

IMO Ship Design & Construction (SDC 12)

Summary Report



Issued for:

Ship owner, Manager, Seafarer, Institute, Flag state



Purpose:

To give a simple and clear understanding of what applies, to which ships, and what is still draft, based on IMO SDC 12 (January 2026).

Most outcomes of SDC 12 are NOT YET IN FORCE.

SDC is a technical sub-committee of IMO.

All draft amendments and guidelines agreed at SDC 12 will be forwarded to the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC).

Next decision point: MSC 111 – May 2026.

Only after MSC approval will any requirement become mandatory and be given an entry-into-force date.

Until then, this circular is for information and awareness only, unless otherwise instructed by Flag State or Class.

NEED TO KNOW

Finalized draft Explanatory Notes for the SAFE RETURN TO PORT (SRtP)

Finalized new draft guidelines for the use of remote inspection techniques under the 2011 ESP Code

Finalized a draft revision of the “Interim Guidelines for Use of Fibre Reinforced Plastics (FRP)

Elements Within Ship Structures” (MSC.1/Circ.1574)

Initiated work on performance standards for engine control room alert management

Established a work plan for the development of a safety regulatory framework to support the reduction of GHG emissions from ships using new technologies and alternative fuels

1.SAFE RETURN TO PORT (SRtP)

Relevant regulations: SOLAS II-1/8-1, SOLAS II-2/21 and 22, MSC.1/Circ.1369 (draft revision)

APPLICABILITY

Applies ONLY to passenger ships:

Length 120 metres or more, or

Having three or more Main Vertical Zones.

Does NOT apply to cargo ships, tankers, bulk carriers or offshore vessels.

STATUS

Revised SRtP Explanatory Notes were finalised as draft at SDC 12.

Draft to be submitted to MSC 111 (May 2026).

Not mandatory at present.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

If approved in future:

Passenger ships will be checked on their ability after fire or flooding.

to return to port

More emphasis will be placed on documented procedures, training and reduced manual intervention.

Likely application only to new passenger ships from 2028 onwards, subject to MSC approval.



2.REMOTE INSPECTION TECHNIQUES (RIT) – ESP CODE

Relevant regulations: 2011 ESP Code, MSC.133(76), MSC.158(78)

