



Marine Notice No. 53 of 2023

Notice to all Shipowners, Agents, Shipmasters, Recognised Organisations, Yachtspersons and Seafarers.

**Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023
Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023
SOLAS Chapter II-2, Construction of ships – fire protection,
fire detection and fire extinction**

The purpose of this Marine Notice is to draw attention to the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 ([S.I. No. 379 of 2023](#)) and the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 ([S.I. No. 380 of 2023](#)), which were made on 20 July 2023.

The Rules update and replace existing Fire Protection Rules. They give effect to the provisions of Chapter II-2 of the annex to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974, the SOLAS Convention, as amended by the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization up to and including amendments adopted in 2017, which came into force internationally on 1 January 2020. Chapter II-2 of the SOLAS Convention deals with the construction of ships with a particular focus on fire protection, fire detection and fire extinction.

The following paragraphs provide information on the application and content of each set of Rules. A Questions and Answers section relating to particular ship types and dates of construction is included in the Appendix to this Notice. Any queries regarding the application of the Rules may be sent to the Marine Survey Office at MSO@transport.gov.ie.

(a) Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 379 of 2023)

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 revoke and replace the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 1985 (S.I. No. 279 of 1985) and the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (Amendment) Rules 1990 (S.I. No. 86 of 1990).

The Rules apply to a ship registered in the State, the keel of which was laid or which was at a similar stage of construction on or after 1 September 1984, to certain ships that are converted into a passenger ship after 1 September 1984, to major repairs, alterations, modifications and outfitting of ships as specified in Rule 3 of the Rules and to other new seagoing ships while they are within a port in the State. The Rules apply general and specific fire prevention, structural fire protection and fire appliance requirements to specified ship categories, including passenger ships, cargo ships, tankers, ships carrying dangerous goods, certain tugs and tenders, sailing ships and larger pleasure craft of 13.7m in length or greater.

The Rules do not apply to pleasure craft which are not passenger ships and are of less than 13.7 m in length and fishing vessels.

In the case of ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002 that are engaged on international voyages, separate rules in the No. 2 Rules at (b) below (S.I. No. 380 of 2023) apply to such ships.

(b) Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023)

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 apply mainly to **ships constructed on or after 1 July 2002 and engaged on international voyages**, i.e. ships to which the provisions of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea 1974 (SOLAS Convention) applies. This includes passenger ships, cargo ships, tankers, ships carrying dangerous goods, certain sailing ships, tugs or tenders and pleasure craft of 13.7m in length or greater.

The Rules do not apply to ships of war and troop ships, cargo ships of less than 500 tons gross tonnage, ships not propelled by mechanical means, wooden ships of primitive build, pleasure yachts not engaged in trade and fishing vessels.

With a few exceptions (as set out in Rule 3), if a ship is constructed on or after 1 July 2002 and is not engaged on an international voyage, the first set of Rules at (a) above (S.I. No. 379 of 2023) will still apply to that ship. The requirements and standards set out in the Rules are already applied internationally through the SOLAS Convention, including to the current fleet of Irish flagged ships engaged on international voyages affected by these Rules.

The Rules deal with prevention of fire and explosion, suppression of fire, the escape of crew and passengers, operational requirements relating to such matters as maintenance, testing, inspections, fire drills and training, and special requirements for helidecks, the carriage of dangerous goods and the protection of vehicle and ro-ro spaces.

The new Rules may be purchased by mail order from Government Publications, Mountshannon Road, Kilmainham, Dublin 8, D08 XA06, Tel: (046) 9423100. The Rules are also available online at: www.irishstatutebook.ie.

Note: Marine Notices are issued purely for maritime safety and navigation reasons and should not be construed as conferring rights or granting permissions.

Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport,
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.

10/08/2023

Encl: Appendix – Questions and Answers

For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact:
The Marine Survey Office, email: MSO@transport.gov.ie.
For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, email:
MaritimeSafetyPolicyDivision@transport.gov.ie.
Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to:
Dept. of Transport, Maritime Safety Policy Division, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02 TR60, Ireland.
email: MarineNotices@transport.gov.ie or visit us at: www.gov.ie/transport.

Questions and Answers

1. I am the owner of a passenger ship that was constructed after 1 September 1984 but before 1 July 2002 and is engaged on international voyages. Which set of Rules apply to my vessel?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 379 of 2023) apply to your vessel. Certain Rules in the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023), as set out in Rule 3 of S.I. No. 380 of 2023, also apply.

2. I am the owner of a passenger ship that was constructed after 1 July 2002 and is engaged on international voyages. Which set of Rules apply to my vessel?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023) apply to your vessel.

3. Which set of Rules apply to a cargo ship or tanker constructed after 1 July 2002 and not engaged on an international voyage?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 379 of 2023) apply. Certain Rules in the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023), as set out in Rule 3 of S.I. No. 380 of 2023, also apply.

4. Which set of Rules apply to a cargo ship or tanker constructed after 1 July 2002 and engaged in international trade?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023) apply.

5. Which set of Rules apply to a pleasure craft of over 13.7 metres in length constructed after 1 July 2002 and not engaged on an international voyage?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 379 of 2023) apply.

6. If I plan to carry out major repairs, alterations, modifications or outfitting to a ship constructed after 1 September 1984 and before 1 July 2002, which set of Fire Protection Rules will apply?

The Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 379 of 2023) will apply at a minimum. Certain Rules in the Merchant Shipping (Fire Protection) (No. 2) Rules 2023 (S.I. No. 380 of 2023), as set out in Rules 3 and 5 of S.I. No. 380 of 2023, may also apply depending on the type of ship involved.

7. How do I determine which requirements in the Rules apply to my ship?

The provisions of Rules 3 and 4 of each set of Rules set out the Application and Classification of Ships for the purpose of the Rules. Check the content of these Rules to see if your particular ship category is listed. Within the body of the Rules, different requirements may also apply depending on the Class and the date of

construction of your ship. The Class of ships to which particular Parts of the Rules or particular Rules apply is set out within the Rules.