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Circular letter No.2554/Rev.1
7 February 2007

To: All IMO Member States
Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea,
1974
United Nations and Specialized Agencies
Intergovernmental Organizations
Non-governmental Organizations in consultative status

Subject: **Implementation of IMO Unique Company and Registered Owner Identification
Number Scheme (resolution MSC.160(78))**

GENERAL

1 The IMO Unique Company and Registered Owner Identification Number Scheme was introduced through the adoption by the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC), at its seventy-eighth session (12 to 21 May 2004), of resolution MSC.160(78), as a measure to enhance maritime safety, security and environmental protection, and to facilitate the prevention of maritime fraud. Its purpose is to assign a permanent number for identification purposes to each company and/or registered owner managing ships of 100 gross tonnage and above engaged on international voyages. Additionally, Administrations are invited to participate in the scheme to the extent they desire by assigning an IMO unique company and registered owner identification number (hereinafter, referred to as "Number") to each company and/or registered owner managing ships of 100 gross tonnage and above not engaged on international voyages. The procedures for the implementation of resolution MSC.160(78) were circulated by means of Circular letter No.2554, dated 24 June 2004.

2 The Committee, at its eightieth session (11 to 20 May 2005), adopted the proposed new SOLAS regulation XI-1/3-1 on the company and registered owner identification number and amendments to SOLAS regulation XI-1/5 on the continuous synopsis record (resolution MSC.194(80)), which should be deemed to have been accepted on 1 July 2008 and should enter into force on 1 January 2009.

3 MSC 80 also adopted amendments to the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (ISM Code) (resolution MSC.195(80)) and to the International Code for the Security of Ships and of Port Facilities (International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code) (resolution MSC.196(80)) introducing references to the company and registered owner identification number.

4 MSC 80 agreed that the procedures for the implementation of resolution MSC.160(78) outlined in Circular letter No.2554 should be reviewed and revised as necessary by the Sub-Committee on Flag State Implementation (FSI), at its fourteenth session (5 to 9 June 2006).

5 The Committee, at its eighty-second session (29 November to 8 December 2006), considered the outcome of the review by FSI 14 of the procedures for obtaining the Numbers, and the

procedures in place for maintaining the integrity of the scheme. This resulted in the addition of a web service, revised data exchange procedures between Administrations and Lloyd's Register-Fairplay (LRF) and the reporting of the name-style of registered owners as recorded by national Administrations in their jurisdiction. The Committee approved the present circular letter, noting the concurrent decision by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), at its fifty-fifth session (9 to 13 October 2006). Having also considered that the operational aspects of the numbering scheme may need to be further developed, based on the experience gained, the Committee requested the Secretariat to make any necessary adjustments, in co-operation with the manager of the scheme, in order to improve the service to be provided to Member States.

PRINCIPLES

6 The IMO Unique Company and Registered Owner Identification Number Scheme is managed, in parallel with the IMO Ship Identification Number Scheme (resolution A.600(15)) and procedures for the implementation thereof (Circular letter No.1886/Rev.3), without charge by LRF. The scheme may assign Numbers to companies and/or registered owners of ships not required to have IMO ship identification numbers.

7 The Number is a LRF number, allocated at the time of issuance of the documents detailed in paragraph 6 of the Annex to resolution MSC.160(78) or registration of a ship not required to have these documents. The Number consists of seven digits assigned by LRF. The label begins with the letters "IMO" followed by either "Company" or "Registered Owner", then, followed by the seven digits.

8 "Company" has the same meaning as in SOLAS regulation IX/1. "Registered owner" is the owner specified on a ship's certificate of registry issued by an Administration.

9 New companies and/or registered owners managing ships covered by the scheme are assigned a Number by LRF when their ship is registered with a flag Administration. For existing companies and/or registered owners, the Number should be assigned at an early convenient date, such as when any document detailed in paragraph 6 of the Annex to resolution MSC.160(78) is issued or renewed.

10 Once assigned, the Number remains unchanged for a company and/or registered owner. When companies and/or registered owners merge, as a matter of general policy, LRF assigns the Number of the larger company and/or registered owner to the new amalgamated entity, while the Number of the smaller entity is frozen and not re-used.

11 LRF maintains a full history audit trail of changes to company and/or registered owner information, with the date of each change recorded. LRF maintains the history of companies and/or registered owners of ships on its database.

12 LRF operates under ISO 9001:2000 quality assurance and is ISO certified for the provisions of publishing and information services to the shipping industry. In order to maintain the integrity of the Numbers in circulation amongst the maritime community, the Administrations should, to the extent allowed by their national law, not publish these Numbers, or allow the Numbers to be viewed or downloaded from their websites, other than on a company-by-company basis.

13 Contracting Governments to SOLAS retain the right to assign the management of the system to another organization in the future or to manage it by itself. If LRF cannot continue to maintain the scheme for any reason, all related information acquired from the scheme should be transferred to the Organization.

COLLECTION AND TRANSFER OF INFORMATION AND ASSIGNMENT OF NUMBERS ON AN INDIVIDUAL COMPANY/REGISTERED OWNER BASIS

14 Original information about a company and/or registered owner is collected by the Administration at the time of registration. It is the same information as that routinely collected by Administrations as part of their registration process, namely:

- .1 company/registered owner name-styles;
- .2 country/State of incorporation (registration);
- .3 date of incorporation; and
- .4 full address (operational and registered address) and contact details. LRF records the operational address of companies and registered owners. The operational address can be the address of a head office or a branch office, or a care-of address for the registered owner or company which has been issued with a Document of Compliance (DOC) and managing the ship for which communication details are provided, hereafter called "DOC Company". The LRF database also records the registered address of registered owners but only under the conditions in paragraph 22.

15 During the registration of a ship, the Administration should contact LRF to determine the Number to be assigned to the company or registered owner, either through the present methods established for obtaining Numbers on an individual basis, as described in paragraph 17, or, preferably, through the fleet data exchanges (see paragraphs 18, 19 and 20).

16 Numbers can also be obtained by recognized organizations (ROs) authorized to issue Safety Management Certificates and Documents of Compliance on behalf of Administrations, and by registered owners and companies, for submission to the Administration.

17 The methods for obtaining Numbers on existing registered owners and companies, for assigning a Number to registered owners or companies that have not previously been assigned a Number and for communicating corrected company details on existing records, on an individual basis, are as follows:

- .1 a free website (www.imonumbers.lrfairplay.com) which allows registered users to look up Numbers, by using the available "Search" facility. When the companies or registered owners cannot be identified through the "Search" function, authorized data providers should request the assignment of new Numbers or provide corrective information on existing records. The website has a free user registration system to enhance both the security of the site and the information;
- .2 paper request forms (annexes 1 and 2); and
- .3 a free web service for Administrations to facilitate the provision of individual company and registered owner data from LRF to flag Administrations in an electronic format for ship registration purposes (sections 1.1 and 1.2 of annex 4).

LRF would confirm the updated company information received with the appropriate Administration.

