



South African Maritime Safety Authority

Ref: SM6/5/2/1
SM1/5/1/15/3

Date: 26 June 2015

Marine Notice No. 10 of 2015

Policy Regarding Approval and Custody of Stability Information, and Related Matters

TO OWNERS AND MASTERS OF ALL SOUTH AFRICAN REGISTERED SHIPS, NAVAL ARCHITECTS, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND SURVEYORS

Marine Notice No 29 of 2014 is cancelled.

Summary

This notice advises industry of the procedures for approval of stability books

1. In 2000, one of the recommendations of the Court of Marine Enquiry was that SAMSA should ensure that no South African registered ship is allowed to sail without having on board approved stability information. That has since been SAMSA policy which was promulgated in form of Marine Notice 6 of 2000.
2. In this regard it should be noted that the stability information is required to be kept on board the ship to which it relates and is deemed to be part of the documents relating to the navigation of the ship. The master is therefore the custodian of this information and must hand it to his or her successor whenever a change of master takes place.
3. In order to give effect to the Court's recommendation, SAMSA's officers have been instructed, with effect from the date of promulgation of this Notice, not to issue any cargo ship safety equipment certificate, passenger ship safety certificate or local general safety certificate unless there is on board at the time of the relevant survey a valid SAMSA – approved stability booklet or stability document and statement letter issued by a SAMSA naval architect or a SAMSA appointed naval architect or issued by a Recognized Organization that has in place an agreement with SAMSA, see Marine Notice 12 of 2014
4. A SAMSA-approved stability booklet means a stability document that:
 - a. is drawn up in accordance with the requirements of Chapter II of the Safety of Navigation Regulations, 1968;
 - b. bears a purple ink stamp consisting of the words "APPROVED SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY" or "MARINE DIVISION DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT APPROVED"; and
 - c. is dated and signed by a SAMSA principal officer.
5. A stability document means a document that:
 - a. is drawn up according to section 11 below.
 - b. bears a purple ink stamp consisting of the words "APPROVED SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME SAFETY AUTHORITY" or "MARINE DIVISION DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT APPROVED"; and
 - c. is dated and signed by a SAMSA principal officer.

6. The owner or master of a ship has an obligation under section 239 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1961, to report any alteration or damage to the ship affecting her seaworthiness, efficiency or compliance with regulations. Of particular note are structural changes or operating procedures that affect the watertight integrity of a ship or the validity of the stability information carried on board.
7. When modifications are to be made to a ship's structure, the plans submitted for approval must be accompanied by a weight estimate of the weights on and weights off and their corresponding vertical centres of gravity (VCG's) and longitudinal centres of gravity (LCG's).
8. The new lightship parameters, namely displacement, VCG and LCG, are to be compared with the existing lightship parameters and:
 - 8.1 if the absolute value of the sum of the weights on and weights off is greater than 1% of the original displacement and the change in LCG is less than 0.5% of the length between perpendiculars (LBP) and the new VCG is less than the original VCG, then a new stability book will not be required, but the weight estimate and new lightship parameters will be attached to the existing booklet;
 - 8.2 if the change in any one of the lightship parameters is greater than .1 above and the criteria of .3 below are satisfied, a new stability booklet must be drawn up based on the new lightship particulars;
 - 8.3 if the sum of the weights on and weights off is less than 5% of the original displacement and the new VCG does not exceed the original by more than 0.1m and in all loading conditions the GM is greater than 0,5m and the GZ curve reaches 0,50m at an angle of not less than 30°, then the stability booklet based on the estimated new lightship particulars may be accepted without an inclining test;
 - 8.4 if one or more of the criteria described in .3 above is not satisfied then a new stability booklet based on an inclining experiment, witness by a SAMSA (or SAMSA appointed) surveyor, must be drawn up.
9. Fishing vessels of less than 100 gross tons are exempt from the stability book requirements under the Safety of Navigation regulations, 1968, but righting-lever curves are still required to be produced for such vessels in accordance with the Construction regulations, 1968. Righting levers on their own are of no use to the master or shipowner, therefore a stability statement (as opposed to a stability booklet) is to be produced in respect of the ship. The data contained in the stability statement must cover the lightship, departure from port and worse case operating conditions, and it must be based on an inclining experiment.
10. Accordingly all fishing vessels of less than 100 gross tons built or transferring to the South African register for the first time on or after 1 April 1995 are required to have on board a valid SAMSA approved stability statement. A SAMSA approved stability statement is also required in respect of every fishing vessel of less than 100 gross tons built after 1 January 1960 but prior to 1 April 1995 that is so altered as to affect her stability. No local general safety certificate will be issued without these documents being on board the vessel.
11. It frequently happens that only incomplete stability data is available in respect of a newly build or second hand South African ship at the time of her delivery voyage. In such a case the ship must if its stability booklet or statement has not been approved, have on board a stability document approved by a SAMSA officer. This document is to contain the stability information prescribed by regulation 8 of the Safety of Navigation Regulations, 1968, provided that the information in respect of regulation 8(2)(g) must be applicable to the departure port, worst case en route and port of destination conditions. Where necessary, the ships lightship parameters are to be based on an inclining experiment performed on the vessel in her current condition and witnessed by a SAMSA (or SAMSA appointed) surveyor.
12. To ensure that the issue of the relevant safety certificate is not delayed unnecessarily (thereby delaying the departure of the ship) it is incumbent upon the shipowner or master to ensure that a stability booklet or statement requirement approval is submitted timeously to SAMSA. **It should also be noted that from 01 June 2015 the stability letters as per the cancelled Marine Notice 29 of 2014 shall no longer be issued.**

13. It should be noted that existing ships returning to the South African register or that have been out of service for more than a year or transferring to the South African register for the first time that have stability data not complying fully with the requirements of Chapter II of the Safety of Navigation regulations, 1968, will be treated as new ships, that is to say they will be required to comply fully with the said requirements.

26 June 2015

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