APPLICABILITY

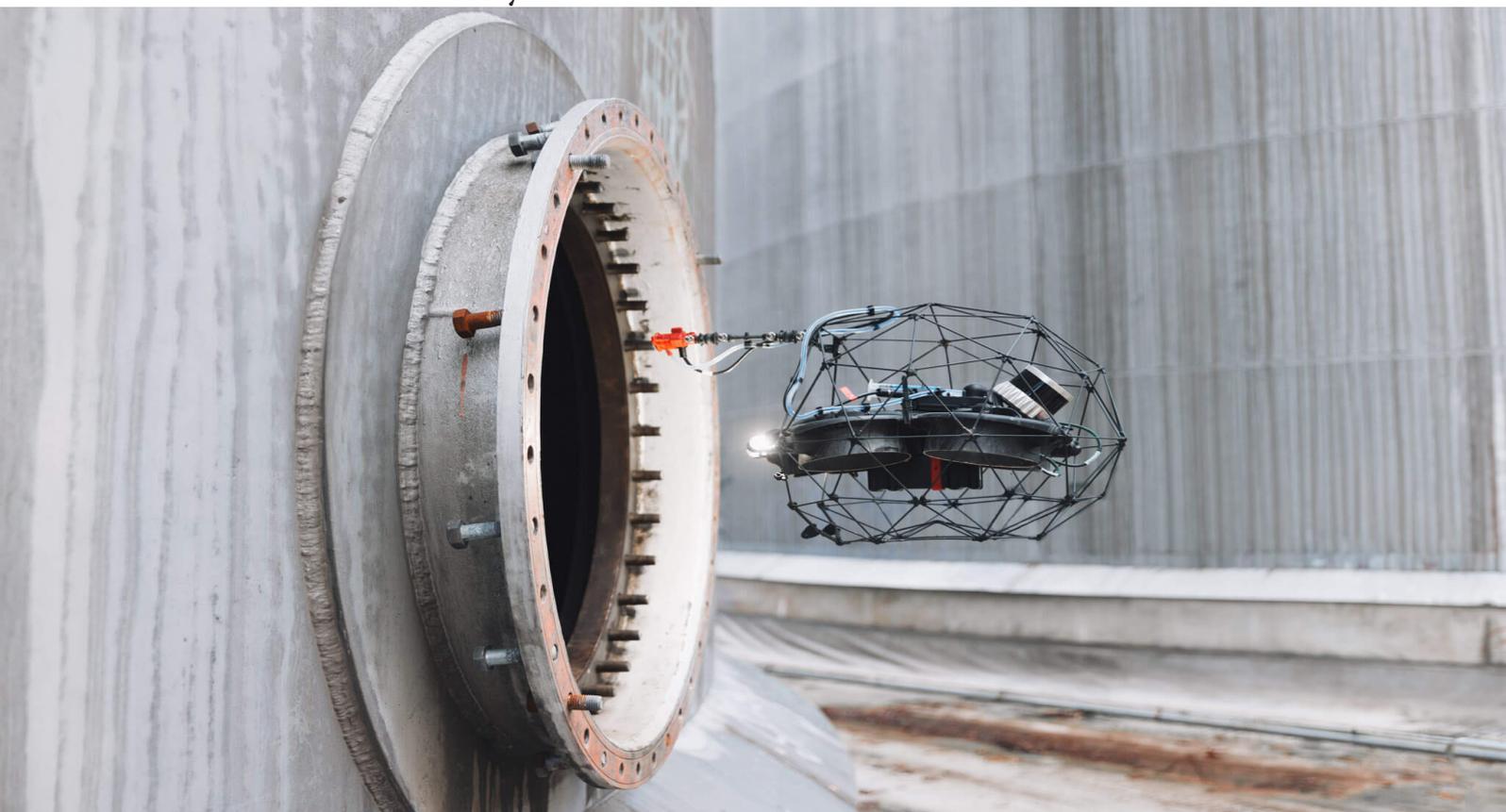
Applies **ONLY** to oil tankers and bulk carriers under the Enhanced Survey Programme.

STATUS

Draft ESP Code amendments and RIT Guidelines agreed at SDC 12.
Draft to be submitted to MSC 111 (May 2026).
Expected entry into force: 1 January 2028, if approved.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

Surveyors may use drones, ROVs or similar tools.
Surveyor remains responsible for the survey.
Crew may be asked to assist with safety and access.
This is not a remote survey.



3.ENGINE CONTROL ROOM ALERT MANAGEMENT (ECRAM)

Relevant reference: SOLAS II-1, Code on Alerts and Indicators (2025)

APPLICABILITY

All ship types, mainly affecting future newbuild ships.

STATUS

Performance standards under development.

No mandatory requirements at present.

Target completion: 2028.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

Future ships will have clearer and fewer alarms.

No change required on existing ships.



4.ESCAPE ARRANGEMENTS FROM MACHINERY SPACES

Relevant regulations: SOLAS II-1/13.4, SOLAS II-2/13, MSC.1/Circ.1511/Rev.1

APPLICABILITY

All ships with machinery space escape trunks.

STATUS

IMO confirmed no safety issue with existing approved arrangements.
No SOLAS amendment required.
PSC advised to be pragmatic.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

Existing approved escape arrangements remain valid.
No modification required unless instructed by Flag or Class.



5.FIBRE-REINFORCED PLASTICS (FRP)

Relevant regulation: SOLAS II-2/17, MSC.1/Circ.1574 (draft revision)

APPLICABILITY

Ships using FRP or composite materials in structures.

STATUS

Revised FRP fire safety guidelines finalised as draft at SDC 12.

