

Article VII

Special rules drawn up by agreement

When in accordance with the present Convention special rules are drawn up by agreement between all or some of the Contracting Governments, such rules shall be communicated to the Secretary-General of the Organization for circulation to all Contracting Governments.

Article VIII

*Amendments**

(a) The present Convention may be amended by either of the procedures specified in the following paragraphs.

(b) Amendments after consideration within the Organization:

- (i) Any amendment proposed by a Contracting Government shall be submitted to the Secretary-General of the Organization, who shall then circulate it to all Members of the Organization and all Contracting Governments at least six months prior to its consideration.
- (ii) Any amendment proposed and circulated as above shall be referred to the Maritime Safety Committee of the Organization for consideration.
- (iii) Contracting Governments of States, whether or not Members of the Organization, shall be entitled to participate in the proceedings of the Maritime Safety Committee for the consideration and adoption of amendments.
- (iv) Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Governments present and voting in the Maritime Safety Committee expanded as provided for in subparagraph (iii) of this paragraph (hereinafter referred to as "the expanded Maritime Safety Committee") on condition that at least one third of the Contracting Governments shall be present at the time of voting.
- (v) Amendments adopted in accordance with subparagraph (iv) of this paragraph shall be communicated by the Secretary-General of the Organization to all Contracting Governments for acceptance.
- (vi)
 - (1) An amendment to an article of the Convention or to chapter I of the annex shall be deemed to have been accepted on the date on which it is accepted by two thirds of the Contracting Governments.
 - (2) An amendment to the annex other than chapter I shall be deemed to have been accepted
 - (aa) at the end of two years from the date on which it is communicated to Contracting Governments for acceptance; or
 - (bb) at the end of a different period, which shall not be less than one year, if so determined at the time of its adoption by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Governments present and voting in the expanded Maritime Safety Committee.However, if within the specified period either more than one third of Contracting Governments, or Contracting Governments the combined merchant fleets of which constitute not less than fifty per cent of the gross tonnage of the world's merchant fleet, notify the Secretary-General of the Organization that they object to the amendment, it shall be deemed not to have been accepted.
- (vii)
 - (1) An amendment to an article of the Convention or to chapter I of the annex shall enter into force with respect to those Contracting Governments which have accepted it, six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted, and with respect to each Contracting Government which accepts it after that date, six months after the date of that Contracting Government's acceptance.

* Refer to Guidance on entry into force of amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention and related mandatory instruments (MSC.1/Circ.1481) and Interim guidance on drafting of amendments to the 1974 SOLAS Convention and related mandatory instruments (MSC.1/Circ.1483).

- (2) An amendment to the annex other than chapter I shall enter into force with respect to all Contracting Governments, except those which have objected to the amendment under subparagraph (vi)(2) of this paragraph and which have not withdrawn such objections, six months after the date on which it is deemed to have been accepted. However, before the date set for entry into force, any Contracting Government may give notice to the Secretary-General of the Organization that it exempts itself from giving effect to that amendment for a period not longer than one year from the date of its entry into force, or for such longer period as may be determined by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Governments present and voting in the expanded Maritime Safety Committee at the time of the adoption of the amendment.
- (c) Amendment by a Conference:
- (i) Upon the request of a Contracting Government concurred in by at least one third of the Contracting Governments, the Organization shall convene a Conference of Contracting Governments to consider amendments to the present Convention.
 - (ii) Every amendment adopted by such a Conference by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Governments present and voting shall be communicated by the Secretary-General of the Organization to all Contracting Governments for acceptance.
 - (iii) Unless the Conference decides otherwise, the amendment shall be deemed to have been accepted and shall enter into force in accordance with the procedures specified in subparagraphs (b)(vi) and (b)(vii) respectively of this article, provided that references in these paragraphs to the expanded Maritime Safety Committee shall be taken to mean references to the Conference.
- (d) (i) A Contracting Government which has accepted an amendment to the annex which has entered into force shall not be obliged to extend the benefit of the present Convention in respect of the certificates issued to a ship entitled to fly the flag of a State the Government of which, pursuant to the provisions of subparagraph (b)(vi)(2) of this article, has objected to the amendment and has not withdrawn such an objection, but only to the extent that such certificates relate to matters covered by the amendment in question.
- (ii) A Contracting Government which has accepted an amendment to the annex which has entered into force shall extend the benefit of the present Convention in respect of the certificates issued to a ship entitled to fly the flag of a State the Government of which, pursuant to the provisions of subparagraph (b)(vii)(2) of this article, has notified the Secretary-General of the Organization that it exempts itself from giving effect to the amendment.
- (e) Unless expressly provided otherwise, any amendment to the present Convention made under this article, which relates to the structure of a ship, shall apply only to ships the keels of which are laid or which are at a similar stage of construction, on or after the date on which the amendment enters into force.
- (f) Any declaration of acceptance of, or objection to, an amendment or any notice given under subparagraph (b)(vii)(2) of this article shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary-General of the Organization, who shall inform all Contracting Governments of any such submission and the date of its receipt.
- (g) The Secretary-General of the Organization shall inform all Contracting Governments of any amendments which enter into force under this article, together with the date on which each such amendment enters into force.

Article IX

Signature, ratification, acceptance, approval and accession

- (a) The present Convention shall remain open for signature at the Headquarters of the Organization from 1 November 1974 until 1 July 1975 and shall thereafter remain open for accession. States may become parties to the present Convention by:
- (i) signature without reservation as to ratification, acceptance or approval; or