Sub-Committee on Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR), 4th session, 16-20 January 2017

Implementation of the 2020 0.50% sulphur limit

The Sub-Committee began work to ensure the effective implementation of the 2020 0.50% m/m sulphur limit, which was decided by MEPC 70..

The proposed work would be aimed at exploring what actions may be taken to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the 0.50% sulphur limit as well as actions that may facilitate effective policies by IMO Member States.

MEPC 71 will be invited to approve a new output on consistent implementation of regulation 14.1.3 of MARPOL Annex VI. Regulation 14.3.1 sets a 0.50% limit on the sulphur content of fuel oil used onboard ships from 1 January 2020, down from 3.50% currently. In emission control areas (ECAS), the limit will remain at 0.10% m/m. (See more here.)

Draft OSV Code finalized

The Sub-Committee finalized the draft Code for the transport and handling of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk on offshore support vessels (OSV Chemical Code), for approval by MSC 98 and MEPC 71, with a view to adoption by the IMO Assembly (A30) in late 2017.

The OSV Code aims to provide a consistent regulatory framework for the transport and handling of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk on offshore support vessels with a single certification scheme, taking into account the complex and continued evolution of the offshore industry as well as the unique design features and service characteristics of these vessels.

The Code covers the design, construction and operation of offshore support vessels which transport hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk for the servicing and resupplying of offshore platforms, mobile offshore drilling units and other offshore installations, including those employed in the search for and recovery of hydrocarbons from the sea-bed.

It was agreed that the Code should apply to OSVs engaged in the carriage of the products subject to the Code, regardless of size or voyage.

Ballast water management manual completed

The Sub-Committee completed its work on the "Ballast Water Management - How to do it" manual, which is expected to be finalized and approved by MEPC 71.

The manual provides advice on the process of ratification, implementation and enforcement of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 (BWM Convention), which will enter into force on 8 September 2017.

The manual gives useful practical information to Governments, particularly those of developing countries, Administrations, shipowners, port State control authorities, environmental agencies and other stakeholders on the implications of ratifying, implementing and enforcing the BWM Convention.

The aim is to encourage the further ratification and effective implementation and enforcement of the Convention. Currently, the BWM Convention has been ratified by 54 countries, representing 53.30% of world merchant shipping tonnage.

Guidance on determining viability of organisms agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft Guidance on methodologies that may be used for enumerating viable organisms, for approval by MEPC 71.

The guidance provides information on methodologies used for enumerating viable organisms during the type approval of ballast water management systems, in order to verify that they meet the ballast water performance standard described in regulation D-2 of the BWM Convention.

Updated OPRC Model training courses agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed the final draft of the updated IMO Model Courses on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation (OPRC Model Training Courses).

The OPRC Model training courses have been revised to provide up to date guidance for preparedness and response to marine oil spills. There are four courses in the series, which comprise an Introductory Level - aimed at providing a general introduction and awareness to oil spill preparedness and response; Level 1 (Operational) - aimed at Team Leaders, First Responders and all those working in the field during a response; Level 2 (Tactical) - aimed at Incident Managers, On-Scene Commanders, Supervisors and those working in an incident command centre or managing a response operation; and Level 3 (Strategic) - aimed at administrators and senior managers with responsibility for determining preparedness levels and developing strategy in the response to a marine oil spill.

Revision of IBC Code - revised chapter 21 on criteria for assigning carriage requirements agreed

The Sub-Committee moved forward with its revision of the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (IBC Code), agreeing the draft revised chapter 21 (Criteria for assigning carriage requirements for products subject to the IBC Code) for submission to MEPC 71 and MSC 98 for approval in principle, pending finalization of the revision of chapters 17 and 18 of the Code, for circulation and subsequent adoption at a future session.

This paves the way for the work to revise chapters 17 (Summary of minimum requirements), 18 (List of products to which the code does not apply). The comprehensive review of the IBC Code aims to harmonize the requirements for individual substances with the UN Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) and the 2014 edition of the Revised Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) hazard evaluation procedure for chemical substances carried by ships.

The Sub-Committee also continued its work to develop draft amendments to MARPOL Annex II to strengthen the discharge requirements for persistent floating, high-viscosity and solidifying substances .

Guidelines for exhaust gas recirculation bleed-off water agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft Guidelines for the discharge of exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) bleed-off water, for submission to MEPC 71 for adoption.

Regulation 13.5.1 of MARPOL Annex VI requires marine diesel engines on ships constructed from 1 January 2016 to meet Tier III NOX emission levels when operating in the North American and US Caribbean Sea NOX emission control areas. One method for reducing NO X emissions is to use Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR), which is an internal engine process resulting in a NO X reduction which will meet the requirements of the regulation. MEPC 70 approved the designation of the Baltic Sea and North Sea as NOx emission control areas with an entry into effect date of 1 January 2021.

By means of this process, condensate of exhaust gas will be generated and discharged as bleed-off water, which should be handled differently depending on the fuel oil sulphur content. EGR may also be used as a Tier II compliance option.

The Guidelines cover the discharge of EGR bleed-off water and are recommendatory in nature. However, Administrations are invited to base their implementation on the Guidelines.

Draft 2017 SCR Guidelines agreed

The Sub-Committee agreed draft 2017 Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) system Guidelines, for submission to MEPC 71, for consideration, with a view to adoption.

On adoption, Administrations are invited to take these Guidelines into account when certifying engines fitted with SCR, which are a type of NOX-reducing devices envisaged in the NOX Technical Code 2008 (NTC 2008).

Shipboard gasification of waste systems work referred to correspondence group

A correspondence group was established to further develop draft standards for shipboard

gasification of waste systems as well as associated amendments to regulation 16 of MARPOL Annex VI and the International Air Pollution Prevention (IAPP) Certificate.

Black carbon correspondence group established

The Sub-Committee established a correspondence group to continue work on addressing the impact on the Arctic of black carbon emissions from ships.

The correspondence group was tasked with further developing the draft measurement reporting protocol for Black Carbon, with a view to finalization at the next session (PPR 5).