL Annex I on the prevention of pollution during the transfer of oil cargo between oil tankers at sea. The new regulation does not apply to any bunker operation and oil transfer operation associated with fixed or floating platforms.

The STS operations Plan shall be developed taking into account the information contained in the best practice guidelines for STS operations identified by IMO that is:

- the IMO's "Manual on Oil Pollution, Section I, Prevention" as amended, which is, at the time being, available only in its draft version which will be approved at MEPC 61 in next September.
- the ICS and OCIMF "Ship-to-ship Transfer Guide, Petroleum", fourth edition, 2005.

STS operations Plan is to be written in the working language of the ship and is required to be approved not later than the date of the first annual, intermediate or renewal survey of the ship under MARPOL Annex I to be carried out on or after 1 January 2011. In this occasion the RINA surveyor will verify the presence on board of the approved STS Operations Plan.

While it is possible to include the STS operations Plan in an existing Safety Management System required by the chapter IX of SOLAS, 1974, as amended, in any case the Plan is to be approved as required by the resolution.

After the approval of the Administration of STS operations Plan, operations conducted before 1st April 2012, shall be in accordance with the STS operations Plan as far as possible.

After the 1st April 2012, STS operations have to comply with the approved plan.

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NEW CHAPTER 8
STS OPERATIONS PLAN**

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Records of STS operations (in the Oil Record Book) are to be retained on board for a period of not less than three years since the transfer occurred.


Any oil tanker subject to the regulation that plans STS operations within the territorial sea or the Exclusive Economic Zone of a Party to MARPOL, shall notify the relevant coastal state Party not less than 48 hours in advance of the scheduled STS operations. For exceptions and further clarifications on the content of this notification, reference is to be made to MARPOL Annex I Ch. 8 reg. 42 full text.

RINA is ready to give the necessary support on the matter, in particular for the development of the risk assessment (referred to in 6.2.9 of the IMO's "Manual on Oil Pollution, Section I, Prevention" as amended) covering operational hazards and the means by which they are managed.

The scope is to confirm the following:

- 1) adequate training, preparation or qualification of oil tanker's personnel;
- 2) suitable preparation of oil tankers for operations and sufficient control over the oil tankers during operations;
- 3) proper understanding of signals or commands;
- 4) adequate number of crew assigned to controlling and performing oil transfer operations;
- 5) suitability of the agreed STS plan;
- 6) adequate communications between oil tankers or responsible person(s);
- 7) proper attention given to the differences in freeboard or the listing of the oil tankers when transferring cargo;
- 8) the condition of transfer hoses;
- 9) methods of securely connecting hose(s) to the oil tanker(s) manifold(s);
- 10) recognition of the need to discontinue oil transfer when sea and weather conditions deteriorate; and
- 11) adequacy of navigational processes.

The output from the risk assessment will be used to develop risk mitigation measures and contingency plans covering all possible emergencies and providing for a comprehensive response, including the notification of relevant authorities.



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