



RUSSIAN MARITIME REGISTER OF SHIPPING

URGENT RULE CHANGE NOTICE **No. 311-05-2064** dated 11.12.2025

Entry-into-force date:
01.01.2026

Re: amendments to the Guidelines on Application of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters (Polar Code), ND No. 2-030101-031-E (version 15.10.2020)

Amendments have been introduced in connection with entry into force on 1 January 2026 of the 2023 amendments to SOLAS-74 Chapter XIV and the Polar Code regarding the requirements for the following ships:

- fishing vessels of 24 m in length overall and above;
- pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade; and
- cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage.

Above-mentioned ships engaged on any voyages in the Antarctic area and/or voyages in Arctic waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of the state under whose flag the ships are registered shall comply with the requirements of Chapters 9-1 and 11-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code (as amended by IMO resolution MSC.538(107)) as it is defined in SOLAS-74 regulations XVI/2.1.2 — 2.1.4, 2.3 and 3-1 (as amended by IMO resolution MSC.532(107)):

- ships constructed before 1 January 2026 — no later than 1 January 2027;
- ships constructed on or after 1 January 2026 — at putting into service after construction.

Instructions on application:

1. Bring the content of the Notice with instructions on its application to the attention of the RS surveyors.
2. Apply the provisions of the Notice in the RS practical activity from the entry-into-force date of amendments.

Director General

Sergey A. Kulikov

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**AMENDMENTS
TO THE GUIDELINES ON APPLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CODE FOR SHIPS OPERATING IN POLAR WATERS
(POLAR CODE) (15.10.2020)**

REVISION HISTORY

Item	Applied to	Description	Remarks
Part I, Section 1	All ships to which the Polar Code apply	Section has been completely revised in connection with entry into force of 2023 amendments to SOLAS-74 Chapter XIV and the Polar Code regarding the requirements for fishing vessels of 24 m in length overall and above, pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade and cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage	IMO resolutions MSC.532(107) and MSC.538(107)
Part II, para 1.2.1	Ships subject to survey and issue of certificates in accordance with SOLAS-74 Chapter I Polar Ship Certificate	Ships, to which the Polar Ship Certificate is issued, have been indicated	IMO resolutions MSC.532(107) and MSC.538(107)
Part II, para 1.2.7 (deleted)	Ships subject to survey and issue of certificates in accordance with SOLAS-74 Chapter I	Obsolete requirements have been deleted. Existing paras 1.2.8 — 1.2.11 and references thereto have been renumbered 1.2.7 — 1.2.10 accordingly.	
Part II, Chapter 1.3 (new)	Fishing vessels of 24 meters in length overall and above Pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade Cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage Surveys	Requirements for surveys of ships to confirm compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code have been introduced. Existing Chapter 1.3 and references thereto have been renumbered 1.4	IMO resolutions MSC.532(107) and MSC.538(107)

Item	Applied to	Description	Remarks
Part II, para 9.2 (new)	Fishing vessels of 24 meters in length overall and above Pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade Cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage Navigational equipment	Requirements for assessment of ship compliance with the provisions of Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code have been introduced.	IMO resolution MSC.538(107)

PART I. GENERAL

1 SCOPE OF APPLICATION

Section 1 is replaced by the following text:

"1 SCOPE OF APPLICATION

1.1 The Guidelines on Application of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters¹ shall be applied during survey of ships and ship's equipment as well as review of design documentation and documentation for ships under construction or in service for compliance with the requirements of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters².

¹ Hereinafter referred to as "the Guidelines".

² Hereinafter referred to as "the Polar Code".

1.2 The Guidelines apply to ships operating in polar waters and covered by the requirements of Introduction and Parts I-A and II-A of the Polar Code as defined in the relevant regulations of SOLAS-74 and MARPOL 73/78, namely:

.1 regarding safety requirements — to ships specified in SOLAS-74 regulation XIV/2, as amended:

.1.1 ships subject to survey and issue of certificates in accordance with SOLAS-74 Chapter I;

.1.2 following ships engaged on any voyages in the Antarctic area and/or voyages in Arctic waters beyond the outer limit of the territorial sea of the state under whose flag the ships are registered:

.1.2.1 fishing vessels of 24 meters in length overall³ and above;

.1.2.2 pleasure yachts of 300 gross tonnage and upwards not engaged in trade;

.1.2.3 cargo ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards but below 500 gross tonnage;

.2 regarding requirements related to environmental protection — to ships specified in regulation 47 of Annex I, regulation 22 of Annex II, regulation 18 to Annex IV and regulation 14 of Annex V to MARPOL 73/78.

