

## TECHNICAL UPDATE

March 2026

### INTRODUCTION

Dear Members,

This update provides information on some of the technical related INTERCARGO work program items and Secretariat activities.

### BALLAST WATER

#### **Ballast Water IMO**

The next main Ballast Water related discussions that will take place at the IMO will be at MEPC 84 (April 2026) and in relation to this INTERCARGO has co-sponsored the following papers to MEPC 84:

- *MEPC 84/4/4 - Addressing operational challenges in challenging water quality: proposed amendments to resolution MEPC.387(81)*
- *MEPC 84/4/XX - Clarification and targeted amendments to BWM.2/Circ.62 to ensure practical and ship based contingency measures under BWM Convention*
- *MEPC 84/4/XX - Industry survey on Ballast Water Management: operational realities and compliance challenges*

In addition to the discussions at the MEPC 84, INTERCARGO has also co-sponsored a paper to the IMO Sub-Committee on Human Element, Training and Watchkeeping (HTW 12) related to Ballast Water training requirements:

- *HTW 12/6/34 - Proposed draft amendments to the STCW Code to address gap no.406*

INTERCARGO has also co-sponsored a BW related paper to MEPC 84 but under agenda item 8 – Energy Efficiency of Ships, please refer to the GHG REDUCTION/EMISSIONS section of this document.

Since MEPC 83, the Secretariat had been participating/monitoring in the *Correspondence Group (CG) on review of the Ballast Water Management Convention* that was established at MEPC 83. The CG has now finished its work.

#### **Ballast Water Other**

Members may recall that INTERCARGO and INTERTANKO had been in communication with BEMA regarding the calibration of sensors by crew. The discussions have continued and in February 2026, INTERCARGO and INTERTANKO have sent a further letter to BEMA that, inter alia, requests the BWTS manufacturers to categorise the sensors into whether they could be calibrated by ship/shore based personnel and for clear procedures and guidance for calibrating the sensors. A copy of the letter is available upon request.

## **CARGOES**

### **Cargoes at the IMO**

The next Cargo related discussions at the IMO will take place at the IMO's Editorial & Technical Group (E&T) which will most likely take place in 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The discussions will centre around IMSBC Code revision 09-27 (likely entry into force of January 2029).

### **INTERCARGO Cargo Panel**

The Cargo Panel will hold its next meeting (Virtually) on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2026, the agenda for this meeting is currently being developed.

Since the last update, the Cargo Panel further considered the new amendments to the Grain Code and agreed on a course of action that included requesting clarification of the requirements from the regulators and subsequently requesting NCB and Transport Canada for an extension to the amendments. Further information is available upon request.

## **DESIGN STANDARDS**

### **Common Structural Rules**

#### **Rec 34-Standard Wave Data**

Since the last update there is little to report except that the next EAG<sup>1</sup> meeting will take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 during which IACS will provide the impact assessment of the revised Rec 34 on the CSR.

### **Onboard Cranes/Lifting Appliances**

New SOLAS Regulation 3-13 - Lifting appliances and anchor handling winches will enter into force on 01 January 2026 and will be applicable to both new and existing vessels. IACS had developed a Recommendation (currently in draft form) for this new regulation with the aim of providing guidance for the maritime industry.

In January 2026 INTERCARGO formed a small group of Technical Committee members to review the draft Recommendation and provide feedback to IACS. INTERCARGO's comments were passed to IACS at the end of January and INTERCARGO has recently received IACS feedback and is currently reviewing.

## **GHG REDUCTION/EMISSIONS**

### **GHG Reductions/Carbon Intensity Indicators (CIIs)/Alternative Fuels at the IMO**

The next major GHG related discussions will take place at MEPC 84 in April 2026 and in relation to this INTERCARGO has co-sponsored a paper to MEPC 84 that highlights the negative effects on a **vessel's CII** due to the additional measures taken by vessels when they bypassed their BWMS due to either CWQ or the inability to conduct BWE and requests the MEPC Working Group on Air Pollution and Energy Efficiency to examine the impact of the BWM Convention on the IMO's carbon intensity/energy

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<sup>1</sup> EAG is IACS External Advisory Group that is comprised of shipowner and shipbuilder interests who review potential rule changes to the CSR, including Rec. 34.

efficiency framework and also for MEPC Working Group on Reduction of GHG emissions from ships to examine the impact of the BWM Convention on the Net-Zero Framework (the Energy Intensity-based approach):

- *MEPC 84/6/8 - Impact assessment of the BWM Convention on IMO's decarbonization frameworks*

### **INTERCARGO Emissions Working Group**

#### CII

The Technical Committee, at its last meeting (November 2025), reaffirmed that a paper related to Geared Bulkers and the negative effects of cargo gear operations on CII should be developed with the Emissions WG having oversight of this paper. DNV kindly carried out an investigation/analysis for INTERCARGO however comparison between geared and gearless bulkers is difficult as depending on the vessel size the vessels were either geared or gearless. A copy of the study is available upon request.

