

MSC/Circ.548

GUIDANCE NOTE ON PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY MASTERS OF SHIPS ENGAGED IN THE CARRIAGE OF TIMBER CARGOES

1. Subsequent to the completion of the Code of Safe Practice for Ships Carrying Timber Deck Cargoes by the Sub-Committee on Containers and Cargoes, it was noted that during the loading of log carriers, several vessels have taken a large list. This circular is not intended to replace the Code of Safe Practice for Ships Carrying Timber Deck Cargoes, as revised, but to supplement the Code. Action to be taken by the ship's master
 2. The master should be aware that during the loading of logs, some vessels have listed up to 20 degrees, causing concern that they might capsize. The major factor in this dangerous listing is failure to close screw-down overboard drain valves fitted to topside ballast tanks. The master is advised to ensure that discharges remain closed during the loading of timber, which must necessarily be closed at sea, such as gravity drains from topside ballast tanks.
 3. While the means of operation of valves are appropriately covered by relevant regulations in the 1966 LL Convention and unified interpretations thereto, the master is also advised to ensure the accessibility of the remote control screw-down valves in overboard drains of topside ballast tanks, both at port and during the voyage.
 4. In keeping with the philosophy contained in [resolution A.647\(16\)](#), IMO Guidelines on management for the safe operation of ships and for pollution prevention, the owner and operator should take appropriate steps to implement safety measures by informing the shipmaster of the importance of maintaining safe operational procedures even when at dockside.
 5. Member Governments are invited to bring this note to the attention of owners, operators and shipmasters, for their information and appropriate action.
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