³ Term "length overall" applies in the meaning as it is defined for term "length" in SOLAS-74 regulation V/2.4 (refer also to IMO circular MSC-MEPC.5/Circ.5).

1.3 The Guidelines supplement provisions of 2.7, Part III "Statutory Surveys" of the Rules for Technical Supervision of Ships in Service⁴ regarding the procedure of surveys and scope of checks required for assessment of compliance with the applicable requirements of the Polar Code.

⁴ Hereinafter referred to as "the Rules TSSS".

1.4 Safety-related requirements of the Guidelines (Introduction and Part I-A of the Polar Code) are given in Part II "Technical Requirements" and apply as follows:

.1 requirements 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, Section 2 — 8, 9 (except for 9.2) and 10 of the above Part (refer to SOLAS-74 regulations XIV/2.2 and 3) apply to ships given in 1.2.1.1;

.2 requirements 1.3, 1.4 and 9.2 of the above Part (refer to SOLAS-74 regulations XIV/2.3 and 3-1) apply to ships given in 1.2.1.2.

1.5 Requirements related to environmental protection in the Guidelines (Introduction and Part II-A of the Polar Code) are given in Section 11 of Part II "Technical Requirements" and apply to ships specified in 1.2.2.

1.6 When applying provisions of the Guidelines and requirements of Parts I-A and II-A of the Polar Code, provisions of Parts I-B and II-B of the Polar Code shall be taken into account.

1.7 The technical supervision including review of technical documentation, survey of ships, as well as issuance of certificates and other documents confirming compliance with

the requirements of the Polar Code are carried out by the Register as a recognized organization within the powers granted by the respective Maritime Administration of ship's flag state⁵. If the Administration gives additional instructions on the application of the provisions of the Polar Code, then, in case of discrepancy with the provisions of these Guidelines, the instructions of the Administration shall be applied.

⁵ Hereinafter referred to as "the Administration".

1.8 Surveys specified in 1.2 and 1.3 of Part II "Technical Requirements" are performed by the Register on the request of the shipowner containing the statement that the ship is intended for operation in polar waters."

PART II. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

1 PROVISIONS ON TECHNICAL SUPERVISION

1.2 SURVEYS FOR ISSUE, ENDORSEMENT AND RENEWAL OF THE POLAR SHIP CERTIFICATE

Para 1.2.1 is replaced by the following text:

"1.2.1 The Polar Ship Certificate together with a Record of Equipment (form 2.1.29)¹ shall be issued to ships given in 1.2.1.1, Part I "General" and complying with the requirements of Part I-A of the Polar Code in accordance with SOLAS-74 regulation XIV/3.

¹ Hereinafter referred to as "the Certificate".

Para 1.2.7 is deleted. **Paras 1.2.8 — 1.2.11 and references thereto** are renumbered **1.2.7 — 1.2.10** accordingly.

After **Chapter 1.2 new Chapter 1.3** is introduced reading as follows:

"1.3 DETERMINATION OF SHIP COMPLIANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHAPTER 9-1 OF THE POLAR CODE

1.3.1 Although performance of surveys and issue of any international certificate for ships given in 1.2.1.2, Part I "General" of these Guidelines¹ are not provided by SOLAS-74 Chapter XIV, the Register may carry out surveys and issue Statement of the Compliance of the Ship² (form 2.1.29.1) confirming ship compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1 of the Polar Code¹.

¹ In accordance with SOLAS-74 regulation XIV/2.3, as amended by IMO resolution MSC.532(107), such ships constructed before 1 January 2026 shall comply with the requirements of Chapters 9-1 and 11-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code, as amended by IMO resolution MSC.538(107), no later than 1 January 2027.

² Hereinafter referred to as "the Statement".

1.3.2 The following types of surveys to confirm the ship compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1 of the Polar Code and to issue the Statement are established:

.1 initial survey before the ship is put into service or before the Statement is issued for the first time, which shall include a complete survey of the structures and equipment of the ship to the extent of the requirements applied to the ship in accordance with Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code, to ensure that they fully comply with the applicable requirements;

.2 annual survey within three months before or after each anniversary date³ of the Statement, including a general inspection of the structures and equipment to ensure that they have been maintained in fit condition and that they remain satisfactory for the service for which the ship is intended;

.3 survey to renew the Statement performed at intervals not exceeding 5 years to ensure that the ship fully complies with applicable requirements and the structure and equipment have been maintained in fit condition and that they remain satisfactory for the service for which the ship is intended.