The Emissions WG joined the Technical Committee for a presentation on CII and SEEMP on the 25<sup>th</sup> February, please refer to Technical Committee section.

#### Correspondence Group on Development of Technical Provisions for Safety of Ships Using Alternative Fuels

INTERCARGO's Emissions WG continues to participate, through the Secretariat in the *Correspondence Group on Development of Technical Provisions for Safety of Ships Using Alternative Fuels* that was established CCC-11. Since the last update the Group has met three times to discuss and agree on comments for Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of the CG, with the last meeting being on the on the 5<sup>th</sup> March.

*Members who would like to join this Group should contact [ed.wroe@intercargo.org](mailto:ed.wroe@intercargo.org)*

### **INTERCARGO EU Regulations WG**

The INTERCARGO Secretariat will participate in the upcoming ECSA Safety & Environment Committee meeting on 10 March and has invited the EU Regulations Working Group to provide feedback on the agenda items to inform the discussions.

The European Commission is assessing options to streamline monitoring methods, reduce administrative burden, and enhance alignment with the IMO Data Collection System. The EU Regulations WG has been asked to contribute to a related survey, the results of which will support evidence-based improvements under the EU MRV and FuelEU Maritime frameworks.

Regarding the default responsible entity under the EU ETS and FuelEU Maritime, no consensus was reached among Members; consequently, no specific position was submitted to ECSA. Additional comments reflecting Members' feedback have been conveyed to DG CLIMA concerning Monitoring Plans and ETS maritime implementation.

*Members who wish to join the group should contact [emmanuel.vergetis@intercargo.org](mailto:emmanuel.vergetis@intercargo.org)*

### **INTERCARGO Shore Power Working Group**

The Secretariat, supported by members of the Working Group, has been advancing the work in line with the Shore Power Work Plan agreed at the last TC meeting. INTERCARGO has also applied to join

the relevant IEC subgroup to enable formal review and submission of comments on the IEC/IEEE 80005-1 Bulk Carrier Standard currently under development.

*Members who wish to join the group should contact [emmanuel.vergetis@intercargoo.org](mailto:emmanuel.vergetis@intercargoo.org)*

### **Other GHG related Groups**

#### Correspondence Group on measurement and verification of non-CO2 GHG emissions and onboard carbon capture

The Group has progressed the framework for measuring and verifying non-GHG emissions, including finalizing the CH<sub>4</sub>/N<sub>2</sub>O test bed and onboard measurement Guidelines (MEPC.402(83)) and advancing draft ELM and CEMS Guidelines, potentially for adoption at MEPC 84. INTERCARGO Secretariat is only monitoring the developments and final report.

#### IACS JIWG: Automated Fuel Consumption Data Gathering

The Tripartite Joint Industry Working Group on Automated Fuel Consumption Data Gathering (FUA 2) is progressing the discussions with the view to develop a standardized protocol for emissions data reporting across schemes such as IMO DCS, CII, EU MRV, FuelEU Maritime, and US VIDA. The INTERCARGO Secretariat has actively participated in the meetings. Next meeting are scheduled for 17 March 2026 and 21 April.

### **BULK CARRIER SHIP TO SHIP OPERATIONS**

INTERCARGO's work on the guidance is now complete and ready to pre-order, the electronic version of the guidance is now available mid- and the hard copy will be available mid-April 2026 but is available to pre-order [here](#). INTERCARGO members will be eligible for a discount, details to follow.

There will also be a presentation event to launch the guidance that will take place on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 in Athens, please refer to our website [here](#).

### **DRAFT SURVEY GUIDANCE**

Work continues on the Draft Survey Guidance with the main task being to reduce the text/guidance to booklet size.

### **BIOFOULING**

#### **Biofouling at the IMO**

At the IMO's Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 13) it was agreed to recommend to MEPC 84 (April 2026) that the regulatory framework for Biofouling should be a standalone convention to MEPC 84 (April 2026). The Sub-Committee also agreed to the establishment of a Correspondence Group (CG) to progress the development of the legally binding framework. Please also refer to INTERCARGO's PPR 13 brief [here](#).

INTERCARGO's WG (see below) will participate in the CG through the Secretariat.

### **INTERCARGO Biofouling Working Group**

The Biofouling WG was formed in mid-January, with the group agreeing that there was no strong opinion on whether the legally binding framework on biofouling by IMO should be a standalone convention or amendment to an existing instrument; with the contents of such a convention being of greater interest. The working group has now been opened to selected associate members to provide technical advice on any emerging topics. Following PPR13, INTERCARGO have expressed interest to contribute as part of the IMO correspondence group on the framework; with the Working Group members to advise accordingly.

*Members who wish to join the group should contact [alan.nugent@intercargo.org](mailto:alan.nugent@intercargo.org)*

### **Biofouling Joint Industry Working Group**

The Biofouling JIWG, chaired by INTERCARGO Technical Manager Ed Wroe, has met twice since the last update. The terms of reference (ToR) and an approximate timeframe have been agreed. The ToR for the group are as follows.