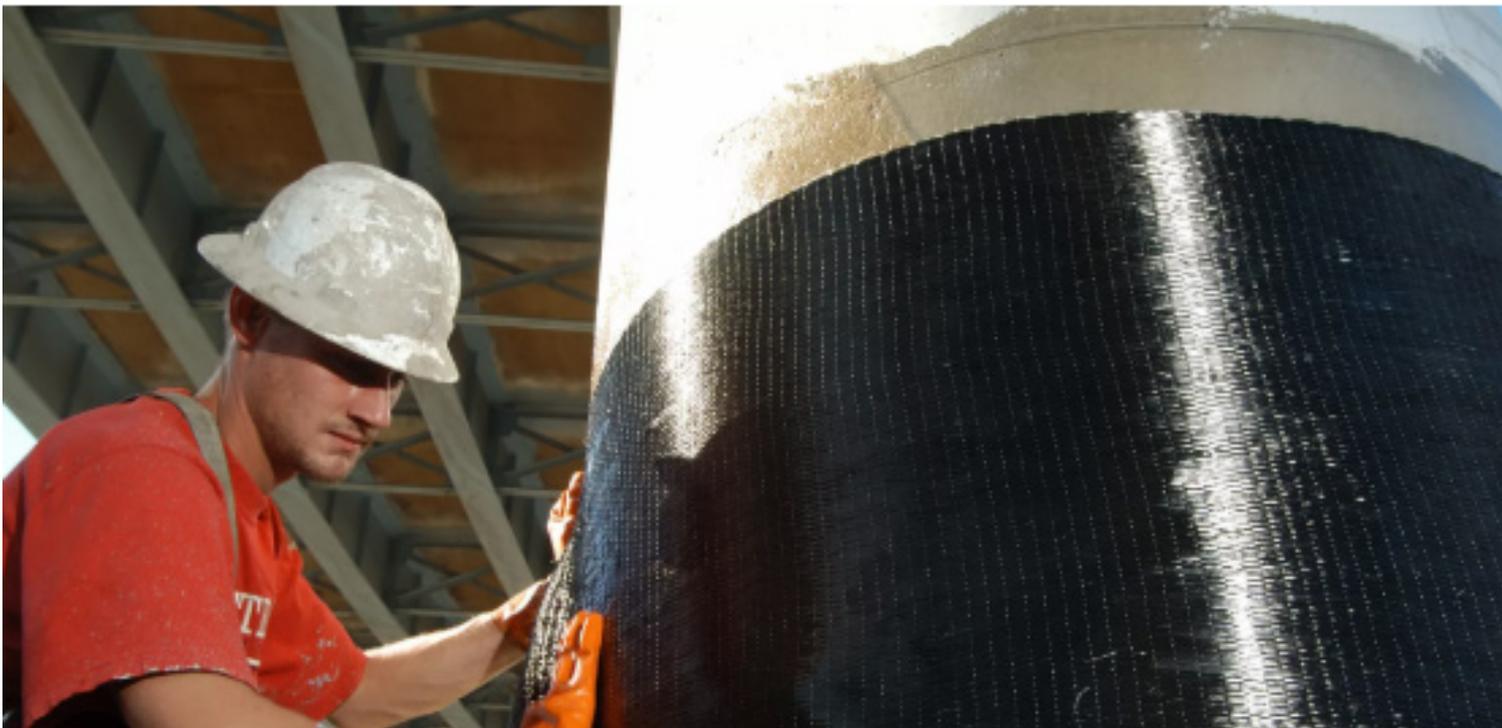
Draft to be submitted to MSC 111 (May 2026).

Not mandatory at present.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

Focus remains on fire detection, fire-fighting readiness and proper maintenance of FRP areas.

COMPLIANCE WITH SIMPLICITY



6. NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Relevant regulations: SOLAS II-1, II-2 and VIII (future amendments)

APPLICABILITY

Mainly future newbuild ships.

STATUS

Battery power, wind propulsion and nuclear propulsion are work plans only.
No regulations in force at present.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

No impact on existing ships.
Any future use will come with clear rules and training.

7. MODU CODE – EMERGENCY SHUTDOWN

Relevant regulation: 2009 MODU Code, Chapter 6

APPLICABILITY

Mobile Offshore Drilling Units only.

STATUS

Draft amendments agreed at SDC 12.
Draft to be submitted to MSC 111 (May 2026).
Expected entry into force: 1 January 2027, if approved.

WHAT CREW SHOULD KNOW

After any emergency shutdown, critical systems must remain operational, including emergency lighting, alarms, public address systems and blowout preventer controls.