³ Anniversary date is the date and month of each year corresponding to the expiry date of validity of the Statement.

1.3.3 The Statement is issued by the Register after completion of the initial and renewal surveys confirming ship compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code for the period not exceeding 5 years and is subject to annual confirmation.

1.3.4 Prior to survey given in 1.3.2.1, the shipowner shall assess the ship compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code considering ship technical characteristics and estimated operational conditions.

The assessment results shall be submitted to the RS Branch Office performing the survey, and shall contain a scope of information required to carry out the survey, on operational limitations and relevant safety measures determined for such ship in accordance with 1.4, regarding, at least, the following:

.1 ice conditions;
.2 high latitudes;
.3 areas and operation periods where ice accretion may occur and/or with 24 h daylight.

1.3.5 If application of equivalent means and devices (refer also to 9.2 of this Part) is provided to be used to meet the requirements of regulations 9-1.3.2.1.1, 9-1.3.2.1.2 and 9-1.3.2.1.4.2, Part I-A of the Polar Code, relevant technical background shall be submitted to the Register for review and approval, where necessary, with the Administration. Documentation confirming equivalence of the means and devices to the above requirements shall be attached to the background."

Existing Chapter 1.3 and references thereto are renumbered 1.4.

9 SAFETY OF NAVIGATION

New para 9.2 is introduced reading as follows:

"9.2 The assessment of the ship for compliance with the requirements of Chapter 9-1, Part I-A of the Polar Code shall include the following:

.1 check for means of receiving current information to ensure safety of navigation including information on ice conditions (refer to 9-1.3.1, Part I-A of the Polar Code);

.2 for ice-strengthened ships constructed on or after 1 January 2026, check for two independent echo-sounding devices or one echo-sounding device with two separate independent transducers (refer to 9-1.3.2.1.1, Part I-A of the Polar Code). Other devices capable of depth sounding, such as fish finders, may be used as equivalent means of meeting this requirement;

.3 check the ship for compliance, irrespective of the date of construction and the size, with SOLAS-74 regulation V/22.1.9.4, and for a clear view astern (refer to 9-1.3.2.1.2, Part I-A of the Polar Code).

On ships which cannot comply with this requirement, arrangements shall be provided to achieve a level of visibility that is equivalent to this requirement.

According to 10.4, Part I-B of the Polar Code, clear view astern may be also ensured by suitable means to de-ice sufficient conning position windows to provide unimpaired forward and astern vision from conning positions and means of clearing melted ice, freezing rain, snow, mist, spray from outside and accumulated condensation from inside. A mechanical means to clear moisture from the outside face of a window shall have operating mechanisms protected from freezing or the accumulation of ice that would impair effective operation;

.4 for ships operating in areas and during periods where ice accretion is likely to occur, check for means to prevent the accumulation of ice on antennas required for navigation and communication (refer to 9-1.3.2.1.3, Part I-A of the Polar Code);

.5 when assessing ice-strengthened ships:

.5.1 if sensors being part of the equipment required by SOLAS-74 Chapter V or Chapter 9-1 of the Polar Code, that project below the hull are provided, check that such sensors are protected against ice (refer to 9-1.3.2.1.4.1, Part I-A of the Polar Code);

.5.2 for ships of categories A and B constructed on or after 1 January 2026, check that bridge wings are enclosed or designed to protect navigational equipment and operating personnel (refer to 9-1.3.2.1.4.2, Part I-A of the Polar Code). On ships which cannot comply with this requirement, arrangements shall be provided to achieve a level of protection that is equivalent to this requirement;

.6 for ships of 500 gross tonnage and upwards check whether two independent, non-magnetic means to determine and display their heading connected to the ship's main and emergency source of power are fitted, and possibility of interface connection with the equipment for which the information on the heading is required (radar, ATA, ARPA, AIS, ECDIS, VDR, S-VDR, INS heading repeaters, etc.) is provided (refer to 9-1.3.2.2.1, Part I-A of the Polar Code);

.7 for ships proceeding to latitudes over 80 degrees, check whether at least one GNSS compass or equivalent which shall be connected to the ship's main and emergency source of power is fitted and possibility of interface connection with the equivalent for which the information on the heading is required (radar, ATA, ARPA, AIS, ECDIS, VDR, S-VDR, INS, heading repeaters, etc.) is provided (refer to 9-1.3.2.2.2, Part I-A of the Polar Code);

.8 for all ships, with the exception of those solely operating in areas with 24 h daylight check for two means of illumination to aid visual detection of ice (refer to 9-1.3.3, Part I-A of the Polar Code).".