



Merchant Shipping Directorate



CALIBRATION MEANS FOR PORTABLE GAS DETECTION INSTRUMENTS

Technical Notice SLS.31

Notice to Ship-owners, Ship Operators, Managers, Masters, Owners' Representatives and Recognized Organisations

Reference is made to Regulation 7 of SOLAS Chapter XI-1 which stipulates that “Every ship to which chapter I applies shall carry an appropriate portable atmosphere testing instrument or instruments. As a minimum, these shall be capable of measuring concentrations of oxygen, flammable gases or vapours, hydrogen sulphide and carbon monoxide prior to entry into enclosed spaces. Instruments carried under other requirements may satisfy this regulation. Suitable means shall be provided for the calibration of all such instruments.”

Taking note that there are numerous different atmosphere testing instruments available on the market, with differing calibration requirements, along with the fact that the above regulation refers to the term “suitable means”, this Administration accepts the practice of sending such an instrument to manufacturer’s approved shore facilities for calibration (with the corresponding calibration certificate issued as a documentary evidence) as one of the “suitable means”.

Notwithstanding the above, should the manufacturer’s instructions require that calibration gases should be carried onboard for functional testing, so called “bump testing”, such gases need to be made readily available onboard.

In line with the above, such a calibration procedure shall be in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and operations/maintenance manual of such an instrument. It is of utmost importance that whatever such a calibration procedure entails, the procedure is duly included into the vessel’s safety management system and related onboard manuals.

The above is in line with the unified interpretation IMO MSC.1/Circ.1561 developed in order to clarify this matter.

This Administration is also adopting the same rationale related to the interpretation of Regulation 4.5.7 of SOLAS II-2 concerning the requirement of portable gas detection equipment for tankers. Reference is also being made to the unified interpretation MSC.1/Circ.1581 approved during MSC 98 held in June 2017.

Finally, it is to be noted that such a calibration does not include any pre-operational accuracy tests that may be recommended by the manufacturer.

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