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MSC.1/Circ.1689
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**ESCAPE ARRANGEMENTS FROM THE LOWER PART OF MACHINERY SPACES
(SOLAS regulations II-2/13.4.1 and 13.4.2)**

1 The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 110th session (18 to 27 June 2025), following consideration of experiences reported by some SOLAS Contracting Governments and international organizations, noted the existence and impact of divergence in the interpretations of SOLAS regulations II-2/13.4.1 and 13.4.2, in particular, in the context of port State control (PSC) inspections, regarding the term "lower part" used in connection with the means of escape from spaces below the bulkhead deck for passenger ships, and from machinery spaces of category A for cargo ships.

2 In light of the relevance of the aforementioned SOLAS regulations to emergency response on board, requiring important design features for escape routes from spaces below the bulkhead deck for passenger ships and from machinery spaces of category A for cargo ships, with a view to clarifying escape arrangements from machinery spaces, the Committee considered the report of SDC 11, which had confirmed that the terms "lower part of the space", therein, should be regarded as either the lowest deck level or a platform or passageway (SDC 11/17, paragraph 10.18).

3 In this context, the Committee agreed a new output on "Review and amend, if necessary, SOLAS regulations II-2/13.4.1.1 and 13.4.2.1 to clarify the requirements on escape arrangements from the lower part of machinery spaces" to be included in the biennial agenda of the SDC Sub-Committee for the 2026-2027 biennium and the provisional agenda for SDC 12.

4 Having recalled the responsibility of flag States to approve the relevant arrangements in compliance with SOLAS regulations II-2/13.4.1 and 13.4.2, as implemented by their authorized recognized organizations, as appropriate, the Committee invited PSC Authorities to adopt a pragmatic approach in the inspection of such arrangements, while the Committee works on a long-term clarification on this issue.

5 The PSC officer should in principle accept the design arrangement approved by the flag State and when appropriate consult with the flag Administrations (*Procedures for port State control, 2023* (resolution A.1185(33)), paragraph 1.2.5, as may be revised), until any relevant amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13 have entered into force, or the conclusion of the work under the output mentioned in paragraph 3 above, as appropriate.

6 This circular will remain effective until any relevant amendments to SOLAS regulation II-2/13 have entered into force, or the conclusion of the work under the output mentioned in paragraph 3 above, as appropriate. SOLAS Contracting Governments are invited to bring this circular to the attention of all parties concerned.