1. Identify and categorise types of niche areas (e.g. Sea chests, gratings, thruster tunnels, etc)
2. Identify specific challenges and mechanisms of fouling in niche areas (e.g. stagnation, sedimentation, restricted access, etc).
3. Review and assess current mitigation practices (e.g. design, coatings, MGPS (Marine Growth Protection Systems), electrolysis, in-water cleaning, ultrasonic, etc).
4. Develop best practice guidance, based on assessment, for design, coating application, and MGPS maintenance.
5. Facilitate collaboration between operators, manufacturers, class societies, and regulators (e.g. webinars, explanatory guidance, etc)
6. Develop a potential submission to PPR, depending on progress (e.g. a JIWG status update to PPR 14 (2027)).

The next steps for the group are to progress ToRs 1 to 3.

### **STANDARD BULK CARRIER SPECIFICATION**

INTERCARGO has established a **Standard Bulk Carrier Specification Working Group** that will aim to collectively define a robust, high-quality standard that reflects operational needs and supports safer, more efficient, and future-ready ships. It is envisaged that the WG will deliver:

1. A comprehensive Standard Bulk Carrier Specification
2. Clear minimum requirements for component and equipment quality
3. Guidance on selecting and integrating new technologies
4. A shared industry position that can be presented to shipyards
5. A living document updated on a periodic basis

The first meeting will take place on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026.

*Members who would like to join this Group should contact [ed.wroe@intercargo.org](mailto:ed.wroe@intercargo.org)*

## **MOORING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Australian Ports**

INTERCARGO Secretariat have been holding monthly meetings with PPA, discussing various topics including upcoming requirements such as Port Hedland Ship Salvage Plan, and Port Hedland's draft harmonized vessel vetting form and pre-berthing checklist. INTERCARGO continues to engage on issues with stakeholders to best support members

### **Mooring – Other**

Following 2025's investigation on global mooring issues, INTERCARGO will host a webinar panel with mooring line manufacturers and UK P&I on 16 March 2026 on the topic high risk berths and mooring line management plans. Members are invited to continue raising concerns on this topic. The Secretariat are evaluating revision of the ship-terminal reporting form to accommodate questions to better identify possible unsafe berths globally.

## **ENCLOSED SPACE ENTRY**

INTERCARGO Secretariat continue to engage with RightShip and InterManager on best practice guidelines for stevedores working onboard bulk carriers. The Secretariat also continue to monitor HEIG's joint industry group on enclosed space fatalities, monitoring potential developments and outputs by this group.

## **CASUALTY REPORTING**

INTERCARGO had co-sponsored a paper to MSC 110 (June 2025) that proposed a new output (an MSC agenda item) to review MSC-MEPC.3/Circ.4 Revised harmonised reporting procedures – Reports required under SOLAS regulations I/21 and XI-1/6, and MARPOL articles 8 and 12. (MSC-MEPC.3/Circ.4/Rev1 is an aide memoire to assist Administrations when reporting into the IMO's GISIS (Global Integrated Shipping Information System) on-line platform). Unfortunately the proposal was not accepted due to an IMO procedural matter (missing procedural information).

INTERCARGO has co-sponsored a new submission (to MSC 111 – May 2026) that essentially has the same proposal as the paper submitted to MSC 110 but with the inclusion of the missing information.

- *MSC 111/XX/X - Proposal for a new output to revise MSC-MEPC.3/Circ.4/Rev.1*

## **INTERCARGO TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

As reported the **last Technical Committee meeting** was held on the 3rd November 2025 at the Four Seasons Astir Palace Hotel, Athens, Greece. Information, including agenda, minutes, presentations, can be found on our website [here](#).

The **next Committee meeting will be held in Singapore on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026**, further details including registration for the meeting can be found [here](#). The agenda for this meeting is currently under development.

The **Technical Committee, with the Emissions Working Group, had an ad-hoc meeting** on the 25<sup>th</sup> February during which consultant naval architect Edwin Pang and representatives of INTERCARGO Associate Member the Maersk Mc-Kinney Center for Zero Carbon Shipping delivered a presentation on a proposal related to CII and the SEEMP.

The INTERCARGO Secretariat will follow the ad-hoc meeting with the TC by correspondence in order to formulate an INTERCARGO position prior to MEPC 84.

### **IMO MEETINGS**

Since the last update INTERCARGO has attended:

- IACS/Industry pre-SDC 12 meeting – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2026
- IMO Sub-Committee on Ship Design and Construction (SDC 12) – 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026
- IACS/Industry pre-PPR 13 meeting – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026
- Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR 13) – 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

In the coming months INTERCARGO will attend:

- IMO Editorial and Technical Group (E&T 44) – 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026
- IMO Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 21) – 20<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2026
- IACS/Industry pre-MEPC 84 meeting – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026
- IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 84) – 27<sup>th</sup> April to 1<sup>st</sup> May 2026